THE PARISH OF DURRIS

Some Historical Sketches

ROBIN JACKSON

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The Parish of Durris

INTRODUCTION

Delightsome doorway to Deeside,
Durris in rural beauty can take pride;
Its woods are fabled and its vistas grand,
With fairy stream and hills on every hand;
From Grampian heights it falls to sylvan Dee;
Happy the few who share its rich amenity.[1]

No claims are made that this is a comprehensive and detailed history of the parish of Durris; rather it is a personal journey in which I have explored subjects that have caught my interest. For example, it has been fascinating to discover that there is in Durris one location where one can trace a continuous religious thread over the millennia. In this one place there has been a prehistoric religious site: an Irish monk's cell, a chapelry of a Knights Templar and later Knights Hospitaller, a small chapel for a Roman Catholic priest, later a church for an Episcopalian vicar and finally a kirk for a Presbyterian minister.

A not insignificant part of this publication has been devoted to examining the life of one particular laird of Durris – Sir Alexander Fraser – Royal Physician to Charles I and Charles II. Sir Alexander had been a close confidant to Charles II and is believed to have been involved in a number of covert operations that led eventually to the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Samuel Pepys who knew Sir Alexander alleged he was on occasion guilty of indulging in medical practices that could have brought him within the grasp of criminal law![2] So far as Antonia Fraser is concerned, in her biography of Charles II, Sir Alexander was "a natural intriguer rather than a successful one." Before arriving at a judgement, the reader of this book is invited to examine all the evidence presented.[3]

In exploring the history of Durris an attempt has been made to solve an intriguing mystery. The Durris Church has in its possession a silver communion set bequeathed by a Thomas Fraser, Chaplain and Judge Advocate of an ill-fated English Royal Fleet, who died in 1694. The mystery surrounds the identity of the benefactor.

No parish history would be complete without an acknowledgement of the individual contribution made by the succession of lairds and proprietors of the estate. All those living in this parish over the past centuries have been profoundly influenced by the extent to which the laird or subsequently the proprietor sought to improve the estate and by so doing enhance the quality of life of tenants and others.

I hope that the reader will gain some insights into the past life of Durris parish and in so doing will learn something of the history of Scotland, for all the major economic, social and religious changes experienced by the nation over the centuries have been mirrored in the parish of Durris.

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[1] C. Graham (1970) New deal for Durris, *The Press and Journal*, 7 November.

[2] J. Payne. (1900) Chapter IX: Medical practice in Sydenham's time. *In Masters of Medicine*: Thomas Sydenham. New York, Longmans. p. 163.

[3] A. Fraser (1979) *King Charles II, London*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, p.124

CHAPTER 1: EARLY HISTORY

1.1 Prehistory

Over seven thousand years before the birth of Christ, North Kincardineshire in which Durris is situated would have been settled by hunter gatherers. The combination of a warm and dry climate and the sandy and gravelly river terrace soil is likely to have created a landscape that was only lightly wooded. The open woodland would have permitted the hunting of the wild ox, wild boar and red and roe deer. And proximity to the Dee would have provided an opportunity for fishing, access to fresh water and a convenient waterway.

Three decades ago an early Bronze Age burial site was discovered in Park Quarry in Durris and a number of interesting items were found – a beaker, seven flint flakes and a perforated decorated stone disc.[4] It is probable that the flint flakes may have originated from Boddam on the Buchan coast and been made any time from 7000-3000 B.C. – the Mesolithic Age. We know that hunter-gatherers by that time had mastered the technology of flint production. Flints were used either for the purpose of scraping (e.g., leather) or for cutting small objects (e.g., twigs or plant stems). Flints were also used as weapons for hunting small game, fowling and fishing or as tools for harvesting plant foods. With such tools it would have been possible to cut timber and construct huts, boats and sledges; whilst deer antlers were shaped for barbed spears and harpoons. The discovery of the bones of deep-sea fish (e.g., cod) in middens (i.e., refuse heaps) also revealed their ability not only to build but navigate sea-going craft.

The route from Boddam to Durris was either by land via the coastal dunes (Sands of Forvie, Menie, Balmedie), up the Dee estuary and onto the strath of Dee or by water along the coast and into the Dee using a dugout canoe or possibly a skin-covered boat (curragh). A direct overland route from Boddam to Durris seems unlikely, as it was a mainly wet marshy terrain. What is not clear is whether the makers of these flints were: (a) on a brief inland hunting expedition from a coastal base; (b) living at a temporary winter base camp; or (c) permanently living on Strathdee.

The discovery of a charcoal layer in the soil profiles of Mesolithic sites around Durris has prompted a debate as to whether these hunter-gatherers deliberately set fire to the woodlands in order to catch the game - forcing animals into pre-set traps or into topographic features from which there was no escape. Or could they have been seeking to semi-domesticate certain wild animals? By opening up the woodland and encouraging the growth of different varieties of grass, the resultant 'pasture' would become attractive to herds of grazing deer.

This kind of ecological change would permit the realisation of two key stock-rearing objectives – growth in herd sizes and an increase in the body weight of individual animals. Thus the Mesolithic hunter was slowly turning into a farmer. However, other commentators have suggested that the fires are more likely to have resulted from natural rather than man-made causes, for, to this day, most forest and moor fires are started by lightning strikes.

[4] A. Sheridan (2007) 'Scottish beaker dates: the good, the bad and the ugly', In M. Larsson and M. Pearson in *From Stonehenge to the Baltic*, British Archaeological Reports.

Whilst these hunters were not masters of their physical environment, it is clear that they skilfully exploited its natural resources and, overall, enjoyed a balanced and harmonious relationship with it.

Stone circles

It has been claimed that the recumbent stone circle of which there are a significant number in Durris parish were mostly erected during the third and second millennia BC. Nearly one hundred examples have been recorded in Britain and Ireland, with diameters ranging from 18.2m to 24.4m. The distinctive feature of the recumbent stone circle is a massive slab, laid recumbent on its side in the south-western or southern arc of the circle and flanked by the two tallest stones. The recumbent stones which average around 24 tons in weight appear to have been carefully levered and chocked-up to ensure that their upper surface was as level as possible.[5]

In a number of cases, these stone circles were converted into burial monuments by the building of a ring cairn within the stone circle. Many circles were eventually used as burial areas for cremated bodies and there is evidence of actual funeral pyres. While there is evidence of such burials during this period (c 2000-1400 BC), little is known of the houses or farms in which the builders of these circles lived. Where single standing stones are found these may represent the remains of now destroyed stone circles, or be outliers from a circle or route markers. In short, recumbent stone circles can be seen primarily as communal, seasonal ritual centres, some of which were subsequently adapted to cremation burial.

Nine Stanes Recumbent Stone Circle: Durris

While the setting of the Nine Stanes Circle today would not have been what its builders had intended, it is a setting which contributes strongly to the remarkable atmosphere that surrounds it. Here, more than at perhaps any other stone circle in Kincardineshire it is possible to imagine our ancient ancestors as real people celebrating key points of the year or burying the remains of their dead.

Some of the atmosphere of this particular circle comes from the way it has partially been reclaimed by nature. Many of the stones are heavily overgrown by lichen, and one of the uprights flanking the recumbent or horizontal stone has fallen down at some point in the past. There were originally eight stones in the circle plus the recumbent and its flankers. One of the stones has been removed, and another exists only as a stump. There may originally also have been two outlying stones standing beyond the ring of the circle, one of which remains today.[6]

[5] https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-culture/archaeology/special-archaeology-in-the-area/recumbent-stone-circles/

[6] Forestry Commission Scotland (2015) *Recumbent Stone Circles, Edinburgh, Forestry Commission.*

Nine Stanes Stone Circle, Durris

Eslie Stone Circle, Durris

Clune Wood Stone Circle, Durris

Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Durris

1. Balbridie, enclosure 300m S of Durris

2. Balbridie, timber house 500m NW of Banchory-Ternan

3. Barns, enclosure 300m W of Durris

4. Cairnmon-earn, cairn

5. Cairnfauld, stone circle 120m NNE of Durris

6. Cairnshee Wood, cairn 750m SSW of Cairnshee

7. Cairnshee enclosure 440m SW of Durris

8. Cairnshee, field system & farmstead 700m WSW of Durris

9. Castle Hill, motte, Kirkton of Durris

10. Clune Wood, stone circle 280m NNE of Monthammock

11. Clune Wood, cairn 900m SE of Woodlands School

12. South Brachmont, mound and stone setting 760m NNW of Durris

13. Westerton, hut circle and field system NNW of Durris

Balbridie Long House

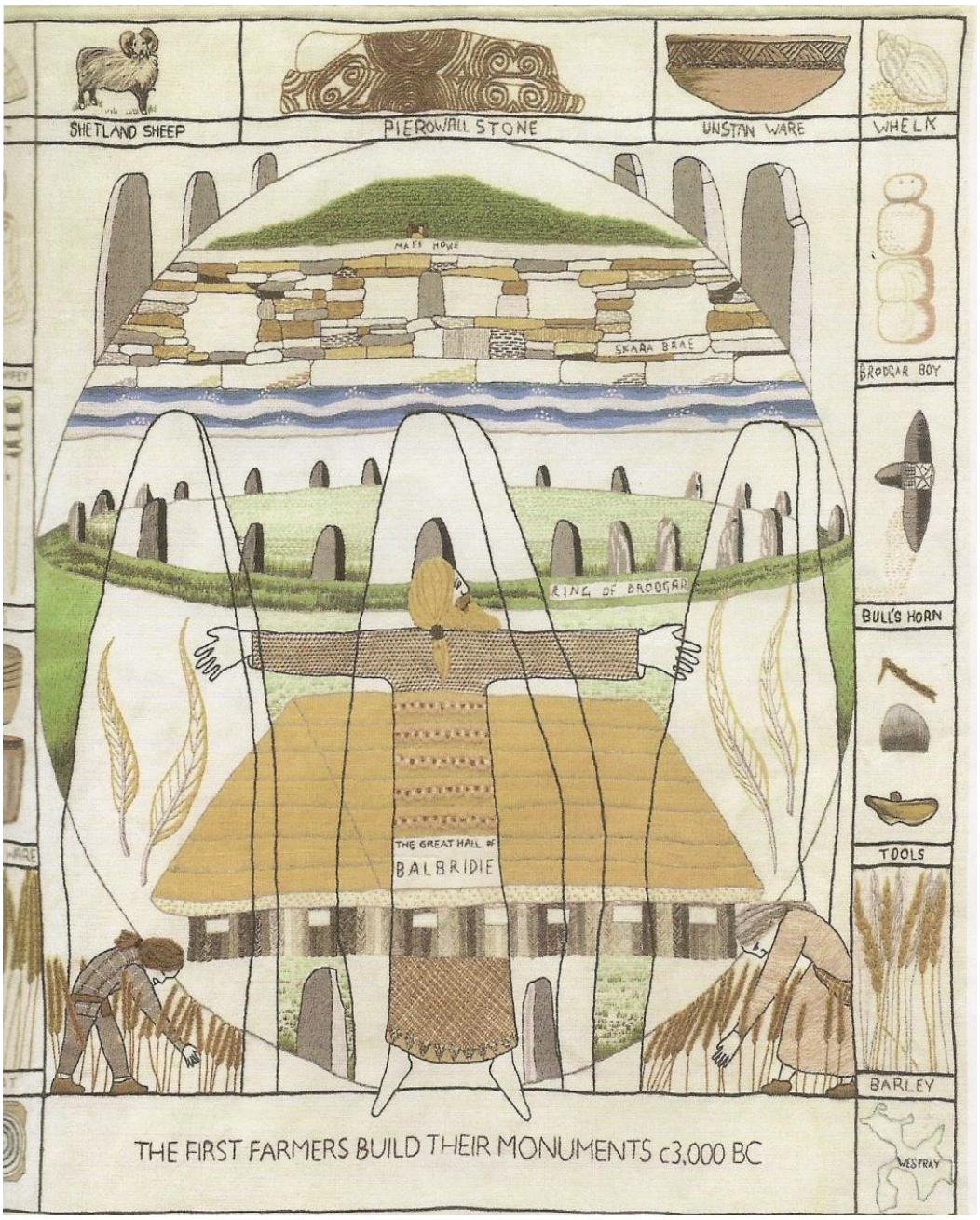
Balbridie in the north of Durris is significant as it is the site of the largest Neolithic long house to be excavated in Britain and is one of the earliest known permanent Neolithic settlements in Scotland, dating from 3400-4000 BC.[7] The Balbridie site was discovered in 1976 by aerial photography carried out by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. The unusually dry summer revealed previously undetected crop marks suggesting a very large structure. Subsequent archaeological work on site permitted an imaginary reconstruction of an enormous timber structure including the identification of large timber potholes. It is significant that Balbridie was not only close to the river Dee but also to the Elsick Mounth trackway, the route of early crossings inland through the low Grampian Mountains.

Jiel Beaumadier

Reconstruction of a Neolithic long house of the type discovered at Balbridie

It is believed that these Neolithic houses had no windows and only one doorway. The end farthest from the door appears to have been used for grain storage, with working activities being carried out in the better lit door end and the middle used for sleeping and eating. Structurally, the Neolithic long house was supported by rows of large timbers holding up a pitched roof. The walls would not have supported much weight and would have been quite short beneath the large roof. Sill beams ran in foundation trenches along the sides to support the low walls. Long houses usually measure around 20 metres (66 ft) in length and 7 metres (23 ft) in width and may have housed from twenty or thirty people. The Balbridie timber house offers an outstanding and larger example of these early structures: it measured 24 metres (79 ft) x 12 metres (39 ft). At one time it was thought to be post-Roman but radiocarbon dating of charred cereal grains established dates from 3900-3500 B.C. thus falling into the early Neolithic period.

[7] A. Fairweather and I. Ralston (1993) 'The Neolithic Timber Hall at Balbridie', *Antiquity* (67): 313–323.



From: A. Moffat (2013) The Great Tapestry of Scotland, Edinburgh, Birlinn

1.2 Early Years

It is worth noting that no Roman expeditionary force which ventured north of the Mounth, the mountain range extending some 150 miles from Drumtochter Pass in the West to Girdleness in the East, was ever successful in permanently subduing the native population in the North East of Scotland. It is true that there were a series of punitive expeditions but no invasions for the purpose of conquest. Nevertheless, Tacitus, the Roman historian, asserted that Agricola comprehensively defeated the assembled armies of Caledonia at Mons Graupius in 83 AD.

To this day, it is not known where Mons Graupius is precisely located. It is thought it may be somewhere at the north-eastern end of Strathmore - possibly around Brechin, Forfar or Stonehaven. There was no doubt in the mind of Tacitus that this had been a decisive battle, which represented the final destruction of the Caledonian armed forces. But, as Agricola's son-in-law, Tacitus may have been tempted to exaggerate the significance of his father-in-law's achievements! It is certainly difficult to reconcile Tacitus' claim of tribal extinction with the crippling losses subsequently sustained by Severus during his campaign over a hundred years later.

One of the aims of Agricola's campaign had been the subjugation of the troublesome Caledonians; a principal strategic target being the capture of Devanha, the capital of the powerful Texali tribe. It has been suggested that Devanha was located within the present day parish of Drumoak - not far from the settlement of Park.[8] At the time of Christ the district around Park had possibly been one of the most important tribal centres not just in the Northeast of Scotland but the whole of Scotland.

What is not in dispute is that there is no evidence of permanent Roman settlements north of the Mounth. The hostile nature of the terrain and climate in the North East of Scotland would have made it totally unsuited for conventional warfare; however, it was ideal for guerrilla warfare.[9] As Julius Caesar learned to his cost in 55 BC and 54 BC even a disciplined, battle-hardened and well-equipped army has no answer to the tactics adopted by a determined enemy who is familiar with every inch of his territory, can engage in hit-and-run ambushes and then melt back into the landscape. Prudently therefore, no attempt was ever made to settle north of Strathmore. Thus it may not be too much of an exaggeration to claim that the Mounth represented the northern-most extremity of the Roman Empire.

In 209 AD Emperor Severus led an army over the Mounth, through what was later to become Kincardineshire across the Dee to Normandykes and then northward. It is reported that he lost no fewer than 50,000 men during the course of this expedition! This seems a rather exaggerated claim, given that the total size of the Roman army in the whole of Britain is not thought to have exceeded 50,000.

Another possible reason is advanced for the failure by the Romans to conquer the North East of Scotland. And that is the likely impact of *culicoides impunctatus* known in the Gaelic as *meanbh-*

[8] R. Jackson (2001) *The Parish of Drumoak*, Private publication.

[9] D. Simpson (1935) *The Celtic church in Scotland; a study of its penetration lines and art*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press.

chuileag. The Scottish biting midge! It should be recalled that before the extensive drainage schemes introduced in the 18th and 19th centuries, much of this region was mostly an extensive marshy terrain.[10]

Defensive structures in the Dee valley

One of the earliest significant defensive structures to appear in the Lower Dee valley was the hill-fort. Hill-forts were essentially places of refuge for the communities living in the neighbourhood and bore no relationship with the later strong-holds created by local barons. The first of these structures which were composed of earthwork and timber were the motte and bailey castles.[11]

Remnants of seven of these castles, established mainly in the 12th and 13th century, can still be seen on Deeside at Banchory-Devenick, Durris, Logie-Coldstone, Lumphanan, Midmar, Nigg and Strachan. All that now can be seen are the earthworks as their timber super-structures have long since perished. The familiar name 'Castlehill' found on an Ordnance Survey map often point to the site of a former stronghold. How long these motte and bailey castles remained in occupation is a matter of conjecture – on Deeside it is possible that they may have continued in use until the beginning of the 14th century or perhaps even longer.

Durris in early times had been a hunting forest and had within it a castle or hunting seat. There is no trace of any stone footings of a castle located on top of the Castle Hill in Durris. The hill is flat-topped with steep slopes which may have been steepened artificially on three sides. The summit of the motte measures about 41 metres by 30 metres. On the south-west side where the natural slopes are insubstantial, a ditch 2.6 metres deep had been constructed - possibly a moat- but this has now been partially filled by stones from the adjoining field. The eastern slopes have been altered by quarrying and the addition of rubbish. No entrance is visible. Also no foundations of any kind have been found at the mound but the old castle may well have been made of timber. There have been discoveries of pottery, stone and iron cannon-balls of small size and other evidence suggesting that the mount was a centre of civilised life.[12]

It is known that this castle was occupied for a time by Alexander III, and the earliest mention of it occurs in the Chamberlain Rolls of that period, when certain sums of money were paid for repairs and alterations.[13] Whether the bridge of the castle was of wood or stone is not recorded but there is a high probability of there being a moat and a drawbridge for the castle.

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[10] It is not a coincidence that many penal institutions in Canada were deliberately located in marshy areas where the midge reigned supreme. Attempts by convicts to escape were exceedingly rare!

[11] F. Wyness (1968) *Royal Valley: the story of the Aberdeenshire Dee, Aberdeen*, Reid.

[12] G. Frazier (1980) *The Old Deeside Road: Its course, history and association, Aberdeen*, Aberdeen People's Press, p.98.

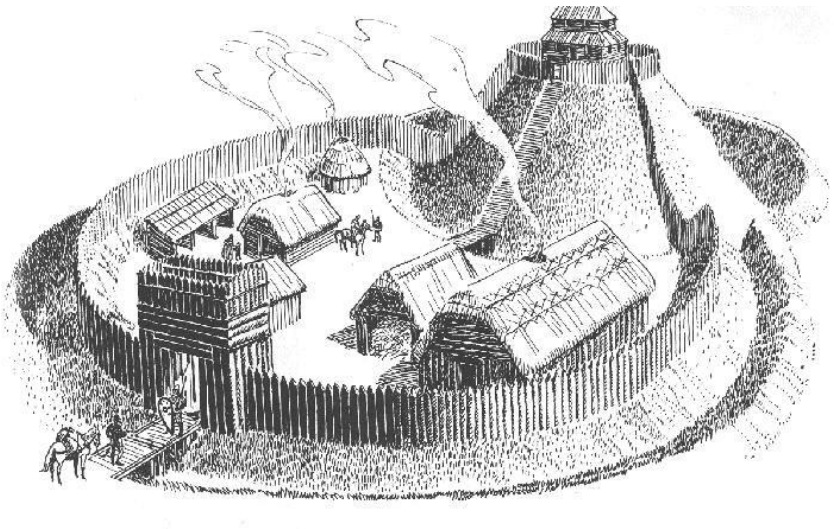
[13] Alexander III, King of Scotland: 4 September 1241 – 19 March 1286.

The motte and bailey

Motte and bailey castles were a common feature in England by the death of William the Conqueror in 1087. Their construction was the start of what was to become a massive castle building programme. The first record of a motte and bailey castle in France appeared at the start of the 11th Century, whilst the first recorded motte in England was in 1051 when French castle builders built one for the English king in Hereford.

The Normans became famous for their castle building and this was because the kings of France had to cope with continuous attacks by Vikings. Whilst the French were not successful in defeating the Vikings, they did find a way to defend themselves by building *castellan*s which protected both people and animals. Some of the Viking invaders eventually ended up staying in the north of France where they transformed from Norsemen into Normans. Because the Vikings found the French *castellans* such impressive defensive structures they adopted them. Thus the motte and bailey became the most favoured design.

But building castles was a very labour intensive undertaking. Research on one of William's motte and bailey castles has shown that the motte contained 22,000 tons of soil. It has been estimated that it would have taken fifty men eighty days to build the motte. Using this as a guide, it is thought that such a motte would have needed 500 men to complete it in eight days. It is possible that local people were coerced into working extremely hard to complete the task. However, building a motte was a skilled achievement. The mottes were built layer upon layer. There would be a layer of soil that was capped with a layer of stones that was capped with a layer of soil and so on. The stone layers were needed to strengthen the motte and to assist drainage.



The fortifications were built in earth and timber, and consisted of five key components: (1) the erection of a tall, truncated cone of earth, the motte; (2) the creation of a raised courtyard area adjacent to, but separated from the mound which was called the bailey; (3) a deep ditch around the two raised

features; (4) a tall timber tower on the top of the motte, commonly surrounded by a palisade and; (5) a timber palisade around the perimeter of the bailey.[14]

Castle Hill Motte, Durris

Access to the bailey was commonly defended by a timber gatehouse, itself reached via a timber bridge across the ditch. A second gatehouse defended access to a second flying bridge which crossed from the bailey to the motte summit, and a third gatehouse protected the entrance to the summit area. Within the bailey were barracks, stables, kitchens – in other words, a typical military camp. The tower was principally used as a lookout point, but also provided a last point of retreat for defending forces.

Bass of Inverurie

Doune of Invernochty, Strathdon

[14] S. Forder (2014) *The myth of the motte and bailey castle in Scotland. An assessment of medieval earthwork fortifications in Scotland and their relationship to traditional Anglo-Norman motte and bailey castles, and earlier Scottish sites.* http://www.thecastleguy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/The-myth-of-the-motte-and-bailey-castle-in-Scotland.pdf

CHAPTER 2: RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF DURRIS

2.1 St Comgall's Kirk

St Comgall

The expulsion of the Romans from Britain in 410 AD was followed by an incursion of Irish missionaries whose main purpose was the conversion of the Picts. In 563 St Columba crossed to Britain with the intent of founding a monastery on the island of Iona. In order to do that he first needed to gain the permission of Brude MacMaelchon, King of the Picts, to settle on the island. St Comgall of Bangor and Cainech of Aghaboe accompanied him to his meeting with Brude in Inverness. Brude, a heathen who was much influenced by his Druids, refused to admit the saints. But it is said that when Columba made the sign of the Cross, the doors of Brude's fortress flew open.

Although permission to settle in Iona and to evangelise in Pictland appears to have been granted to Columba, there is no evidence that Brude, or his people as a whole, were converted to Christianity. Whilst Columba has come to be seen as the Apostle of the Picts, there is little to suggest that he took part personally in much missionary activity. That task was left to the monks from Iona and the other Irish monastic centres. Many of the monks who initially came to the North East of Scotland appear to have been closely linked with the seminary at Bangor in County Down founded by Comgall in 558 AD. It is believed that a monastery was established at Banchory and that the name Banchory itself owes its origin to the great seat of learning in Ireland!

Bangor was one of the great world-renowned centres of Celtic Christianity. From Bangor were founded monasteries in Switzerland, Burgundy and Lombardy. The motherhouse is described in its founder's day as 'a most noble institution, the nurse of many thousands of monks, the parent of many

monasteries, a centre truly great, the home of Saints.' Throughout the three centuries prior to its destruction by the Vikings in 822, the influence of Bangor upon Pictish Christianity was profound.

Comgall was born sometime between 510 and 520 in County Antrim in present-day Ulster. After serving as a soldier in his early life, he studied and was ordained deacon and priest. He lived for a while in Ulster on an island on Lough Erne, accompanied by a few colleagues who followed a harsh form of monastic life. The regime was so austere that seven of his companions died of cold and hunger. There was a close connection between Comgall and Columba according to Adamnan's *Life of Columba,* though there does not appear to be sufficient authority for stating that Comgall was a disciple of Columba in any strict sense. It is believed that among the monks trained by Comgall at Bangor, were Columbanus and Moluag. The year of Comgall's death is not known for certain but it is thought to have been sometime between 597 and 602.

About the same time that Comgall had visited Pictland in 563, he despatched from Bangor a very notable missionary, also an Irish Pict - Moloch/Moluag. The headquarters of Moluag were located on the island of Lismore, right in the mouth of the Great Glen. This offered him easy and direct access to the Eastern Lowlands where his mission field lay. By the aid of a mapping of his church sites, the journeyings of Moluag can be easily traced. He ascended the Great Glen on its eastern side, founding a church en route at Ballagan, and working his way forward to Mortlach in Glenfiddich, where he established an important monastery, and then by an ancient route through the Cabrach, via Essie and Scurdargue (Clochmaloo on Tap o'Noth) to the headwaters of the Bogie and on to Clova and Clatt; then southward to Tarland and over the Cairnamounth Pass to Strathmore and Alyth.

It is possible that the first Christian religious settlement in Durris was a cell linked to a monastery almost certainly located at Brechin. It has been suggested that in the Celtic Church, the monastic centres, and the outlying cells which were maintained from them, always bore the name of the actual founder, or at all events that of the founder of the parent monastery. The fashion of dedicating churches to saints in heaven did not, it is claimed, come in until the growth of Roman influence in the eighth and following centuries. Thus, the names of Celtic saints attached to ancient churches and church sites in Scotland are thought to give a fair indication of their presence or the presence at least of their followers in these parts.

Who were the Culdees?

It is known that by the mid-late 9th century the Culdees arrived in the Mearns. The Church of the Culdees was a continuation of the Church of Columba. It is believed that this anchorite[15] system had formed part of the Columban arrangements, whereby brethren at different seasons would retire to some solitary place, an isle or cave, for rest and meditation. It has been argued that this practice was comparable to the holiday of the Victorian clergyman - where hard-worked ministers found it good to be anchorites for a few weeks once a year and retreat to the highlands or by the seashore. This was what Columban clergy did, with the difference that their seclusion was perhaps a little stricter than that experienced by their successors. When in the course of time the Columban houses began to be broken up and the brethren dispersed, the number of solitaries or anchorites greatly increased. But

[15] An anchorite is a religious recluse

though they now lived apart and had dwellings of their own, it did not follow that they would abandon the public duties of their office, which were to maintain the worship of God in the churches, and instruct their countrymen. They felt it all the more imperative to keep up the practices of piety and the public acts of devotion.

The Culdees were no new sect that had suddenly arisen on Scottish soil, or had been imported from abroad. They were adherents of the old faith, which had entered Scotland from Ireland at an early period. At a time when the influence of Rome was growing in Scotland, the Culdees found themselves as custodians of the ancient purity of Celtic Christianity, the true sons of Iona. There is also a sense in which they were the pioneers of the Reformation, the dawn of which they saw, and a few of their number lived to welcome.

The Culdees may have been brought into the Pictish Church by King Kenneth MacAlpin (810-858) in an attempt to modernise its practices. The first recorded reference to a church in Brechin is King Kenneth II of Scotland (971-995) giving 'the great city (i.e. monastery) of Brechin to the Lord', endowing the monastic community with lands and having a church built. Thus by the 10th century a sizeable and significant ecclesiastical establishment was in existence. Brechin was the mother church of the provinces of Angus and Mearns, a centre from which the Culdee monks went to minister to the local community. What would be an ideal site for a cell? A monk anxious to spread the gospel might want to locate himself where he was most likely to come into contact with people. We know that the gravel flood plains of Lower Deeside were well populated.

It had been Columba's strategy to establish, at suitable sites, small colonies, or brotherhoods of trained missionaries, usually twelve in number, with one to oversee the rest, who was titled abbot or father. These sites were the bases from which evangelistic missions were undertaken into the surrounding district. That district was their parish or diocese, though as yet there was neither parish nor diocese established by law in Scotland. In an unsettled and lawless state of society, as was the condition of Scotland when Columba began his work in it, it was hardly possible to act on any other kind of strategy. Once the nation was converted to Christianity, the necessity for this mode of operation came to an end. The monasteries fell into a state of dissolution, the brotherhoods broke up and their individual members selected their spheres of labour according to their own inclinations and as the needs of the country demanded.

Beehive hut

The important point to make here is that the Durris cell would not have looked like a church in any respect. It may initially have been a stone beehive construction and then later progressed to a small thatched hut, which would have accommodated the simple needs of the monk who would travel from it to the people in the local area.

An examination of a map of Deeside reveals that *all* the old kirks were dedicated to Irish saints, and were invariably located very near to the river and to possible ferry or fording points:

St Comgall, Durris

St Mayota, Dalmaik

St. Ternan, Banchory

St Erchan, Kincardine O'Neil

St Nathalan, Tullich

There is also a measure of correspondence between the location of the kirks and the various passes across the Mounth, (e.g., Cowie Mounth; Elsick Mounth and Craigincrosse Mounth).

2.2 Durris Chapelry: The Knights Templar and Hospitaller

Who were the Knights Templar?

It is known that in the vicinity of the monk's cell in Durris a chapelry was later established first by the Knights Templar and then Knights Hospitaller. The Knights Templar in Scotland enjoyed a wide range of various privileges, both temporal and spiritual, the possession of which made their order one of the most favoured societies in Christendom. They were monks only, not clerks; although sworn to chastity, obedience and poverty, they did not possess the mysterious power and sanctity of the priesthood. They had chapels and cemeteries of their own, and the priests whom they engaged as chaplains were not subject to any other authority than that of the Order. In effect, the Templars and all their dependants were withdrawn from the ordinary episcopal jurisdiction, and made subject directly to the Pope and to him alone.[16]

The Templars were made up of three classes; knights, chaplains and serving brothers. The *knights*, who alone were the proper and original Templars, were distinguished by the white mantle with a red cross on the left breast, which they wore over a complete suit of chain mail. Each knight had three horses and an esquire. The *chaplains* were ordinary ecclesiastics who had been admitted to the order that they might perform divine service and administer the sacraments to the brethren. The *serving brethren*, though taking the vows of the order, were only inferior attendants, and their inferior status was marked by the black or brown robe which they wore. They served the knights as esquires, tending their horses and following them to the field armed with bows, bills,[17] and swords, while at home they did the menial work of the preceptory.[18] In addition to these, a house of Templars generally contained some servants and esquires who were not members of the order.

[16] R. Aitken (1898) The Knights Templars in Scotland, *The Scottish Review*, 1-36.

[17] A bill is a polearm weapon similar to a halberd.

[18] A preceptory was a building serving as an administrative or ritual centre for a chapter.

The character of life in the preceptory was the common monastic one. The brethren were bound to daily observance of all the canonical hours from matins to compline. In the refectory they ate their meals in silence, while one read aloud some passage of scripture, or homily, or sacred legend; four days a week they abstained from flesh, and on Fridays had nothing but Lenten fare. At supper, it was commanded that wine should be used but sparingly, and when compline was over, all went to bed, conversation, except in case of absolute necessity, being forbidden.

Every day a tithe[19] of the bread was given to the poor, its distribution being the duty of the almoner. The vow of chastity was so strictly interpreted that the knights were forbidden to accept any service from a woman – even so much as a basin of water for washing the hands. They were denied all luxuries of apparel. They might not wear furred garments, pointed shoes, or baldricks[20]: the adornment of their arms with gold or silver was discouraged; neither might they permit their hair and beards to grow to 'picturesque length'. Hunting and hawking, too, were prohibited.

From the first its stern monastic character must have been affected by the fact that the Templars were not only religious devotees but men-at-arms. The preceptory would have been an odd mixture of a monastery and feudal castle, where mailed and bearded monks passed from the narrow cell, the solemn chapel, and the refectory, to the armoury where the red-cross shields hung, to the stables where the war-horses were stalled, and the tilt-ground where martial exercises were practised.

Templars on Lower Deeside

The average number of Templars in Scotland is not known, but it is likely to have been small. At the extinction of the order in the 14th century there were between two and three hundred members in England, and somewhere between forty or fifty in Scotland. The Scottish possessions of the Templars about which most are known lay in Aberdeenshire and the Mearns. Shortly before 1239 Walter Bisset built a house for the order in what was then the undivided parish of Culter in Aberdeenshire. This house, which is the only Scottish preceptory known besides Ballantrodach was built on the south side of the Dee, where also was situated the greater part, if not the whole, of the land attached to Blairs.

However, in 1312 an order was issued from Rome that all the churches, houses, manors, lands and rents of the Templars in that country, with the crops in their fields and the ornaments of their churches, should be delivered to two Commissioners appointed by the Grand Master of the Hospital. There is no record of the actual transference of the Scottish lands but its accomplishment is an historic fact. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries all the known possessions of the Templars in Scotland— the houses of Ballantrodach and Culter, the church of Aboyne are found in the hands of the Preceptor of Torphichen as local chief of the Knights of St. John; that being so, the Templars will have held the 'church' at Durris for only a relatively short time. The Knights Hospitallers will have remained in their properties until the Reformation in the mid 16th century.

[19] Tithe is a tenth.

[20] A baldrick is a belt worn over the shoulder to carry a weapon.

Who were the Knights Hospitaller?

The Knights Hospitaller were dedicated to the care of the sick. In addition to the normal monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience they also took a unique fourth vow to serve the sick. The Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem were established in 1099, shortly after the crusading armies had recaptured Jerusalem. A group of Benedictine monks returned to the Holy City and found themselves with a full time job tending those who had been wounded in the fighting and caring for the poor and sick.

The monks founded and ran a Hospital and a Hospice (place of hospitality) for strangers. From this base they cared for the sick and wounded, offered hospitality to pilgrims and travellers to Jerusalem and looked after the poor. They cared for anyone who needed help, regardless of their nationality, religion or sex. They would send out servants to search for those who were too ill or infirm to get to the hospital unaided and have them carried in and admitted – possibly the earliest form of an ambulance service! The monks operated an outreach service to support mothers in their own homes who were too ill or poor to care for their babies and also took in, cared for, and educated abandoned children and orphans.

The hospitals of the Knights Hospitaller, in addition to providing care for the elderly and infirm, were places where pilgrims or travellers could rest. It is likely that such institutions would have provided spiritual aid to travellers. Travellers' 'hospitals' would have been on or adjacent to what are now called "heritage routes". It is possible that some "traveller's hospices" would have been similar to the chapels built at bridges in early times to allow travellers to stop and offer prayers for a safe journey. It is likely that any medieval hospital on or adjacent to such routes would have served several purposes.

Although the St John Ambulance Brigade is a modern charity formed in 1887, its history goes back to 11th century Jerusalem. The eight-pointed cross of the Brigade was the symbol worn by the Knights Hospitaller who provided free medical care in their first hospital in Jerusalem.

It would be expected that inns or hospitals would have been situated on roads and paths. These normally followed natural contours across the Grampians and Cairngorms taking advantage of gaps between the hills. There are fourteen passes over the Mounth:

- Causey or Cowie Mounth (Stonehaven to Aberdeen);
- Elsick Mounth (Stonehaven to Drum);
- Slug Road (Stonehaven to Durris);
- Cryne Corse Mounth (Laurencekirk to Durris);

- Stock Mounth (Glenbervie to Strachan);
- Builg Mounth (Glenfarquhar to Bridge of Dye);
- Cairnamounth (Fettercairn to Kincardine o' Neil);
- Forest of Birse Mounth (Tarfside to Aboyne);
- Fir Mounth (Glen Esk to Glen Tanar);
- Mounth Keen (Invermarkie to Ballater);
- Capel Mounth (Glen Clova to Glen Muick);
- Tolmounth (Glen Clova to Glen Clunie);
- Monega Pass (Glen Isla to Glen Clunie);
- Cairnwell (Glen Shee to Braemar).

These paths would have had stopping places for travellers and as a result a number of hospitals were located adjacent to or on these routes. In addition, where paths crossed rivers by fords, ferries or bridges, traveller's inns were located.

There has then been a Christian religious site located at Durris for over twelve hundred years: a site initially established by Irish Culdees, subsequently taken over by the Knights Templar and then Knights Hospitaller. The Knights Hospitallers will have finally relinquished their possession of the site with the introduction of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

2.3 Durris Kirk

The current parish church is built on the foundations of a medieval predecessor, which first comes onto the records in 1249. It remained an unappropriated rectory up to the Reformation in the patronage of the bishops and archbishops of St Andrews.[21] There is, however, some information in the post-medieval period about the kirk.[22] In 1601 there was a visitation to Durris by the Presbytery of Aberdeen at which a small group of heritors was present, the laird of Durris and his family being often absent despite their residence in the parish. A report on the fabric of the kirk found that it was in need of repair and re-slating. The minister, the Reverend Alex Youngston, was admonished and urged to have the work done with all diligence and that the kirk should be made both water-tight and wind-tight by the time of the next visitation.

In 1602 Mr Youngston was censured and removed, the complaint from his parishioners being that he only preached every other Sunday! The excuse given by Mr Youngston was that he had to serve another congregation and because of a tempestuous river filled with ice and snow he was forced to remain in town. On inspection of the church it was found that the repairs had not been carried out as had been requested. The minister, elders and the remainder of the congregation were instructed to ensure that the kirk was well repaired inside and out, by slating, casting and harling of the walls, by stanching[23] and glassing the windows and the purging and removal of those things not seemly. This may be a reference to some pre-Reformation (i.e. Catholic) decorative features.

Curiously on a further visitation to the kirk later in 1602 the negligent minister, Mr Youngston, who had been removed, was back and now deemed to be 'competent'. It was further reported that the kirk had been repaired and in a short while would be made water tight as the stanching and the windows were ready to be installed. On the occasion of this particular visit the minister complained that his stipend was insufficient to meet his needs. In a visitation the following year the parishioners were encouraged to augment the minister's stipend with produce rather than cash!

In 1666 the Reverend William Reid, the minister, recorded his regret that his kirk was in a ruinous state and that the manse and glebe were also inadequate. Four years later in 1670 William Reid once again expressed his concern about the need for repair of the fabric of the kirk and an approach was made to Sir Andrew Fraser of Kinmundie, factor for the laird of Durris. But in 1677 the fabric was still found to be in a state of great decay and the minister was urged to take steps to remedy the situation. One is prompted to wonder what those attending the interment of the body of Sir Alexander Fraser on the 20th July 1681 made of the poor state of the church. Rebuilding clearly followed soon afterwards, because in 1684 it was stated that the kirk had been newly built by the heritor, presumably by Sir Peter Fraser, son of Sir Alexander.

[21] An unappropriated rectory was one that was not formally assigned to any particular religious organization.

[22] https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158538

[23] Stanching is a Scots word for checking the flow of water.

The present church, a rectangular structure, was built in 1822, for which the contractor appears to have been a Henry Lumsden. Durris Church is characteristically Georgian in appearance where attention has been paid to proportion and balance both in its interior and exterior. A decision was obviously taken not to incorporate the old church in the new one as that would have disturbed the architectural proportions sought by the architect.

The main face to the south has a regular sequence of four round-arched windows. A western porch and a small bellcote on the west gable appear to be later additions, possibly dating to 1877. It has accommodation for 400 persons. The church is located on the south bank of the River Dee and within a large walled graveyard. It is aligned east-west and occupies the site of a much earlier, medieval church. Alongside the church and to the east is the Fraser Aisle, the only surviving part of the old church.

The church is rubble built, mostly from granite stone, and harled apart from the east gable and north wall. The roofs are slated. The nave has round-arched windows along the south elevation, which have small coloured glass panes. The main entrance is through the round-arched doorway in the porch, which is framed by a pediment above and dressed stone which is a characteristically Georgian feature. The porch has a west window and a small window on the north side. There is a round-arched window in the east gable, with a door below which is used for funerals. The north wall is featureless other than a lean-to structure that has been converted into a toilet and a single round-arched window at the west end.

The interior of the church has cream coloured plastered walls and red carpeting on the floor of the central aisle and east end of the church. The east gable is painted a light green which complements a large pair of dark green crosses, cruciform in pattern, painted on the east wall. The sanctuary at the east end is raised from the nave by three steps and extends the full width of the church. Within the sanctuary is a small communion table with trefoil headed cut-out panels, a similarly styled wooden lectern and a small pulpit in a darker wood. In the north-east corner is a pipe organ with painted pipes.

The nave has original wooden pews with numbers intact on either side of a central aisle. There is a small section at the rear of the nave that is used as a meeting and coffee area. A wide west gallery is supported by the church walls with no apparent internal supports. The gallery was inserted when the church interior was recast and the porch and stairwell built in the 1890s. The gallery has similar pews to those in the nave and the front of the gallery has simple wooden panelling. Before organs were introduced in the 19th century, west galleries were frequently used by musicians and singers.

Reference has been made to the two large crosses painted on the east wall. What is their significance? The Pelican Christian Symbol which is illustrated here was frequently used to signify atonement and charity. The 'Pelican in her piety' in heraldry and symbolic art is a representation of a pelican in the act of wounding her breast in order to nourish her young with her blood – a practice attributed to the bird. Given this tradition, one can possibly see why the early Christians adopted it to symbolise Jesus

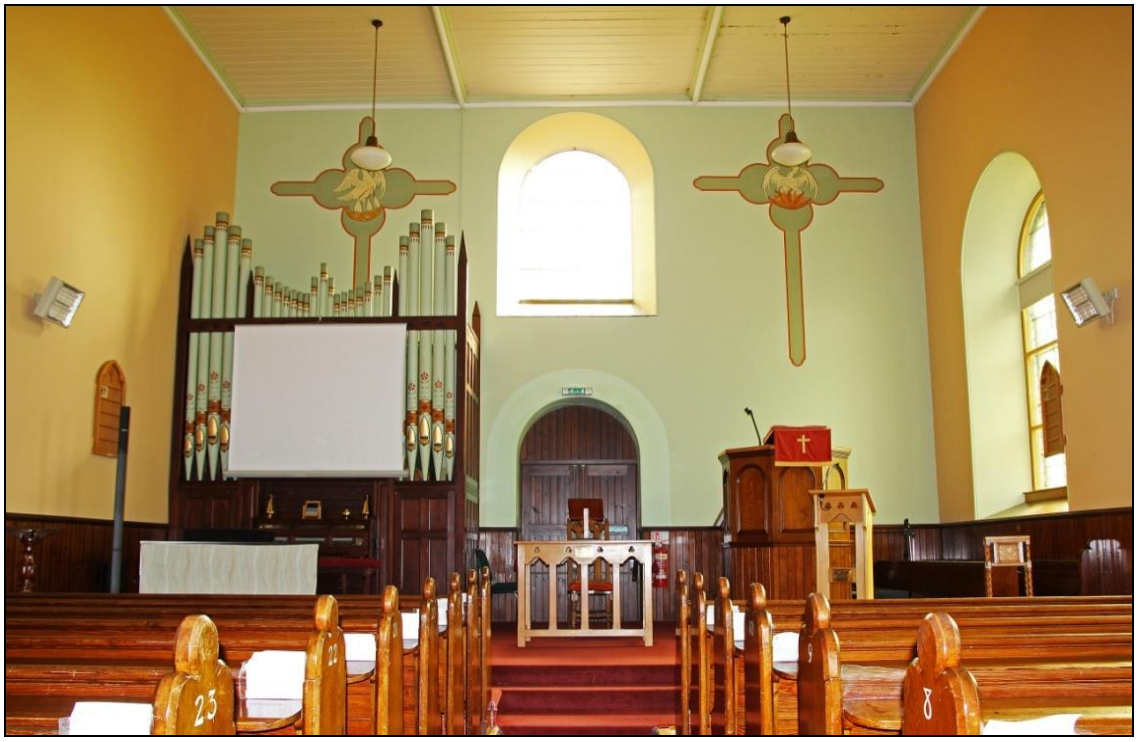
Christ and the crucifixion. What is curious here is why such obvious Roman Catholic iconography is still present in a Presbyterian church.

At the time that the new church was built John Innes was laird of Durris and as such had a legal responsibility for the church and its maintenance. Thus it would have been surprising if he had no say in the exterior and interior design of the new church. It is not known what the strength of John Innes's commitment to Presbyterianism was, but we do know that his son, Cosmo Innes, was thought to be a Roman Catholic sympathiser at a time when it was illegal for people in high positions to hold such views. Eventually Cosmo Innes joined the Scottish Episcopal Church. Of course, the fact that his son held such views does not mean that John Innes was necessarily sympathetic to them but it cannot be ruled out.

In the 16th century John Knox and his followers were determined to have removed from churches all visible symbols of Catholicism whether icons, paintings, murals, stained glass windows or statues as they were seen as heretical and distractions. The purpose of the Presbyterian Church was to hear Christ's message, therefore the focal point of the church moved from the altar at the east end to a usually more centrally located pulpit from which this message could be proclaimed. In the Third Statistical Account of 1951 it is reported that important renovations to the parish church were carried out by the heritors in 1897. The gallery round the church and the centrally situated pulpit, along with the outside stair, were removed. That arrangement would certainly have accorded more with the traditional Presbyterian pattern and it is not clear why it was changed.

An atypical feature of the new Durris church is that it retained the east-west orientation of the pre-Reformation church. This is unusual because most post-Reformation churches in Scotland were built on a north-south axis. This can be seen in local examples at Drumoak, Peterculter, Banchory East and West. Whilst the reason for Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches adopting this east-west orientation is not definitely known, it has been suggested that it may be because the star that symbolised the birth of Jesus appeared in the east. The change in orientation of Presbyterian churches is likely to have been a conscious decision to dissociate them from the symbolism inherent in the east-west orientation of pre-Reformation churches.

Durris Kirk: Exterior



Durris Kirk: Interior

St Nicholas Church, Oakley, Suffolk

St Mary's Church, Odstock, Wiltshire

The Fraser Aisle: Durris Kirk

Fraser Burial Enclosure

A short distance to the east of the church is the burial enclosure of the Fraser family. Its south face, which is approximately aligned with the south face of the church, is pierced by three large triangular-headed openings: a door flanked by two windows. Above the door is a stone dated 1869, possibly in reference to its reconstruction for the Mactier family. Set within the north wall of the enclosure is a canopied tomb, with a panelled front to the chest, a moulded round arch, pinnacle-like finials on each side at the arch springing, and an armorial tablet at the summit of the arch, which is topped by a baluster-like finial. Flanking the helm of the armorial panel are the initials of Thomas Fraser, and on a scroll round the top finial is the date 1595. There seems little reason to doubt that the tomb is in its original position, and this suggests that the burial enclosure has been in its present position from soon after the Reformation. If that is the case, this may be an example of a common practice where the local land-owning family took over the chancel of a medieval church to adapt as their mausoleum.

Parochial buildings

Two hundred years ago Robertson commented that perhaps in no department of rural architecture had more improvement been made than in the style of its buildings erected for public worship.[24] In his opinion nothing could be simpler in the outward appearance, or less elegant in the internal arrangement, than the general run of country Kirks. However, the fashion of a kirk shaped in the figure of a cross was ill adapted to the plain and simple virtue of the presbytery, in which the chief requisite is that it should be 'a commodious auditorium'. Even in cases where the cross had not been the original form, it generally took on that form because of the different aisles or appendages that from time to time had been added onto to the original building by the several proprietors, either as burial places for their families, or an additional seating room for themselves and dependants. Most of these kirks were also inconveniently laid out, whether with regard to the seats or to the passages by which access was had to them. They were likewise usually ill-lit, and seldom lathed and plastered, and often without any flooring or pavement. Robertson also observed that they were commonly very damp and full of noxious vapour:

> *Besides all this, from the inhumation of so many generations of people in the surrounding kirk-yard, the mould in the lapse of ages had accumulated so much around the church itself that the ground on the outside was commonly several feet higher than the area within. There the living might literally be said to be engulfed amid the ashes of the dead. The pernicious consequences of this, in the crowded churches of this county require no illustration. Even all the thyme, southernwood, and other aromatic herbs, which country people perhaps without advertising to their use so plentifully bring with them to church, were not always able to counteract the bad effects of the effluvia. People of tender habits frequently got sick, and were often to be carried out fainting. But these occurrences, from being so very common, neither excited interest nor attracted regard.*

[24] G. Robertson (1810) *A General View of Kincardineshire; or the Mearns; drawn up and published by order of the Board of Agriculture*, London, Phillips, pp 187-8.

Of nineteen parish churches in Kincardineshire, eight had been rebuilt within a period of five years (e.g. Strachan, Maryculter). Robertson observed that these were all constructed on nearly the same enlarged and improved plan. They were loftier in the ceiling, better aired, with much more light, and seated with every attention to accommodation. The form was generally an oblong square, about twice the length of the breadth. Initially, they were still placed as of old, in their longest dimension due east and west, except the church at Maryculter, which in conformity to the highway passing, was placed nearly north and south. In the interior arrangement the pulpit was commonly erected against the middle of the south wall, having a window on each hand. The seats were made to face it, more especially in the lofts or galleries, which were arranged semicircularly in front of the pulpit, shelving from three sides of the house. The belfry or steeple continued to be raised at the west end; but steeples were erected on a very modest system here, seldom rising more than three or four feet above the roof.

The Resurrectionists

One curious relic to be found in the Fraser Aisle is a mortsafe (see below). Mortsafes were contraptions designed to protect graves from disturbance by Resurrectionists who were commonly employed by anatomists in the United Kingdom during the 18th and 19th centuries to exhume the bodies of the recently dead. Between 1506 and 1752 only a very few cadavers were available each year for anatomical research. The supply was increased when, in an attempt to intensify the deterrent effect of the death penalty, Parliament passed the Murder Act 1752. By allowing judges to substitute the public display of executed criminals for the purpose of dissection, the new law significantly increased the number of bodies anatomists could legally access. However, this proved insufficient to meet the needs of the hospitals and teaching centres that opened during the 18th century. Corpses and their component parts became a commodity, but although the practice of disinterment was detested by the general public, bodies were not legally anyone's property. The Resurrectionists therefore operated in a legally grey area.

Mortsafe: Fraser Aisle, Durris Kirk

Many people were determined to protect the graves of newly deceased friends and relatives. The rich could afford heavy table tombstones, vaults and iron cages around graves. The poor began to place flowers and pebbles on graves to detect disturbances. They dug heather and branches into the soil to make disinterment more difficult. Large stones, often coffin-shaped, sometimes the gift of a wealthy man to the parish, were placed over new graves. Friends and relatives took turns or hired men to watch graves through the hours of darkness. Watch-houses were also sometimes erected to shelter the watchers.

Upper Mills Farm, Durris: Mortsafe used as a drinking trough for cattle

Resurrectionists were active in Scotland from about the early 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. The two most infamous were William Burke and William Hare, two Irish immigrants living in Edinburgh. The pair exhumed recently buried bodies and sold them to anatomy instructors in Edinburgh's fast growing medical schools. In the early 19th century obtaining human cadavers for medical research was not a simple matter as the medical schools were restricted by law to one body per year for the purpose of dissection and that had to be the body of an executed criminal.

When Burke and Hare realised the profits that could be gained from providing bodies to the medical schools and finding demand fast outstripping supply, they started murdering hapless victims in the Old Town of Edinburgh. The anatomists to whom these bodies were supplied asked no questions. Eventually Burke and Hare went too far, were charged with the death of an Irish immigrant and brought to trial. At the trial Hare turned King's evidence, as a result of which Burke was found guilty and executed. By a supreme irony, the body of Burke was donated to the Medical School for what was termed 'useful dissection' and to this day his skeleton is to be seen in the Medical School of the University of Edinburgh.

Ministers of Durris Kirk

John Duff	*1560*
Alexander Gerrit	*1563*
George Frazier	*1568*
Archibald Hogg	*1574-1595*
James Irvine	*1595-1599*
Alexander Youngson	*1595-1630*
William Youngson	*1653-1656*
William Reid	*1656-1673*
John Reid	*1675-1715*
Robert Melvill	*1717-1758*
Alexander Leslie	*1759-1771*
William Strachan	*1772-1823*
Robert Copland	*1823-1860*
James Duirs	*1858-1893*
Charles James Watt	*1878-1882*
Robert Reith Spark	*1883-1932*
Philip Conacher	*1933-1946*
Philip Lawson	*1946-1958*
James Kellas	*1958-1968*
William Southwell	*1968-1981*
William Nicholson	*1981-1988*
David Prentis	*1988-1991*
James Scott	*1992-2012*
Dolly Purnell	*2012-2014*
Jean Boyd	*2016-*

As can be seen from the above table, there are discrepancies in the dates for the late 16th and early 17th centuries. This is not surprising given that these were times of considerable turmoil in the church. As will also be obvious there is no reference to those who ministered at Durris Kirk before the Reformation (pre-1560).

2.4 The United Free Church: The West Church

The Disruption in 1843 which led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland was in large measure a political statement demanding that the state should accede to the Kirk's wishes for an end to patronage - the right of an heritor to appoint the minister. As a result of the Disruption it has been estimated that the Established Church lost a third of its ministers and well over a third of its membership. In parishes where the minister 'went out' he was frequently followed by most of the congregation so that few congregations escaped serious depletion. Its growth was phenomenal with 470 new churches built within a year of the Disruption and 730 completed by 1847.

The strength of the Free Church was that it started with an organised and large body of ministers and a clear idea of how the church should be run. Within a few years it had created a central financial organisation of the type later adopted by all modern churches. There were those who claimed that the Free Church was the true established Church of Scotland, which, for valid and compelling reasons, had severed its connection with the state. Patronage, which had been one of the main reasons for the Disruption, was eventually abolished by Parliament in 1874.

The Disruption was a turning point in Scottish history, for it heralded the end of the parish state. Schooling, poor relief and 'moral discipline' had all been organised through the medium of the parish since the Reformation, and much of the legislation on which it was based also went back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The spectacular break-up of the Established Church ended its monopoly power in these areas.

Opening of Durris United Free Church (West Church)

After the Disruption of 1843 occasional services were held in Durris and in 1852 the Free Church Presbytery established a mission there. Before that the congregation had worshipped for a time in a smithy's shop. An approach was made to Mr Mactier, the proprietor of Durris, to see if he would lease ground for the construction of a church. But Mr Mactier had particular notions of the way in which things ought to be conducted in State and Church, and he exhibited a grim humour in expressing his convictions. So, when a small body from the Free Church applied to him for a site on which to build a church, he told them the only one he could give them was on the top of Cairnmonearn, which had the great advantage of being nearer to heaven than any other spot at his disposal!

Eventually a less elevated site was made available by Mr Mactier. The lease granted by Mr Mactier stated that the ground on which the buildings were to be erected should be used for a place of worship and school and manse and schoolmaster's house, or any of these purposes, but for no other purpose, except for gardens or glebe land in connection with the said building. The new feu stipulated one dwelling house and no division of feu.[25]

[25] J. Scott. (1997) *Windows into the Past: Durris Parish Church 175th Anniversary,* Private publication.

A good stone building was erected in 1845-1846 as a Schoolhouse and dwelling house for a schoolmaster and was supported from the funds of the Free Church Society. On the 20th August 1856 an announcement was made that the Church would be opened (God willing) on Sunday 24th August and the Divine Service would be conducted by the Reverend R.H. Ireland of Skene, in the forenoon at half-past 11 o'clock, and in the evening at 5 o'clock.[26]

The membership of the Free Church in 1868 was 93 but by 1900 it had declined to 62. However it was noted that attendances tended to increase in the summer months of July and August. But the numbers eventually dropped to a point when it was no longer viable as a working church. In March 1933 there was a consummation service of the union of the parish of Durris, Kincardineshire, between St. Comgall and the West Church.[27]

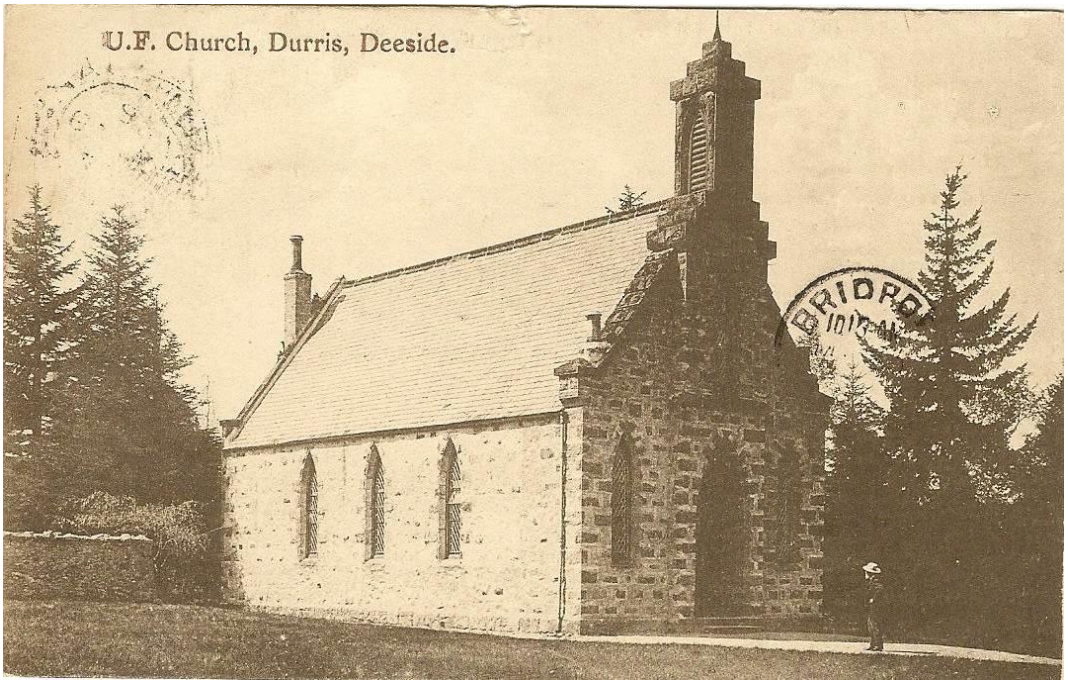
Ministers

Ministers of Durris Free Church

1868 John Hendry
1884 David Laird
1904 John Forgan
1913 Frank Gordon
1918 James Alexander Russell
1922 William Rankin

[26] Opening of Durris Free Church, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 20 August 1856.

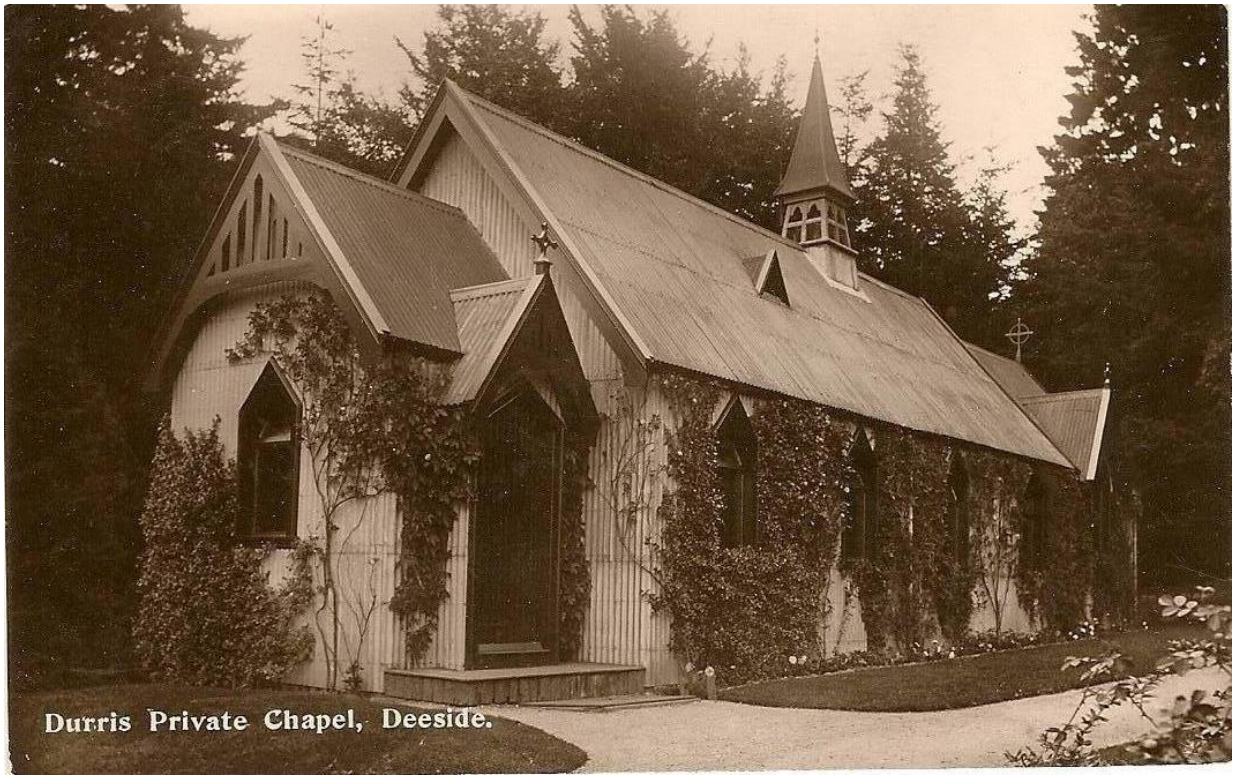
[27] Mearns Churches United: largely attended service at Durris, *Dundee Courier*, 13 March, 1933.



United Free Church, Durris

Free Church Manse

2.5 The Tin Tabernacle



Durris Private Chapel

This private Episcopalian chapel – a corrugated iron building – was built in the mid-1890s to meet the wishes of Mrs Baird of Durris House. The nearest Episcopalian church was at Banchory – seven miles away and nearly an hour's drive. For a number of years the chapel served the owners and staff of the estate but it eventually fell out of use.[28]

Mrs Baird was an Episcopalian and the nearest Episcopalian Church was at Banchory – seven miles distant, or nearly an hour's drive. The factor of Durris estate was instructed to procure plans of corrugated iron chapels and, when the selection was made, to have one erected and furnished. The site chosen was near a small disused quarry on the west side of the back road bounding the policies and within a quarter of a mile of the forester's cottage. It was painted red and surrounded by lawns and shrubs, and looked very attractive. Well-known clergymen were invited for monthly engagements in the summer to give two services on the Sundays and with residence for their families at Nether Balfour House.

It is known that from 1899 until 1902 the charge was initially by James Stuart, the curate of St. Peter's, Torry which at that time was in the Diocese of Brechin. The charge was then vacant from 1906 to 1910. From 1910 until 1918 chaplains were appointed each summer and many well-known clergymen were invited to take services for a month with accommodation provided at nearby Nether Balfour

[28] D. Jamieson & W. S. Wilson (2003) *Old Lower Deeside*, Stenlake Publishing Limited.

house.[29] From 1918 until the early 1920s the chapel was served again on an *ad hoc* basis. It is thought that the chapel closed in the later 1920s.

However the chapel was to have a new lease of life. It was dismantled and re-erected in the Hilton area of Aberdeen to serve members of the Episcopalian Church living there. A generous gift of money was provided by a benefactor that enabled the chapel to be fitted out temporarily on the site. However once the stone and lime church was built there, the 'tin temple' was relegated to act as a church hall. It is thought that the chapel was possibly demolished in the 1970s.[30] The initiative for this transfer from Durris to Aberdeen belonged to Mrs Baird of Durris House.

One possible reason why the chapel was made of corrugated iron is that Mr Baird came from the Baird dynasty which in the late 19th century owned four ironworks, plus many coal and ironstone mines at Gartsherrie in North Lanarkshire.[31] At that time it was one of the largest ironworks in Scotland (and the second largest in Britain). The chapel might well have been seen as a demonstration project illustrating the versatility of corrugated iron and the speed with which such buildings could be assembled and disassembled.

Another possible reason for the creation of a 'tin tabernacle' in the grounds of Durris House is tentatively suggested. The chapel may have been set up to accommodate members of the numerous shooting parties which visited the grouse moors on the Durris estate. Many of these visitors are likely to have come from England and have been members of the Church of England. Another tin tabernacle, St. Fillan's Episcopal Church in Perthshire, was built in 1876 by the 7th Earl of Breadalbane and was a place where members of his shooting parties could worship. It was known locally as the 'Grouse Chapel'! According to an article published in *The Scotsman* in 2016, the chapel has been in almost continual ecumenical use with a weekly Episcopal service and a Roman Catholic mass.[32]

Tin tabernacles

Unlike other building forms such as railway termini and industrial units, churches may have seemed a particularly unusual use for this modern material considering the long traditional legacy of church architecture. But there were strong driving forces in Scotland which created a need for churches in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1900 the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church which had formed the United Free Church built the majority of the Highland tin tabernacles.

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[29] F.Eeles (1895) *The church bells of Kincardineshire*, Meeting of Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society, 18 June.

[30] S. Donald (2019) Email correspondence, 9 January.

[31] See Chapter 8.6 Lairds and Proprietors of Durris: Henry Robert Baird

[32] A. Campsie (2016) Six of Scotland's smallest churches, *The Scotsman* 9 November. https://www.scotsman.com/news/six-of-scotland-s-smallest-churches-1-4283475

The benefits of these innovative prefabricated churches were two-fold: firstly, it provided an inexpensive and quickly constructed solution; and secondly, a temporary place of worship could be created whilst funds were gathered to construct a more lasting church.

The first firm to market itself as a manufacturer of patent corrugated iron in 1832 was Richard Walker, a builder employed at London docks. With an eye to the export market, and the colonies in particular, Walker spotted an opportunity to exploit the lightweight versatility of corrugated iron in the construction of portable buildings. Relatively inexpensive to construct, the component parts would stow into a small space for transportation and, upon arrival, at their destination, could be erected with relative ease and be moved from place to place if required.[33]

To protect it from the elements, early corrugated iron sheeting was coated with oil or tar-based paints but these proved weak and ineffective. The answer lay in galvanising the metal which involved immersing the iron sheeting in a bath of molten zinc at a temperature of around 450 centigrade so that the coating could offer up to 100 years of corrosion protection.

After seeing a corrugated iron cottage at the Great Exhibition of 1851, Prince Albert ordered a pre-fabricated iron building for Balmoral to serve as a temporary ballroom and dining room. It was quickly in use by 1st October 1851 and would serve as a ballroom until 1856.[34]

Expansion in number of churches

During the Victorian era, a sharp increase in the number of people attending church and the mass migration of workers from the countryside into cities and towns resulted in the construction of many new places of worship. Corrugated iron offered a swift and economic way of meeting the demands of an increasingly diverse religious market. Whilst predominant at the start of the 19th century, by the end of the Victorian era the Church of England was increasingly only one part of a vibrant and often competitive religious culture, with non-Anglican Protestant denominations enjoying a new prominence. The period saw the greatest burst of church building since the Middle Ages, prompted in part by the many varieties of belief and the many disagreements, within the religious community.

[33] J. Carron (2017) *Tin Tabernacles and Other Corrugated Iron Buildings in Scotland*, Amenta Publishing.

[34] D. Millar (1985) *Queen Victoria's life in the Scottish Highlands: depicted by her watercolour artists,* London: Philip Wilson.

St Fillan's, Killin, Stirlingshire

St. Michael's Church, East Neuk, Fife

2.6 Primitive Religious Beliefs

In his book *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland* the Reverend McPherson, one time Minister at Rickarton Kirk which lies a short distance from the parish boundary with Durris, noted that with the approach of the twentieth century knowledge about nature worship and beliefs connected with the Black Art was disappearing.[35] In his book McPherson looked at beliefs that were broadly classified as survivals of nature worship, whilst the second part dealt with beliefs connected with the Black Art. He conceded that this distinction could not always be drawn; particularly in the ancient rites associated with birth, marriage and death there were many practices and underlying conceptions that had more affinity with the witch cult than with the worship of a nature spirit. In the second half of the book he makes particular reference to ceremonies originally identified with the worship of fire, water or stone but subsequently absorbed in the magic art.

There is perhaps a sense in which for people living in the country and who were totally dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood, as was the case in the parish of Durris, druidical festivals had a particular relevance given that many festivals were directly linked to promoting the continuing fertility of crops and livestock. Two elements, which played a key role in the druidical celebrations, were fire and water. The Celtic year was marked by two great fire festivals – *Beltane*, inaugurating the summer half year, when the cattle went out to pasture, and *Samhain* or Halloweve, celebrating the commencement of the winter semester, when the beasts of the field returned to the fold.

The Beltane fires were at first kindled upon high hills to serve a wide area but in later times they were lit on smaller hills where the people of each hamlet or township could congregate. In the earliest times, the Beltane flame was raised by Needfire, produced from the friction of two pieces of wood rubbed together. When the fire was blazing, a common meal was taken, part of which was offered to the spirit of the fire. The Beltane fires were interpreted as man's response to the attack of the powers of darkness, which were believed to be abroad with peculiar force at that season.

The Celtic year began with Halloweve. All fires were extinguished in the home and farm then hallow fires were kindled in similar manner to those of Beltane. From the consecrated pile, portions of the fire were carried back to the houses to renew the flames upon the domestic hearth. Every village would have its Hallow blaze. Straw, furze and peats, everything combustible was gathered, and the fire lit. Then a circuit of the fields would be made with lighted torches, to ward off all evil spirits and to ensure fertility during the coming year. The motive behind the Samhain fires was the same as inspired the Beltane festival. It was man's response to, and attack upon, the powers of darkness. At this season, the day was shortening, the sun's strength was diminishing, and malevolent powers of every kind seemed to be abroad.

The most popular and most widely spread of all the fire celebrations were at midsummer for this marked the great turning point of the sun's career. The Reformed Church struggled for a long time to suppress these observances but with little success. The winter solstice was celebrated in many North East ports, including Stonehaven, where the Fireballs ceremony took place. Though now seen largely

[35]J. McPherson (1929) *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland,* London, Longmans, Green and Co.

as just another Hogmanay event, the fireballs at one time were the means of burning the witches and ensuring prosperity in the coming year.

The other important object of druidic worship was water. There were special times and seasons for visiting the wells when the healing virtue of their waters was at its greatest strength. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year was the proper day for the pilgrim to pay his vows at the holy well. The hour of arrival was usually midnight on Saturday. Sometimes the drinking and washing had to be performed in the twilight or just before sunrise. When the patient reached the sacred spring, he drank the waters. Sometimes he would partially or totally immerse his body. The patient at some wells would apply the water to the affected parts of his body or to healing stones that lay around the well, which resembled as nearly as possible parts of the human body. The next step was to take a rag or piece of clothing, dip it in the water of the well, rub it on the sore, and then attach the rag to a tree or bush nearby. A gift to the well followed the attachment of the clothing – this was an offering to the spirit inhabiting the water. The final act would be walking three times round the well following the course of the sun. The last stage in the story of the holy well is when it was regarded merely as a 'wishing well' a place of resort for holidaymakers.

Whilst the worship of nature might be viewed as relatively harmless, the role of witches and charmers was quite different. In the 15th and 16th centuries the witch cult challenged the authority of Church and State and exercised a greater influence on the daily life of the common people than secular or religious powers. At a meeting of the Synod of Aberdeen in 1669 'the fearful and damnable practice of witchcraft and charming' was reported to be widespread in the North East. By the close of the 17th century the witch cult was beginning to weaken in the face of the sanctions imposed by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Individual witches, or witches in bands of two or three, pursued their craft well into the 19th century by which time their prestige, power and influence was on the wane, largely as a result of advances in medical knowledge.

Examination of kirk session records in the North East of Scotland shows that pagan beliefs, rites and observances co-existed with Christian beliefs right up until the 19th century. What reasons can be advanced for their persistence? One explanation for their slow disappearance was the extent to which members of small rural communities were actively involved in such practices including, on some occasions, elders of the kirk! This placed the minister in a difficult position. If he chose to take steps to eliminate such practices he ran the risk of alienating a significant proportion of the parish for whom such ceremonies were an important, integral and traditional part of rural life. By ignoring them, he ran the risk of being accused of condoning practices that had been forbidden by the ecclesiastical authorities. Ministers appear to have turned a blind eye so long as the ceremonies were benevolent in intent (e.g., concerned with the fertility of land and livestock). Other ministers may have dismissed such ceremonies as simply public expressions of harmless superstitious beliefs that did not pose any serious threat to the established religion. Perhaps the most persuasive explanation for the tolerance shown towards such ceremonies is that they provided a rare and necessary opportunity for people freely to engage in uninhibited behaviour for a short while without fear of public censure. In other words, they acted as a valuable escape valve in what was, by today's standards, a repressed and oppressed society. For people living in parishes like Durris in the early

centuries, life was full of fears and forebodings: they were surrounded by mystery on every side – the unseen terrors. As McPherson observed:

> *In man's extremity, he resorted to the old nature rites, finding in them not only a joyous break in the weary round of existence but a reinforcement of his spirit, in the warfare he was consistently waging against the harbingers of pestilence, sickness and death.*

What should not be underestimated, from today's vantage point, is the degree to which superstition governed every aspect of a person's life: the significant life events (birth, marriage and death); working practices; play and recreational activities; appearance and dress; what one ate and drank; etc. Because many superstitions would have been absorbed from an early age, people were often not aware that their behaviour had been influenced by irrational impulse.

McPherson draws attention to three instances of ritual practice in the parish of Durris:

> *"One of the last of the midsummer fires is that which still blazes each year on the appointed day on the hill of Cairnshee in Durris. Shorn of much of its ancient glory, it is still kindled on the evening of the 24th of June. It owes its continuance to a bequest left about the year 1790 by Alexander Hogg, a native of the parish. In terms of the trust, 10 shillings a year is paid to the herds round the hill to make a bonfire, and a further small sum to provide ale, cheese, and bread to those who assemble. As a lad, Hogg had herded cattle on the hills, seen the midsummer blaze, and taken part in the celebration. This would be about the middle of the eighteenth century, when the midsummer fires still illuminated the twilight of the North. The fire must be lit on the 24th June just as the sun disappears beneath the western horizon. The height on which the fire is kindled is the highest in the district. The sun is visible from it at the last possible moment. The herds must collect the fuel themselves. Of old, anyone not sharing in this task was doomed to have his barley full of thistles and his oats full of weeds. At the present time, the fire burns low – it would never be lit but for Hogg's benefaction. There is no pushing of celebrants or cattle through the flames as in days of old. Bread and cheese, the midsummer fire feast, is discontinued. The ale in diminished bulk is distributed amongst the few lads who assemble. The importance of this fire, however, lies in the fact that here we have evidence that in the third quarter of the eighteenth century midsummer fires were burning in Kincardineshire not far from the city of Aberdeen, that the celebrations left such an impression on the minds of the peasants that one of their number, after making a competence, felt constrained to make provision in his last will and testament for the continuance of the ancient ceremonial."*[36]

> *"Often sickness among a herd followed the removal of a stone. Near Auchleven in Premnay, once stood a stone circle now destroyed. The farmer, who moved the stones, soon after lost many of his cattle and was ruined. The same fate overtook the bestial upon the farm of Cairnfauld in Durris, when the stones of the adjacent circle were carried away. In recent times, an attempt was made to employ in building the standing stones at Corrydown: the mason hurt his fingers: the stone was harder than was anticipated. Someone suggested it was unlucky to meddle with the stones. The workman agreed and ceased to use them. These stories reveal the belief long cherished in the rustic mind that these megaliths were animate, and that they could wreak vengeance upon those who laid profane hands upon them. This was a primitive belief, but along with it went the conviction that sacred pillars could also help and bless. It was*

[36] ibid. p. 18.

natural, therefore, that, regarding them from either point of view, man should seek to propitiate them by offerings, in the same way as he paid his homage to the sacred wells."[37]

"With many of the common folks who went regularly to church, the devil was a more important factor in their life than God. He seemed to come more directly in touch with them. He was reputed to have gone about in person for the better part of a winter on the Garrol Hill in Durris.[38] *The laird of Dunideer had noted a midnight encounter with the Dusky Potentate. The latter went roaring round the braes about Bruxie and Atherb. He tore up the earth and stones with his cloven hoofs, and with his horns "boxed" the hillocks like an infuriated bull.*[39] *Those who encountered him were able to describe his appearance. "Ow he wiz a gay decent like chiel, if he hidna had a terrible heid o' horns and fearfu' lang hairy legs wi' great cloven feet, but Lord, man, he hid a terrible smell o' brimstone".*[40] *This is a Corgarff testimony, and it fairly represents the popular belief."*

In his concluding chapter, McPherson noted that less than half a century ago children sat by the fireside in the quiet of the winter's evening and there listened to tales of witches and kelpies and ghostly apparitions.[41] He quotes the experience of a minister colleague in Dinnet who spoke of his experience:

"Every bush was suspected of harbouring some malignant spirit, and every rustle among the branches sent a shock through my nervous system from the effects of which, in spite of my philosophy, I sometimes feel I have not yet quite recovered. Even now I cannot pass through a dark wood late at night without recalling these boyish experiences."

McPherson observed that if this feeling animated a man of culture, one can understand something of the eerie existence of those whose minds were not widened by the teachings of philosophy and science and whose hearts were untouched by the divine love. Life was full of fears and forebodings. It was surrounded by mystery on every side – the unseen exuded terrors. In man's extremity, he resorted to the old nature rites, finding in them not only a joyous break from the weary round of existence but a reinforcement of his spirit in the warfare he was constantly waging against the harbingers of pestilence, sickness and death.

Witchcraft

It has been estimated that there were between four and six thousand witchcraft trials in Scotland, most of which were in the lowland areas of the country, especially Aberdeenshire. This number is extremely high for such a small nation; with less than a quarter of England's population at this time, Scotland had three times the number of trials. As was the case in other places where such trials existed, the reasons behind them were complicated but often had a root in the suppression of women

[37] ibid, p. 81.

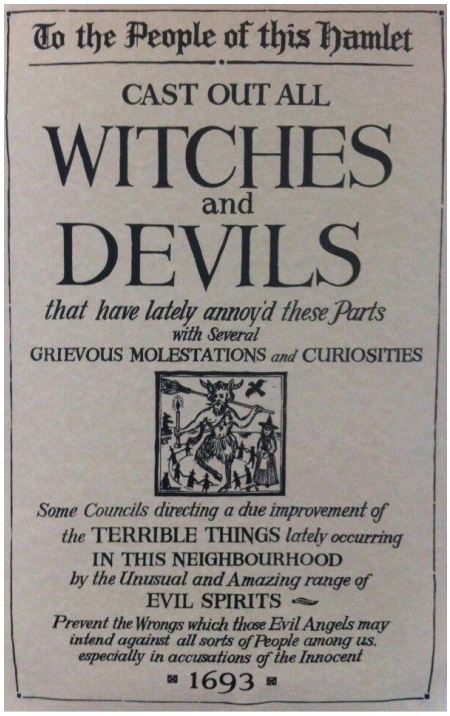
[38] J. Grant (1869) *Tales of the Glens*, Stonehaven, p.59.

[39] J. Milne (1881) *Myths and superstitions of Buchan District,* Aberdeen, p. 29.

[40] W. Gregor (1881) Notes on the folk-lore of the north-east of Scotland, *Folk-lore Journal* VII, p. 289.

[41] ibid, p.295-296.

at the time. This was certainly true in Scotland, as King James the Sixth (who later became King James the First of England) began to believe he was the victim of witchcraft after having seen witch-hunts on a visit to Denmark. Upon returning to Scotland, James attended witch trials and even wrote a book on the subject. After it was published it sparked what became known as The Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1597. This was the second national witch hunt in Scotland, with a further three to follow, the last in 1661. In each of these hunts, many hundreds of people, mostly – but not exclusively – older women, were accused of witchcraft and of talking to the devil. Often the charges against them were, by today's standards, shocking — such as a woman healing someone when they were sick, the accusers assuming if she could heal she could also harm. The last witch to be tried and executed in Scotland was Janet Horne, in 1727, and a small stone marks the spot in the Sutherland town of Dornoch where she was tarred, placed in a barrel, and burnt.



Some of the factors which led to the torturing and death of so many women has been ascribed to a potent mix of the Protestant religion, strict morality and ingrained misogyny of local kirk sessions – a ruling body of mainly male elders – endeavouring to stamp out what they saw as corrupting behaviour.[42] But women were also targeted because they were vulnerable, some of them owned land that others – usually men – wanted access to or they were unmarried or widowed.

Between the first execution in 1479 and the last in 1727, at least 2,500 women and men were killed and thousands more were tortured or put on trial. Scotland carried out five times more executions than the European average. There are now calls for a memorial to Scotland's tortured and executed witches.

[42] L. Brooks (2019) Calls for memorial to Scotland's tortured and executed witches, *The Guardian*, 30 October.

Paganism: past and present[43]

As the Scottish Enlightenment advanced, extensive philosophical discussion about the supernatural and witchcraft meant that the topic was no longer viewed as serious and public interest in witch trials waned rapidly. By this point in history, however, the damage had been done — not just to the unfortunate women and men who had been falsely accused of witchcraft, but also to many ancient traditions. These included the pre-Christian Celtic tradition of leaving offerings and hoping for healing at Clootie Wells, places which were especially visited during Beltane, the festival of Spring (also banned by Parliament and the Church).

People continue to visit the Clootie Well at Munlochy in a bid to cure sickness. This has gone on since at least 620 AD when the well was associated with St Boniface. Today, hundreds of offerings of cloth - or cloot - can be seen hanging from the trees that surround the water source. In the recent past on the first Sunday of each month there was a 'Clootie Well day' in which hundreds of people would converge on the well. The placing of clooties is linked to Patronal days or the Christianized pagan Gaelic-Celtic feast days: Imbolc (1st February), Beltane (1st May), Lughnasadh (1st August) and Samhain (1st November). It is possible that the clootie was an offering to a deity at the well.

In recent years, interest in pagan ritual, ancient traditions, natural healing and spiritual connection to nature has re-emerged in Scotland, with examples including the resurgence of the use of the few remaining Clootie Wells, foraging classes and Edinburgh's well-attended festivals led by The Beltane Society. It was not that long ago in history that these things would not only have been frowned upon, but potentially still illegal, with The Witchcraft Act of 1735 still being on the statute books until the second half of the 20th century.

Nearly twenty years ago my wife and I, accompanied by our two children, decided to go to the top of a hill in Durris to witness a solar eclipse. This decision was not prompted by any deep spiritual impulse; rather we were interested in discovering if all bird song ceased during the course of the eclipse, as reports of previous eclipses had indicated. And that indeed was what happened – there was an eerie and all pervasive silence.

But there is one other memory that remains. As we were standing on the top of the hill, we had a very good view of the surrounding countryside. Just prior to the eclipse we saw a family – parents and young children – hurriedly making their way across the fields below. Where were they going with such haste and evident purpose? And then I remembered that lying not far distant and in the direction of their line of travel was a stone circle – a prehistoric site. But what we had witnessed was not so surprising. Across the UK people were gathering at different prehistoric monuments – the largest 'congregation' being at Stonehenge in Wiltshire.

[43] R. Jackson (2011) Paganism: past and present, *Drumoak & Durris Newsletter*, June, p.6.

Munlochy Clootie Well

At Stonehaven the last night of the year still witnesses the ceremonial of the Fireballs. The balls are circular in shape and about the size of a bees' skep.[44] They are made of combustibles and are inoculated with tar. To each ball a piece of wire is attached by which it can be swung with great gusto as the procession marches backwards and forwards along the High Street of the old town.

Stonehaven Fireball Ceremony

In the uplands of the north-eastern counties there were many evidences of the survival till quite recently of primitive agricultural rites. There was the ceremonial associated with the 'streeking of the plough' in the autumn. When the plough was first put into the soil after harvest a semi-religious rite was observed. There was a meal held in the field and then a sacrificial offering to Ceres was laid upon the plough and to be touched by no-one. This custom continued well through the 19th century. It was found in Buchan, Cairncry, Strathdon, Glenlivet and Strachan.

[44] Skep is a beehive – possibly of wickerwork.

There may be some who will be surprised there are still a significant number of people holding pagan beliefs. But as Cole Morton has pointed out "paganism is casting its spell over more people now than ever before in the modern age".[45] It has been estimated there are a quarter of a million practising pagans in the UK, double the number a decade earlier. This makes them, in the UK, more numerous than the Buddhists and about as numerous as the Jews. What Morton also noted was that paganism is not necessarily incompatible with established faiths: one can be a good Christian and a pagan at the same time! Thus it would be quite wrong to view all form of contemporary paganism as sinister in character.

Perhaps the most persuasive explanation for the tolerance shown towards such ceremonies is that they provided a rare and necessary opportunity for people freely to engage in uninhibited behaviour for a short while without fear of public censure. In other words, they acted as a valuable escape valve in what was, by today's standards, a repressed and oppressed society. For people living in parishes like Durris and Drumoak in the early centuries, life was full of fears and forebodings: they were surrounded by mystery on every side – the unseen terrors. As the Reverend McPherson observed:

In man's extremity, he resorted to the old nature rites, finding in them not only a joyous break in the weary round of existence but a reinforcement of his spirit, in the warfare he was consistently waging against the harbingers of pestilence, sickness and death.'[46]

[45] C. Morton (2009) 'Everyone's a pagan now', *The Guardian*, 22 June.
[46] J. McPherson (1929) *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland*, London, Longmans.

CHAPTER 3: PARISH STATISTICAL ACCOUNTS

The Statistical Account

The parish as an administrative unit was widespread in Western Europe in the Middle Ages. Normally a 'parish' meant the area around a local church. The inhabitants of the parish paid a tenth (teind) of their produce to support the local clergy. By the 17th century the division of Scotland into about 900 parishes had become a convenient way for the Church and Crown to administer and record activities in the country for taxation, school education, road buildings and poor relief.[47]

These parishes were termed *quoad omnia* parishes (Latin: for all purposes). Each *quoad omnia* parish had a parish church, minister, a local church court (the kirk session) and a committee of landowners who were supposed to manage the fabric of the church buildings, the burial grounds, education and poor relief. The kirk session appointed a session clerk, who recorded baptism, marriages and burials in the parish register.

One of the most effective ways of gaining an insight into the life of a parish in Scotland is through an examination of the Statistical Account for that parish. The Statistical Accounts of Scotland are a series of documentary publications which cover varying aspects of life in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The Old (or First) Statistical Account of Scotland was published between 1791 and 1799. The New (or Second) Statistical Account of Scotland was published under the auspices of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland between 1834 and 1845. These first two Statistical Accounts of Scotland are among the most informative European contemporary records of life during the agricultural and industrial revolutions.

In 1790 structured questionnaires were sent to over 900 parish ministers covering the whole country. This contained 160 questions in four sections:

- geography and topography
- population
- agricultural and industrial production
- miscellaneous questions

Whilst the general response was excellent, the length and quality of submissions was variable.

3.1 Statistical Account: 1791 – Reverend William Strachan, Minister

Name and Situation. The ancient name of the parish, as appears by some old manuscripts in my possession, is Duires. The modern name is Durris or Dores. The word Duires signifies, in the Gaelic language, the Mouth of the Highlands. The parish of Durris lies in the county of the Mearns, and in

[47] In the reign of George III (1760-1820)

the presbytery and synod of Aberdeen. Its form is nearly that of an oblong square. It is about four or five Scots miles long and two and a half broad. The appearance of the country is, in some parts, flat, and in others mountainous. Part of the Grampian hills run along the south side of the parish. The soil, near the river side, is generally thin and sandy. There are, however, two pieces of flat ground, viz. those of Durris and Balbridie, of a deep soil. That of Durris is mostly enclosed and subdivided. A good part of it has, of late, been improved; and now produces excellent crops. In the midland, and towards the hills, the soil is deeper and blacker.

Mineral Waters. There are several mineral springs in this parish, mostly of the chalybeate kind.[48] There is one on the top of mount Gower, called Red Beard's Well, which is reckoned good for stomachic complaints. There is another strongly impregnated with sulphur. The taste of the water is disagreeable; but it sits very light on the stomach.

River. The river Dee bounds the parish on the north. It is not navigable, but at Aberdeen, by means of the tides. The salmon fishings on the Dee, for some years past, have not been profitable; because the fish do not come up the river in such numbers as formerly. From the month of January, till the middle of May, salmon sells at 6d. per pound. During the rest of the season, they are sold at 3d. per pound. They are in perfection from the beginning of January to the middle of September.

Hills. The hills in the parish are Hawk's Nest, Mount Gower, Cragg-beg, Mon-dernel and Cairn Monearn. The most remarkable of these hills is Cairn Monearn; according to Mr. Garden's map of the county, it is 340 yards high. It has a very large cairn of stones on top of it. All these hills are covered with moss and heath. There are a good many rocks at the foot of Cragg-beg. Among these rocks is a cavern. A road to Stonehaven, called the Stag-road, is near this cave. Robbers, headed by one Red-Beard, are said formerly to have sheltered themselves in it; and to have committed many depredations. Red-Beard's Well received its name from this robber.

Population. In the year 1769, as appears by a roll of the former incumbent, the population was 777. The present population is 651 (decreased since 1769 by 126). The number of males is 299. The number of females is 352. In Dr Webster's report, the number is 889.

Productions, etc. The produce is barley, oats, pease, turnips, potatoes and cabbages. Lord Peterborough, nine years ago, planted a large field near the house of Durris, with Scots fir, larix[49], etc. This plantation is thriving very well. He has lately enclosed a great deal of moor ground near the House of Durris. Part of these enclosures is already planted. There is a very romantic den at the back of the house of Durris, planted with ash, elm, horse-chestnut, beech, larix, birch, and oak. The number of cattle may be about 500 or 600, of horses 123, and of sheep 2275.

[48] *Chalybeate waters*, also known as ferruginous waters, are mineral spring waters containing salts of iron. Early in the 17th century, chalybeate water was said to have health-giving properties and many people have promoted its qualities. There is a nationally known chalybeate spring in Drumoak at Parson's Well.

[49] *Larix* is larch

Church - The stipend of Durris is L.50 Sterling. No victual is paid to the minister. The Earl of Peterborough is both patron and proprietor. It brings him in L. 1,200 Sterling, per annum. The manse and most of the office-houses are new. They were built in the years 1773 and 1774.

Poor - The number of poor, receiving alms, is from 30 to 40 yearly. The total sum of annual collections, and of annual rents, for the use of the poor, is L. 35, of which L. 1 Sterling, and upwards, is appropriated to the infirmary of Aberdeen.

Fuel - The fuel commonly used here, is peat and turf. The peat is procured from excellent mosses, in different parts of the parish; and the turf from the grounds near the mosses.

Miscellaneous Observations - The number of farms is 42. There are no manufacturers, strictly speaking, in the parish. The women and children make great many hose, but are not fond of spinning lint. There is one Roman Catholic, one Episcopalian; all the rest are of the established church. There is no map of the parish; but there is one of the county by Mr Garden. He makes the number of acres in this parish 13,309 Scots, 16,912 English

About a quarter of a mile below the church, on the North side of the Aberdeen road, there is a little hill, called the Castle-Hill. It has formerly been a place of some strength. Places on the top, where cannon have been planted, are very visible. There is a pretty deep ditch round the foot of it, on the east, south and west. A stream of water, coming from the neighbouring hill, can easily be brought to fill the ditch.

Erection - This parish was formerly a parsonage, in the presbytery of Fordoun, and diocese of Brechin. As the minister found it, at all times, very inconvenient, and in winter often impossible, on account of the deep snow on the hills, to attend the diets of presbytery, the General Assembly, therefore, in the year 1717, annexed Durris to the presbytery of Aberdeen.

Agriculture - The Norfolk plough is used for saughing, or ribbing the ground, and ploughing light soil. The drill and wheel ploughs are used on the haugh[50]; but the old Scotch plough, with low stilts, is most in use. The farmers constantly employ hired servants; but most of them have sub-tenants, who are bound to cut down their master's crops, cast and lead his peats, and build his sauld dykes[51]. They are usually allowed Saturday, in time of harvest, to reap their own corn.

Poor - Mr Alexander Hogg, a native of this parish, died at Turkenham[52], in the beginning of the year 1787, and bequeathed to this parish L., in old 4 per cent Bank annuities reduced, to be applied to the following purposes:

- To a charity schoolmaster, for instructing 10 poor children, boys or girls, whose ages shall not be under 9 years nor exceed 11, in reading English, writing, and accounts, per annum £5 0 0

[50] Haugh is a piece of level ground usually alluvial, on the banks of a river: river meadow land.

[51] Sauld – cattle stall

[52] This is probably Twickenham.

- To the herds round Cairn-Shee, for their mid-summer fee, (on which occasion the farmers give their herds bread and cheese, and sometimes they have music and dancing) £ 0 10 0

- For a dinner to the members of the kirk-session, when they distribute the interest of his mortification £1 0 0

- The remainder of the interest of the said 500 L. (for which only 3 per cent. is now received) to be distributed among the poorhouse keepers, who are not on the poor's roll

  NB. The interest of this 500 L. makes a part of the account formerly communicated of the poor's funds of this parish.

School. - Mr John Gerard, the present schoolmaster, gives the following particular account of his salary and perquisites:

The salary, (of which Lord Peterborough pays the one half, and the tenants the other), is, per annum, £8 6 8, Ditto as session clerk, £1 10 0, Ditto as clerk to Mr Hogg's mortification, £0 10 0, Dues of baptisms, 6½ d. each, amount on an average to £0 9 6, Ditto of marriages, 6½ d. each, amount on an average to £0 3 0, Ditto for extracts from the register of baptisms, 3d. each, £0 1 6 School fees, *communibus annis*, about £4 0 0. He has also a small garden, worth about £0 5 0

Total amount of salary and perquisites per ann. £15 5 8.

The number of Scholars is from 30 to 40 in winter, and between 20 and 30 in summer.

3.2 Statistical Account: 1838 – Reverend Robert Copland, Minister[53]

In 1832 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland supported the decision to produce a more modern statistical account - The Second (New) Statistical Account of Scotland - incorporating maps of each county and drawing upon the specialist knowledge of local doctors and schoolmasters.

I. – Topography and Natural History

Name. The ancient name of the parish, according to the generally received accounts, was Duires; it is now written Durris, and sometimes pronounced Dores. The ancient name signifies, in Gaelic, a mouth or entrance, probably from the parish being a principal entrance into the Highlands.

Extent, &. The parish extends from east to west about 5½ miles along the south bank of the river Dee, which is its northern boundary. On the south, it is bounded by the Grampian Mountains.

Topographical Appearances &c. Its figure resembles an oblong; but the length on the south side is at least seven miles. The appearance of the surface is very irregular. On the river side, there are considerable fields of haugh land, quite level; some of it being very productive, and some light

[53] In the reign of Victoria (1837-1901).

and sandy. Several acclivities or small hills then intervene and intercept the prospect, so that the half of the parish is not visible from any one point in it. The highest hill in the parish is Cairnmonearn, one of the Grampians, elevated about 1200 feet above the level of the sea; but several others, as Mindernal, Mountgower, and Craigbeg, are nearly the same height.

The temperature of the atmosphere is exceedingly various; the cold, in some seasons, being much more intense than in others; and the heat in summer, especially on the river side, very great, arising in some degree from the gravelly nature of the soil.

Hydrography. There are several small rivulets in the parish, but none deserving notice except the Shiach (Sheeoch) Burn, which often sends down a great body of water from the Grampians, and after a course of the greatest rapidity for about twelve miles, falls into the Dee at the church of Durris. A number of chalybeate springs are found in different parts of the parish, of various degrees of strength; and near the top of one of the hills, there is a medicinal spring called Red-Beard's Well, from an old tradition, that a certain freebooter called Red-Beard, lived in a cave near this well, in the times of black mail[54]. This water has never been analyzed; but it is said to contain neutral salts, and in many of its properties to resemble the Harrowgate[55] water. It is difficult to obtain the water in a pure state, the spring being surrounded with reeds and decayed vegetable matter, and rills of water often falling into it.

Mineralogy. Throughout the whole extent of the parish, there are immense masses of stone (gneiss) but Cairnmonearn and some of the other hills afford the finest granite and whinstone[56]. The quantity of both appears to be inexhaustible. From the sides of these hills the naked rock often show themselves; but they are generally covered with two or three feet of moss and heath; and in the hollows at the foot of the hills, there depth of mosses very considerable, affording peats and fuel of the best description. The soil in the lower ground is, in general, a loam, very fertile with good management; but clay and gravelly soils are likewise found. In most of the varieties of soil under cultivation, the enormous masses of stone (gneiss) would attract the notice of the stranger; and would deter an agriculturist from settling here, who had been accustomed to the smooth fields of the southern counties. But custom has brought both men and horses to plough round these rocks, with the greatest of ease; and it is generally observed, that the soil is superior where these rocks abound most. There are here several large plantations of Scotch fir and larch in a thriving state, where the subsoil is not retentive of water; and hard-wood, such as beech, ash, and elm, grow well where the soil is congenial.

II. – Civil History

The estate of Durris comprehends this whole parish, and a considerable part of the adjoining parish of Banchory Ternan. This large property has passed from several owners, in the course of a few years. It formerly belonged to Lord Peterborough; afterwards the whole estate was held in

[54] *Black mail* is a payment exacted or made in return for protection from plunder or injury; an illegal exaction.

[55] Harrogate – a spa town in Yorkshire.

[56] *Whinstone* is a term used in the quarrying industry to describe any hard dark-coloured rock (e.g., igneous rocks, basalt and dolerite, as well as sedimentary rock, chert).

lease from him, by the late John Innes, Esq. of Leuchars, near Elgin. On the reduction of this lease by the Supreme Court, the estate came into possession of the late Duke of Gordon in 1824, as next heir of entail; and under authority of an act of Parliament, transferring the entail to other lands, the estate was purchased from the Duke of Gordon last year, by Anthony Mactier, Esq., late of Calcutta. The proprietor is patron of the parish church.

Parochial Registers. The parochial register of baptisms begins at the year 1717, as does also the register of discipline: and for upwards of forty years, the registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths appear to have been accurately kept. There is also a separate register kept for the annual distribution of a mortification[57] to certain poor and to other purposes, left by a native of this parish of the name of Hog(g), in the year 1787, under the management of the kirk-session, which will be noticed more particularly under another head.

Antiquities. The parish cannot boast of many antiquities of great interest. There are, however, several tumuli or cairns of stones, now partly overgrown with heath and whins. About six years ago, a farmer, in trenching out the foundations of some old houses and dikes on his farm, found a number of small copper and silver coins, but none of them in a state of good preservation. From their appearance they were supposed to be Danish.

It may here be mentioned, that after the great flood in 1829, the writer of this account, in taking away a large round cairn of stones for the purpose of preventing the encroachments of the River Dee, found, when the stones were removed, that they had merely covered a hillock of earth of exactly the same shape, and evidently artificial. His curiosity was excited to know the contents of the hillock; and on breaking it up, some bones, partly burnt, were found, and a number of sharp flint stones of different sizes. The hillock has very lately been more particularly examined; and at a depth of three feet under the surface of the adjoining field, a large trench or grave, upwards of seven feet long, built with stones on the sides, and covered above with three very large stones, was discovered. It contained human bones mixed with charcoal; and it was observed, that part of a skull, contrary to the usual mode of internment, was placed at the east end of the grave.

Immediately overhanging a pretty steep bank of the River Dee and about a quarter of a mile below the church is a small hill, called the Castle Hill. It has a ditch at the bottom, and is commonly supposed to have been a place of strength or military position. A small rill of water runs close past its base, which could easily have been made to fill the ditch. And on the top, which is quite level, several small hollows or cuts are yet to be seen, which tradition reports were the places from which the artillery was fired. Perhaps the hill may have been converted into this purpose, from being originally a dun or *law*, that is, a place for administering justice in ancient times; many others of a similar description being found in different parts of the country. Several Druidical temples are also to be met within the parish, but none in a perfect state.

Modern Buildings. The only modern building deserving of notice, is the mansion-house of Durris, built by John Innes, Esq. lessee of the whole estate. This building is connected with the ancient

[57] *Mortification* or *mortmain* is the status of lands held inalienably by an ecclesiastical body.

mansion-house by an extensive colonnade; and both have undergone extensive repairs and additions by the present proprietor. There is no place of worship except the parish church, built in 1822. The parish formerly was a chapelry belonging to the Knights Templars, or some other very ancient Popish order.

III. – Population

Amount of population in	1801	-	605
	1811	-	724
	1821	-	945
	1831	-	1035

Number of families in the parish: 213

Number of families chiefly employed in agriculture: 140

Number of families chiefly employed in trade, manufactures or handicraft: 55

Illegitimate births in the course of the last three years: 8

From the benevolence and liberality of the late Duke of Gordon, under whose leases the whole parish is at present occupied, the people are able to enjoy, in a moderate degree, the comforts and advantages of society; and are, in general, contented with their situation.

IV. – Industry

Agriculture. The number of imperial acres under tillage is nearly 4000; 1000 and upwards are in plantations, and perhaps 10,000 in pasture, mosses, moors, and hills; but of this, more than 1000 acres are fit to be improved and could be brought under cultivation, at a moderate expense; and a great deal of it would be as productive as some now under the plough.

Rent. The average rent of arable land per acre is somewhat under £.1. The average rent of grazing an ox or cow is about £1 for the summer or grass season, and about £1, 10s. for the winter: the keep of a sheep, about 2s 6d. a-year.

Live Stock. The common breed of sheep is the black-faced; and of cattle, the hummel or dodded[58]. The colour preferred is black, dun, or branded. Some, however, have lately introduced the Ayrshire breed; but whether that will be more advantageous than the other kinds, is not yet ascertained.

Husbandry. The farms are partly under a fifth, and partly under a seventh shift rotation. In case of the former, two-fifths of the arable land is under grain crop; one fifth under green crop, viz. turnips and potatoes; one-fifth in hay, and one-fifth in pasture grass. In case of the latter, three-

[58] *Hummel* or *dodded* means hornless.

sevenths are in grain crop; one-seventh under green crop, one-seventh in hay, and two-sevenths are pastured.

During the currency of the present leases, which were all for nineteen years, a great deal of waste land has been reclaimed by the tenants - generally by trenching; as the number of large stones renders plowing impossible. Drains are cut where necessary and filled up; the stones are all turned up, blown with gun powder and carted off the field; and lime, from, fifteen to twenty bolls[59] per imperial acre, applied; but dung must also be used, before a new field is fully productive. The farm-buildings in the whole parish, are, in general good repair, and all belong to the proprietor. The want of capital is an obstacle to improving waste land, by the tenants; but even if they had the command of capital, a nineteen years lease is too short to repay a tenant for improving effectually. Some part of the expense, perhaps a half, should be borne by the proprietor. There is limestone in various parts of the parish, but no quarry has been regularly wrought; nor is the quality of the rock properly ascertained.

Fishings. There are two or three salmon-fishings on the Dee, within the parish; but the produce has diminished yearly for some time, and is now insignificant. This decrease is attributed to the mode of fishing with bag-nets at the mouth of the river, which intercepts the fish; and it may be also owing, partly, to the extensive works carried on for several years, in improving the harbour, of Aberdeen, where the river empties itself.

Produce. The yearly produce of the parish may be estimated as follows:

Total imperial acres under cultivation, 4000, as far at least as the writer of this report has been able to ascertain.

Two-fifths of which in grain crop (oats and barley,) 4 quarters per acre, exclusive of seed, 1600 acres X 4 = 6400 quarters at £1. 1s: **£6720. 0. 0**

800 acres turnips, potatoes, and cabbages, £.5 per acre: £**4000. 0. 0**

Hay, 500 acres at 100 stone of 21 lb. Dutch, 50,000 stones at 5d. per stone: £**1041. 13. 4**

Pasture land and hay too poor to cut: **£1000. 0. 0**

Do. Bills for pasturing sheep, 2000 sheep at 2s 6d each: **£ 250. 0. 0**

Butter and cheese: **£300. 0. 0**

Honey: **£ 87.10. 0**

Salmon-fishings: £ **13. 0. 0**

V. - Parochial Economy

Means of Communication. There is no market-town or village within the parish; Aberdeen and Stonehaven are the places where farm produce is sold; each about thirteen miles from the centre of the parish. There is no post-office nearer than Banchory, five or six miles distant; but most letters

[59] A *boll* is a dry measure of weight or capacity.

for this parish come through the post-office of Aberdeen; as the farmers being frequently there, get their letters with less trouble and delay than when sent by Banchory. There is only one turnpike road, which passes through the parish for about four miles, called the Slug Road, leading from Stonehaven to Banchory. But a commutation road to Aberdeen on the south side of the river is kept in good repair; and several cross roads leading to other lines of communication are now in the course of being finished.*

*Since this Account was drawn up, a new turnpike road is in the course of being made from Aberdeen to Banchory-Ternan, which will intersect this parish for five miles and a-half, along the south side of the Dee.

Ecclesiastical State. The parish church was built in the year 1822 by the late proprietor, and is in sufficient repair, affording accommodation for 550 sitters, and none of the seats are let. The manse was built about sixty years ago, but having never been well finished nor commodious, it is now unfit for the minister, and a new one is about to be built. The glebe measures about fifteen imperial acres, besides a patch of pasture which is of little value, being frequently covered over with sand from the river. By an ice speat in January 1831, a great part of the best of this glebe, together with the crop of turnips and soil, was entirely carried off, and nothing left but bare gravel; and in another place, about three acres of the best land entirely disappeared, and now make part of the bed of the river. The late proprietor, the Duke of Gordon, in the most handsome manner, made compensation to the minister for this extensive loss, increasing the glebe to the extent above-mentioned. If let at the same rent as the land of the same quality in the neighbourhood, the glebe and garden, with the office-houses, would bring in £18 or £20 a-year. The stipend payable by the proprietor for this valuable parish, including allowance for communion elements of £8. 6s 8d, is only £76. 12s 6d. The deficiency is made up from the Exchequer allowance, so as to make the stipend £150. I find a valuation of the teinds in the year 1773, a few months after the settlement of my predecessor, before he could possibly be aware whether the valuation was fairly made or otherwise.

There is no chapel or other place of public worship of any kind within the parish. The people are all Presbyterians, with the exception of part of one family of Independents[60], and about twenty individuals of the Popish faith[61], who attend worship at the Popish College of Blairs[62], in the neighbouring parish of Maryculter.

Education. The schools in the parish are two: the parochial school near the church, at which are taught, reading English, English grammar, writing, arithmetic, and Latin. The salary of £29, besides the emoluments which the teacher enjoys as clerk to the session, and fees paid by the

[60] In 1733 there was an exodus of ministers and members from the Church of Scotland - the First Secession. Those who took part were often referred to as seceders. It is possible that this part of the family belonged to this group.

[61] *Popish* - Roman Catholic.

[62] St Mary's College, Blairs situated near Aberdeen was from 1829 to 1986 a junior seminary for boys and young men studying for the Roman Catholic priesthood. The land on which the seminary was built was originally owned by the Templars and then Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem before passing to the Menzies family in 1542.

scholars, the average amount of which is 3s 6d. per quarter. The situation altogether may be worth £56 per annum. There is also another school under the patronage of the kirk-session. It is generally called Mr Hog(g)'s Charity School, because it was first instituted by a Mr Hog(g), a native of this parish, who, in 1787, left £5 per annum for a salary to the teacher, but for which he is required to teach *gratis* ten poor children recommended by the kirk-session, if so many should claim that privilege. The late minister also left £100 under the session's management, the interest of which was to be yearly paid to this schoolmaster, to augment his salary. The above, with a small croft of land, is all the income of this teacher, except the fees, which are the same as at the parish school. The branches of education taught are also the same, with the exception of Latin. His income scarcely exceeds £30 a year. At both schools, the instruction of the pupils in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism and the principles of the Christian religion is duly attended to. From this statement, it does not appear that any more schools are necessary. The parents in general are inclined to educate their families as far as their circumstances permit; and a sewing-school for girls has been established for several years. There is scarcely any person in the parish above fifteen years of age, who cannot read and write more or less, nor is there any from six to fifteen years, who, if they cannot read and write, are not in the course of being instructed.

Poor. The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 25; the yearly sum allowed to each, at an average, is £1 15s. The annual amount of collections at the church is £33, including for mortcloth money[63]. Interest of money lent, £10; penalties and occasional donations, £6 10s. No other mode has been adopted here, of providing for the poor. The reluctance to receive parochial relief is now rarely to be met with. Besides the above persons receiving aid, there are nearly as many who receive a small sum yearly from Mr Hog(g)'s mortification already mentioned. The sum left was £500 three per cents reduced, yielding £15 a-year. This was sold out, a few years ago, for £420, and placed at interest in this country. The particulars are these: - £5 to a schoolmaster; £1 to the kirk-session, for their trouble in managing the fund; 10s to the session-clerk for keeping the books; 10s to the herds round the hill of Cairnshea, to make a midsummer fire on that hill, where the donor himself had once kept cattle; and the remainder, about £9, to poor householders not on the poor's roll.

Fairs. There are three fairs held in the parish annually, one in May, one in June, and one in September, all for selling cattle; none of them numerously attended.

Inns. There are four inns, whereas one, or at most two, should be sufficient.

Fuels. The fuel mostly used is peats and turf from the hills. For a farmer's house, sixty or seventy loads are required in a year, one-half peats and the other half-turf; expense per load, casting and drying, of peats 1s., of turf, 7d, besides driving them home, which is done with their own horses and servants. When driving is paid for, the cost is 1s 6d or 1s 8d per load, according to the distance. Most families, however, besides this species of fuel, use a few bolls of English coal.

January 1838

[63] *Mortcloth money* – the fees received from the hire of a mortcloth which is a pall covering a coffin on its way to the grave.

3.3 Statistical Account: 1951[64]

Following a grant of some £8,000 from the Nuffield Foundation in 1947, the Third Statistical Account was initiated which followed a similar parish format to the earlier accounts. The first volume was published in 1951. It has been claimed that the third account was more rigorous and wide-ranging than either of its predecessors covering as it did industry, transport, culture and demographics. The scale of the project meant that the project took over forty years to complete. It was not until 1992 that the last volume was published. Another consequence of this delay was that the later volumes covered administrative divisions which no longer existed. Several parish accounts had to be revised or rewritten due to the lapse of time between the fieldwork and publication. Although the project was more secular in orientation than before, there were sections of the accounts which continued to focus on religious life, and several of the parish accounts were written by Church of Scotland ministers.

The last Statistical Account in 1838 stated that there was no post office nearer than Banchory. However, on 1 June 1886 was opened the Durris Post Office at the Kirkton shop. It is a sub-post-office, and with the exception of the issuing of money orders, it transacts all kinds of post-office business. Three postmen cover the district, and one delivery of letters and parcels is made daily.

Running along the northern edge of the parish is the South Deeside road, which crosses the Dee at Banchory and links Aberdeen to Royal Deeside. Along this road, for over a quarter of a century, regular services have been available to Durris for business and pleasure at the various town centres. In addition a special bus, begun 2 years ago, starts from the Kirkton of Durris at 10 o'clock each morning for Aberdeen. For years the return fare to Aberdeen was 1/6d, but within recent weeks the fare has been increased to 1/10d. Previously, travel to and from Aberdeen was by the Deeside Railway, opened in 1853, at first with its terminus at Banchory and later extended to Ballater. The railway does not pass through the parish, but runs along the north bank of the Dee, within easy reach of Durris at Park and Crathes stations.

The Slug road from Stonehaven to Banchory cuts across the parish from its summit (757 feet) beside Cairn-mon-earn. A new road, structured roughly but passable for motor traffic, was completed by the Forestry Commission during the recent war to facilitate the passage of fire engines and equipment to fight plantation and forest fires. Because of its winding and steep course over the hills it has been locally named the 'Burma Road'. This road begins near Meikle Tulloch farm, on the Woodlands to Lochton road, and mounts the hills in a southerly direction, passing Pitcowdens till it reaches Strathgyle.

Housing. A few 3-roomed wooden houses for forestry workers were constructed in the early 1940s and 2 blocks of brick houses, 2 storeys high, each containing four homes was built in 1947 on the Woodlands road near Woodlands School. The latter have modern conveniences, with the exception of electric light, each home containing a living room, kitchenette, 3 bedrooms, bathroom and W.C. Unfortunately, this tenement type of building rather clashes with the simple beauty of the

[64] D. Smith (ed) (1988) *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: The County of Kincardine*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press.

countryside, especially with the modest one-storey houses alongside. The rent, including rates, amounts to little over £28 per year.

Electricity. The electric cable of the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board passes through the east part of the parish, but so far only Durris House, the farms of Upper and Nether Balfour, Bogenraith and the Home Farm are linked up with this power. So distant are the prospects of obtaining the Board's electricity that most farms are installing private plants for generating electricity.

Agriculture. Agriculture is still the most important industry of the parish. Arable land extends to approximately 7000 acres. There are over 20 farms each with an acreage of between 100 and 280 acre, and about 30 farms having under 100 acres each of arable land. In addition, a number of crofts are worked by tenants, such as forestry workers, roadmen and sawmill workers. Since the 1838 Account vast changes have taken place in modes of agriculture. With the introduction of the tractor horses for farm work are now the exception, as farmers have little use for them. The petrol or paraffin-driven tractor completes speedily and satisfactorily almost all operations – ploughing, land-rolling, seed sowing, and conveying produce to and from the farm. An acre can be ploughed in two or three hours when a tractor and double plough is used, whereas to do the same work by horses a day and a half was usually required. This mechanisation of all farm work, including the milking of cows by electric power, has so speeded up the work that fewer workers are employed.

Startling, too, is the steep rise in wages to £5 a week for a farm hand, £12 a week for a dairyman and his wife, and over £5 for a shepherd. But these high wages are somewhat offset by the fact that the usual perquisites of free house, coal, meal and milk are no longer granted. Usually, 2/6 per week is the rent for a cottar house with no water, 5/- where water is available in the house, and 7/6 when a bathroom is provided. Coal, meal and milk have to be bought at current prices.

Black-faced sheep are the usual breed in Durris. The largest single flock, numbering about 700, is at South Brachmont farm, with its extensive hill pasture. During the Second World War much land, previously thought unprofitable, was broken up to provide additional food for the nation. Financial help from the government was given. Two new crops successfully tried out during the war were sugar beet and flax, but these are no longer grown.

Conditions of work for farm servants in Durris have also not escaped the general tendency for improvement. The week is now one of 5½ days – no work after noon on Saturday, so that the livestock must be attended to by the farmer, or at his additional expense, till Monday morning.

To attract more young people to farming and at the same time to encourage more food production, there was formed in 1945 a Durris Junior Agricultural Club, familiarly known as the J.A.C. Over 60 people (male and female) are members and organised monthly meetings take place, when farming topics are discussed. Experts from Aberdeen Agricultural College lecture on all phases of farm work, including livestock and the maintenance of farm machinery. The scientific facts thus presented, combined with practical experience, should eventually lead to better farming in the parish. Great enthusiasm featured this novel venture at the beginning, and fortunately keen interest is still maintained. Competitions with other Clubs in judging the merits of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs keep the young farm workers alert, and many prizes have come to Durris. Skill in practical work is shown in the annual ploughing and hoeing matches.

Charities. One might truly say that there are no really destitute poor in the parish. However, the Kirk Session distributes individual sums varying from £1.10/- to £5 mostly to widows, spinsters or families suffering from hardships. These monies represent the interest from capital sums known as the Hogg Fund, the Lady Fraser Fund, the Thom Fund and others.

Local rhymes.

When Cairn-mon-Earn puts on her cap,

The folk of Dores will get a drap.

This couplet, as old as Durris itself, refers to the fact that when Cairn-mon-Earn (1245 feet), the highest hill in Durris, has mist on its summit, the folks of Dores (old name for Durris) will have showers of rain. Another homely Durris rhyme is:

Lime, lime without manure

Mak's baith the fairm and fairmer poor.

The way of life. The way of life of the Durris people has vastly changed in the last 50 years. No fairs are held in the parish, and if the Reverend R. Copland of the 1838 Account were alive today his heart would rejoice that there are now no inns in Durris, although a few years ago a licence to sell porter and ale was granted to the grocer's shop at Lochton.

Peats are not used so widely as in former years. Prices are high, usually £2 and over per cart load. Coal is brought to the door by motor lorry from Aberdeen and sells at the high price of £5 a ton for English coal and £4. 15/- for Scotch coal.

Telephones are installed in most farm houses and in the two schoolhouses, a change from the time over a quarter of a century ago when the post office and Durris House were the only telephone centres. Now two telephone kiosks are in full operation – one at the Kirkton shop (opened 12 August 1938) and the other at Denside shop (opened 11 April 1950).

There are two smiddies, on at Denside, the other at Lochton. A third one, at Crossroads, has not been in use since the death of the smith over twelve years ago. Horse-shoeing is almost a job of the past and the blacksmith has had to learn new techniques in the repair and maintenance of farm machinery. At Denside Smiddy a petrol pump was installed a few years ago, a pointer to the future kind of work of the smith.

Social gatherings, concerts, barn dances and rural sports are now less frequent, owing to the ease of travel by bus to Aberdeen, where the cinema, theatre and football, wrestling and boxing matches provide a poor substitute for former country pleasures. The Durris Dramatic Club, whose activities were suspended at the beginning of the recent war, has not been resuscitated and unfortunately the two Durris social clubs have become defunct. Dancing seems to have supplanted all these activities. It is hoped to restart the Durris Horticultural and Industrial Show this year (1951). It was suspended in 1940 owing to the war. The Women's Rural Institute, which celebrated its 25th birthday in

December 1950, is strong in Durris and the members bravely try to recapture the atmosphere of the past rural life.

Afforestation. Within the last twenty years a new and active industry has arisen – afforestation, employing at present about 30 workers. Growing of trees interested Mr Anthony Mactier, the laird mentioned by the Reverend R. Copland in 1838, and it was he who in addition introduced to Durris many foreign specimens of trees. One might call him the pioneer of tree planting. His mantle fell on the shoulders of Mr. H.R. Baird, laird of Durris from 1890 to 1929, who experimented with tree planting, growing extensively such trees as Douglas fir and Menzies and Sitka spruce. He probably foresaw the vast possibilities of silvicuture on the hills of Durris. Then in 1930 came the Forestry Commission, who acquired 4,000 acres of woodland, cut down the matured trees during the Second World War, and have now replanted most of this vast area. The soil and climate of Durris have been found very favourable to the rapid and sturdy growth of all types of conifer trees.

Ecclesiastical. The present parish church, built by the side of the Dee at Kirkton in 1822, was the only place of worship till 1856, when a Free Church was erected on the road between Kirkton and the Slug Road, about a mile from the parish church. In 1897 important renovations to the parish church were carried out by the heritors. The gallery round the church and the centrally situated pulpit, along with the outside stair, were removed. A new porch of stone and lime was built at the west door, with a vestry attached, and an inside stair leading to the reconstructed gallery. The pulpit was placed at the east end, and a passage was made down the centre of the church. New comfortable seats of modern design, facing one way, were installed, as well as suitable accommodation for choir and organ. The church was heated by a hot water system. A new window was made in the north wall to light the gallery, and a new walk round the church.

In 1933, after the Reverend Robert Spark, M.A., minister of the parish church, retired, having completed a ministry of 50 years in Durris, the union of the two churches was consummated and the United Free (originally Free) Church (the last minister being the Reverend Dr Rankin) then ceased to be a place of worship. The united congregations number 400. The stipend is the minimum of £450 per year.

Education. There are two schools in the parish, each capable of accommodating 90 pupils – Woodlands School (in the east) and Crossroads School (in the west), both built in 1876. They replaced the Central School at Kirkton, and the two side schools at Brachmont (east) and Dhualt (west). Both schools provide primary education to the age of 12. Thereafter the pupils proceed to Banchory Academy for secondary education. At present the schools have approximately 40 pupils each on the registers and as the leaving age has been raised from fourteen to fifteen most parents are keen to give their children a good secondary education. This transference of country scholars to a town secondary school may unfortunately lead to the depopulation of country districts, given the attractions of employment in the towns and cities. Even in Durris this tendency is apparent. To arrest this drift from country to town the County Council has erected 2 blocks of modern houses (already mentioned) and a beginning has been made to modernise the cottar houses.

School dinners, consisting usually of two courses, were introduced by the Education Committee at the beginning of the Second World War at a daily charge of 6d for the first child, 5d for the second,

and 3d each for the others in a family. Approximately 80 percent of the scholars take the school dinners. Those living near the school usually dine at home. About the same percentage take the third of a pint of milk supplied daily free of charge. The result of these schemes is a definite improvement in the health of the scholars. The dinners are made at a modern equipped kitchen at Banchory Academy, catering not only for Durris schools but other rural schools. Previously the Durris schools were supplied with dinners as an obligement by Aberdeen Town Council, who had converted the out-buildings at the Durris Home Farm into a modern kitchen for supplying Aberdeen schools. Long before these two organised dinner schemes, the two local schools (since 1933) had run their own soup kitchen, under a parents' interest committee, providing one course, usually soup, with an occasional meat course.

CHAPTER 4: LIFE IN A RURAL PARISH: PART ONE

4.1 Power of patronage

Until the weakening of its power throughout the 18th century, the Church of Scotland's Kirk Sessions (church courts comprising the minister and elders) had considerable local power by overseeing religious observance and public morals. They could even prevent movement between parishes by requiring a certificate of good character (testificat) signed by a minister. As the main landowners, the heritors were responsible for the building and maintenance of their parish church and of the minister's stipend and glebe, more often than not the local minister and Kirk Session would support the landowners' interests. The Free Church, which resulted from the Disruption in 1843, arose out of growing frustration of congregations and many ministers over the abuse of patronage in the appointment of ministers to the Kirk, and the perceived complacency of some clergy. Patronage was a landowner's privilege, which made the church subordinate to the landed classes.

The first two Statistical Accounts set out earlier were written at a time when the local laird continued to exercise the power of patronage. This fact may have encouraged the minister to think carefully about what he wrote in the account. Notwithstanding that fact the Reverend Copland made a point of highlighting the tenants' need for capital in order to improve waste land. He went on to observe that even if the tenants were able to obtain the necessary capital, the traditional lease of only nineteen years was insufficient to repay a tenant for undertaking any improvements. In his opinion, some part of that expense, perhaps a half, should be borne by the proprietor.

The Reverend Copland would also have been aware that in the course of just thirty years the population of Durris had nearly doubled from 605 in 1801 to 1035 in 1831. What will also have been apparent was that the improvements in farming practice were requiring fewer tenants to work the land. From the latter half of the 19th century the population of Durris more than halved going from 1109 in 1861 to 484 in 1991.

4.2 The character of farming life[65]

From the 18th century the system of land ownership and tenancy in the North East of Scotland had been well developed. The land was owned by proprietors, some of whom were lairds owning extensive tracts of land but with a surprising number of land-owning "gentlemen" owning smaller estates. Up until the 20th century, however, the land in Durris was owned by a succession of lairds, some of whom were absentee lairds, who left the running of the estate to their factor.

[65]This section draws heavily upon an excellent and highly informative article by J. Strachan, *Farm servant life in north-east Aberdeenshire*, https://judyfamhist.com/articles/farm-servant-life-in-north-east-aberdeenshire/

As a general rule the lairds leased land to the tenants of the large farms, who in turn sublet some of their holdings to small farm sub-tenants. Both large and small farmers then leased small acreages to cottars and crofters who combined supplying labour and essential crafts to farms with subsistence production of food for themselves and their families. Farms were often categorised by how many horses were needed: a two pair farm was small whereas a four pair farm was quite large. However, crofters were usually unable to afford to keep a pair of horses and so would often pool resources, which sometimes meant yoking a horse and an ox together to pull the plough.

What is perhaps not generally appreciated is that from a very young age children would provide labour on the family croft. In the early 1800s, children as young as ten were leaving home to work as farm servants on the larger neighbouring farms. As servants they would frequently change farms possibly once every six months, then getting a position or 'fee' at a feeing market.[66] But farm servants would usually stay within a radius of about ten or so miles of their home. Once they had climbed the farm servant hierarchical ladder and had gained a good reputation, they could then marry and negotiate a fee that came with a cottage. Whilst sons of a crofter would sometimes take over the lease of their father's croft, their usual aim was to become the tenant of their own croft. The cycle would then begin again as their sons went off to be farm servants.

A similar pattern of life was led by the women who would go out as servants to undertake domestic, dairy and outdoor work on farms until they married, usually to a farm servant, and then eventually becoming a crofter's wife. A crofter's wife was an essential part of the crofting life for she did a lot of the farming work as well as looking after the cottage and the children. Her particular responsibility was dairy work. The usual time for getting up was four in the morning and working until around seven at night. By the 1880s the working day had fallen to about ten hours.

Up until mid-19th century farm work was very labour intensive. Whilst horses were used to pull the ploughs, harrows and carts, the sowing, weeding, harvesting and threshing had to be done by hand. Cattle needed feeding especially during the long winters. Horses were usually very well cared for and this involved cleaning and maintaining the harness, mucking out the stables, and feeding, watering and grooming the horses. Outside dykes needed to be dug and kept clear to improve drainage, and farm machinery needed cleaning and maintaining.

There was a clear and strict hierarchy within the farm labour force. At the top was the farmer and next, on the larger farms, came the grieve – the foreman in charge of the labour force, though on smaller farms the farmer himself would be his own grieve. The farm servants were then divided according to their role – horsemen (ploughmen), cattlemen (coo baillies)[67] and orra men[68] (who did everything else). The farmer's wife would be in charge of the dairymaid, housemaid and kitchen

[66] Feeing market was a market where farm servants gathered to be hired for the coming season or year.

[67] *Coo baillie* was the person in charge of the cows. *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985

[68] *Orra man* was the person who does the odd jobs on a farm. *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985

maid (the latter known as a deem[69]). The hierarchy created status, horsemen having more status than cattlemen even though they did not necessarily earn more.

It was at the feeing markets where farm servants, both male and female, obtained their jobs (fees). Unmarried farm servants often moved farms every six months, though married ones tended to stay longer in one place. Contracts which were verbal and binding – were for six months. During the

[69] *Deem* was the kitchen maid on a farm. *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985

fortnight before the feeing market, known as 'speaking time', the farmer would approach those servants he wanted to keep and ask "Will ye bide?" The servant would answer either 'yeah' or 'nay': if they were not asked, they could not bide.

A farmer wanting to recruit at the feeing would approach a likely looking servant and they would negotiate terms. If a deal was struck it was usually sealed with a tot of whisky and a token sum paid by the farmer. This payment for services was termed an arle.[70] A farmer chose his servants based on that person's reputation and appearance which might involve the farmer feeling the servant's muscles! The reputation of a farm servant was of particular importance, as it enabled him to move up the hierarchy and obtain fees at the best farms. Horsemen were able to display their skills at well-attended ploughing matches.

Farm servants were paid by money plus food and board. Wages which were agreed for the spring to autumn term were usually higher than for the autumn to spring term due to more work being done during the lighter days and better weather.

Living arrangements

A tied cottage was usually part of a farm servant's fee and was often owned by the laird and rented to the farmer. The fee would also comprise money and the supply of essentials such as oatmeal, peat, milk and potatoes. The cottage would usually come with a piece of land, a kaleyard, where the servant and his wife could grow kale and other crops and possibly keep a cow or even a pig. The cottage was usually very basic and small – two rooms with a dirt floor of the typical Scottish 'but and ben'[71] style. However, by the mid 1800s such cottages were being replaced by similarly styled but better constructed but and bens of stone with an internal ceiling that gave the residents an attic where the children often slept.

The majority of farm servants were male, in their late teens and early twenties, and unmarried and were fed in the farmhouse kitchen, the farmer providing all meals as part of the fee. This usually meant the servant's food was prepared by the kitchen maid (deem). The servants could then sit by the kitchen fire until around nine o'clock which was bed time. They slept in the chaumer[72], usually a loft room in the steading, above the horses.

Farm servants would own a trunk (kist) to house their clothes and possessions, and the trunks would line one wall of the chaumer and act as seats. There was no heating and the only windows were sky-

[70] *Arle* to engage for service by payment of a sum of money *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985

[71] *But and ben* refers to the opposite ends of the same dwelling – usually a cottage, *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985

[72] *Chaumer* was a term used in the North East of Scotland to describe a sleeping place for farm workers, *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985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lights in the roof, often badly fitting or even with broken panes. Sometimes the deem would have the job of sweeping out the chaumer and making the beds. Later in the 1800s unmarried farm servants would be housed in a purpose-built chaumer next to the steading which usually had a fireplace. But by then the bicycle had made farm servants more mobile.

Diet

Judged by today's standards the diet was very boring and mostly vegetarian. Oatmeal was the staple served as brose. In order to make brose, oatmeal was boiled in water and then let to stand for a while until the oatmeal had softened, then it could be eaten warm with whatever was to hand – salt, milk, butter, buttermilk or with vegetables, especially kale and neeps (turnips).

Unmarried servants usually were given brose with milk and perhaps some oatcakes for breakfast, on occasion they had porridge, and sometimes herrings on Sunday. Dinner (lunch) could be broth made from barley or potatoes with more oatcakes and milk. Supper was brose again or porridge, with yet more oatcakes and milk. The milk would have been skimmed as the cream would be used by the dairymaid to make butter and cheese. There might be meat, most often beef or chicken on a Sunday.

It was the same diet for married servants (and for independent crofters) depending on what they could provide for themselves, they might also have eggs, rabbit or bacon and ham from the annual butchering of the pig. They would also have vegetables, mostly the threesome of "neeps, tatties and kale". Later in the 1800s provisions could be purchased from a local shop (e.g., tea, jam, treacle and bread made from wheat).

The mobile shops (especially the grocer) would take eggs, butter, soft fruit (when in season) from the farm for onward sale elsewhere in the area. A farm garden grew the vegetables for consumption by the household for which dried ingredients of lentils, peas and barley etc would be supplied by the grocer for the making of soup. Dried fruits, raisins, prunes, rice and lemonade etc would be the grocer's domain. Should chicken be required for the table, this would be on the hoof one minute – caught, slaughtered and gutted for the table. Milk was from the milking cows. The milk house (small cool room) within the house contained a separator for which a number of 'baking bowls' would sit around in varying stages of settlement – cream for the table to accompany the strawberries from the garden – thick cream (a few days older) for the butter making and possibly for cheese. The 'blue milk – whey' went into the pig swill.[73]

[73] M. Kite (2019) Correspondence, 11 August.

Durris looking east to the Duke of Gordon's Tower

4.3 Agricultural revolution and land agitation in Scotland

One of the most significant changes in the parish landscape in Scotland took place in the 18th and early 19th centuries during what has come to be called the Agricultural Revolution. The key agent here in transforming the landscape was the laird and this was because many lairds had travelled far afield, especially in England, and had come into contact with new agricultural developments and techniques. Before the 'Agricultural Revolution', there were two main types of hamlet in Scotland – the fermtoun and kirktoun[74] but after the 'Revolution', with a few exceptions, the fermtouns entirely disappeared to be replaced by the single farmstead, along with farm-workers cottages on the larger farms.

Before 1750 the building of dykes or hedges around fields, the clearing of stones, the laying of drains and levelling rigs was rare. In order to undertake these kinds of improvement the laird required expert advice which had been unavailable until the 1750's. The development of marginal areas was a good indicator of the revolutionary changes that were taking place. There were some cases where the growing pressure to improve the land led to an over investment in marginal areas and eventual abandonment and bankruptcy. Some lairds were happy to give out leases for little or no rent so as to enable tenants (e.g., many displaced cottars) to bring wasteland into cultivation.

[74] A *fermtoun* is a collection of cottages for the workers on a farm, whilst a *kirktoun* is a village with a parish church.

There was little doubt at the time that a major upheaval was taking place described variously as 'a spirit of improvement', 'fever of improvement' and even 'revolution'. A further indicator of rapid change was a massive displacement of labour with rural emigration increasing to epidemic proportions. What were the principal causes?

Both lairds and farmers recognised that to improve their incomes from farming, it was necessary to increase output per capita. Thus they had a vested interest in the removal of that group of people - the cottars - who made up half the population. Their labour was only required at certain times in the year for ploughing, threshing, herding and harvesting. With the introduction of the plough there was a reduced need for large teams of oxen and men, the threshing machine took over one of the most labour intensive tasks in the farming year; and the introduction of enclosures removed the need for the herdsman. It was only at harvest time that there was a need for extra hands and these could be obtained by seasonal labour from the Highlands and later from Ireland.

The clearances in Durris[75]

One of the most documented episodes in Scotland's past was the Clearances but this was *not* unique to one part of Scotland.[76] The process began in the Scottish Lowlands nearly a century before the glens and straths of the Highlands were emptied of people. Tens of thousands of Lowlanders were moved from the land by estate owners who replaced them with livestock and/or enclosed fields of crops. The revolution of 'improvement' helped shape the landscape we accept today as the Scottish countryside.

It also swept aside a traditional way of life, causing immense upheaval and trauma for rural dwellers, many of whom were forced to move to the new towns and cities or emigrate. In the later 18th century the simple act of losing land and becoming landless was much more significant for large numbers of people in Lowland society than it was for those in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands of Scotland. The Lowland Clearances also set in train the trend of depopulation which continues to affect Scotland to this day; the number of people who left the Lowlands during the agricultural revolution far exceeded the number exiled from the Highlands. And yet, compared to the Highlands, little has been written or published about the Lowland Clearances.

Land agitation in Scotland

On the 2nd August 1879 the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported that a meeting of the tenantry of the Durris estate had been held in Kirkton Hall for the purpose of formally expressing their thanks to their proprietor, Dr James Young, of Durris and Kellie, for the liberal deduction he had made off their rents at a recent rent collection.[77] Mr Reid, Balbridie, was in the chair, and there were present Mr

[75] The reduction of rent agitation: meeting of Durris tenantry, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 26 February 1887

[76] P. Aitchison and A. Cassell (2016) *The Lowland Clearances: Scotland's Silent Revolution 1760-1830*, East Linton: Tuckwell Press.

[77] *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 2 August 1879.

Salmond, Nether Balfour; Mr Thom, Quithelhead; Mr Kennedy, miller; Mr Smith, Garrol; Mr Simpson, Brigton, Mr Don, Brachmont; Mr Mann, Upper Balfour; Mr Robertson, North Brae; Mr Reith, Barns. Mr Salmond moved the resolution, which was duly seconded and agreed to. The chairman was directed to forward a copy to Mr Young.

In 1881 the *Dundee Courier* carried a report from the *New York Tribune*:

> *"Scotland is fast becoming permeated with the land agitation. A convention met at Aberdeen on Friday representing 40,000 farmers who demand lower rents, compensation for improvements, and other measures favourable to the tenant class. In striking contrast with the kindred agitation in Ireland, the Scottish movement produces no lawlessness. The shrewd and orderly Scotchmen are content with the weapons of fact and argument, and with these they will win in the long run. Nothing is plainer than that the immense quantities of American farm products brought to British markets by British steamers have so changed the conditions of agricultural success that it is necessary to lighten the burdens of the farmers in the United Kingdom to give them a fair chance to make a living off the land."* [78]

Also in 1881 the *Buchan Observer & East Aberdeenshire Advertiser* reported that land agitation in the north of Scotland had begun to assume an important aspect. There had been meetings of tenant farmers throughout Aberdeenshire, Banffshire and adjoining counties where arrangements had been made for holding demonstrations, at which resolutions had been submitted with the object of petitioning the Government to take into consideration the depressed state of agriculture, with a view to its amelioration so far as possible through legislation.[79]

On the 14th October 1881 Sir George Balfour MP for Kincardineshire addressed a conference of farmers on the issue of land agitation.[80] He pointed out that since he had been elected to represent the county of Kincardineshire he had taken a deep interest in the welfare of the constituency. It was not his intention to break the union between farmers and lairds but the land had to be cultivated and lairds had to consider the interests of the farmers as well as their own interests.

Sir George then indicated that he had ascertained in what respect these improvements had taken place. He made reference to the period 1842-43 when income tax was first established, the annual income of the lairds paid by farmers in Kincardineshire amounted to £122,000 per annum, and that for the last year it amounted to £188,000 per annum. It could be seen that the lairds in Kincardineshire had derived from these improvements of the country. He was in no doubt and he gave the lairds full credit for the fact they had invested the money for the improvement of the land but no such increase had occurred which could entitle them to claim the vast increase of nearly £50,000 which had taken place in the rent of the land.

Sir George then drew attention to the fact that in the years 1842/3 when the whole lands of Scotland were five million acres, the rents paid by the farmers amounted to five million sterling, and that for

[78] Extract from *Dundee Courier* of report in the *New York Tribune*, 23 December 1881.

[79] The land agitation in the North of Scotland, *Buchan Observer & East Aberdeenshire Advertiser*, 20 September 1881.

[80] Sir George Balfour (1881) The land agitation – conference in Aberdeen, *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 14 October.

the last year for which there were records, they amounted to upwards of seven and three quarter millions. Given this improvement could the lairds see whether or not they could possibly meet the wishes of the farmers.

If one went back to the time when the system of leases was begun in the year 1770, a great change had taken place with regard to the cultivation of the land, the law then passed for the cultivation of the land, entitled the farmer to a great degree the results of any improvements they then effected. For nearly 30 years leases were carried on free from many of the conditions which had since hampered the cultivation of the land during the last seventy years. Sir George believed that whatever new conditions were laid down or required from the landlord for the cultivation of the soil, no conditions should be inserted in leases that operated against the fruit of a farmers' labours.

Sir George reminded his audience that the great curse which had fallen on the cultivation of the land in Scotland was due to the Courts of Justice giving in all the cases, especially in former years, decisions hostile to the farmers and beneficial to the lairds. These decisions had gone upon the principle that farmers were not entitled to any advantage whatever except those advantages which were distinctly accorded in their leases and fixed by contract.

In 1881 it was reported that Lord Aberdeen had met his tenantry to discuss the land question, the agitation for reform of the land laws and reduction of rent.[81] In the course of his speech, he sought the opinion of the tenantry on the questions at issue. He acknowledged that agriculture was not at that time in a satisfactory condition but asked them to consider that the falling-off in agricultural prosperity was part of a wider depression to which the country as a whole had been affected.

While he acknowledged that an improvement was necessary in regard to land laws, he suggested that the present distress might have come about because so many crofts had been swallowed up into larger farms and that farmers by adding to their holdings without having an adequate amount of capital to maintain their position were unable to cope when bad times came upon them.

Land agitation in Durris

In February 1885 it was reported that the tenantry of Durris had presented a petition to the representatives of the late Dr Young, in which they had made a number of requests:

(1) To meet the present necessity, to grant a substantial abatement from the rent for last year's crop;

(2) A revaluation of farms and readjustment of rents to be made by practical and experienced valuators;

[81] The Haddo House Tenantry, *Aberdeen Journal*, 13 January 1881.

(3) Liberty to those who find it impossible to continue under their present or adjusted rents to retire from their holdings with the privileges of an outgoing tenant.[82]

In enforcing their petition, they urged the following considerations: that the late Dr Young some years ago had granted a considerable temporary abatement of rent; that the circumstances which then existed had not changed for the better but had rather become worse, and that many of the petitioners were now in a more unfavourable position to meet their engagements than they were then; that in most cases they had entered on their leases when farming was in a comparatively flourishing condition, and in the case of others, in which leases were more recently taken, it had not assumed the dark prospect which it at present bore, and consequently they were induced to enter on engagements which in many cases there was little prospect of them being able to fulfil; that from their present position and future prospects they felt greatly discouraged, and had neither inclination nor inducement to deal liberally with their holdings, which consequently were likely to get out of condition, leading from bad to worse, terminating in some cases not only in disaster to the occupants, but also in deterioration and exhaustion of the holdings; that if the petition be granted, they were persuaded that ultimately it would not only be for the benefit of the petitioners but also for that of the estate and its owners.

On the 17th January 1885 the trustees of Durris estate replied:

Dear Sir

> *Having now conferred with my co-trustees on the subject of the petition signed by you and other tenants on the estate, we have come to the conclusion that the time between the receipt of the petition and the rent day is too short to enable us to give the matter such full consideration as it requires in justice not only to the tenantry but also to those in whose interest we act. We trust, however, that when we have had time and opportunity to go into each case on its own merits we may be able to afford such assistance to tenants as may meet the requirements of the times. I am, yours, &.*

On the 26 February 1887 the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported that a meeting had been held of the tenantry on the estate of Durris, Kincardineshire to consider 'the present agricultural situation'. Upwards of fifty of the tenants were present with Mr William Reid, Balbridie, presiding.[83] In comparing the present state of agriculture with what it had been fourteen years ago, the chairman indicated that previously he had sold cattle at £5 per cwt whereas now the price obtainable was about 56s. Fourteen years ago, barley sold at 36 shillings, and oats at 27shillings, but at the present time 14 shillings would be considered a high average price for oats.

Under the existing conditions he thought it was virtually impossible for the tenants to pay their costs. He expressed regret that farmers were being held to their bargains until they were actually ruined. In his opinion it was absolutely necessary that something should be done, not only to relieve the tenants

[82] The Durris tenants and rent reduction (1886) *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 4 February.

[83] The reduction of rent agitation: meeting of Durris tenantry, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 27 February 1887.

on the Durris estate, but tenants throughout the whole of Scotland. He thought that if the whole tenantry of Scotland could petition Parliament on the subject it would be the means of convincing the Tory government that something needed to be done to improve the position of agriculture.

In thinking of a remedy for the present unsatisfactory state of matters Mr. Reid proposed that every tenant should employ someone with a practical knowledge of agriculture to value his farm, each tenant paying for his own valuations and then if the day came when they could not pay more than the real valuation then the laird should look for the balance somewhere else. Mr George Fyfe, North Brae, suggested that the tenants should approach the trustees on the estate with a firm and strong request for a reduction of 25 to 30 per cent on their rents. Anything less would be quite inadequate.

The Chairman proposed that a Committee should be appointed to represent to the trustees of the Durris estate that the tenants desired a re-evaluation of their farms by valuators, mutually chosen, and also that they should be given liberty to quit their holdings. Mr James Gordon, Sunnyside, observed that during the past eighteen years out of 52 farms, 27 farmers on the Durris estate had been evicted or become bankrupt. While there had been an outcry about the crofter tenants' evictions in Skye, little attention had been paid to the issue of clearances a little nearer home. The chairman's proposal was unanimously adopted, and Messrs James Gordon, Sunnyside; Thomas Ramsay, Calladrum; George Fyfe, Newton; John Robertson, North Brae; and the Chairman were appointed to wait upon the factor on the estate, and make a representation in terms of the resolution.

In 1893 a short article appeared in the *Stonehaven Journal* which recorded an abatement of rent on the Durris estate:

> *At the collection of Whitsunday rents of the Durris estate generous deductions were made on the sums payable, in consideration of the disastrous season last year. The present proprietor, Mr H.R. Baird has, since the acquirement of the estate, done much for the assistance and wellbeing of his tenants, and this fresh token of his consideration has been received with lively gratitude*.[84]

At a Durris estate entertainment in January 1895 reference was made to the great improvements that had been made on the estate which had involved a large outlay and which had been entirely carried out by the large permanent staff. It was acknowledged that Durris was particularly favoured above most estates by having a proprietor who spent so much of his time in their midst, a sentiment strongly endorsed by estate workers.[85] Notwithstanding the sympathetic support given by the proprietor, the size of the parish population of Durris halved with few of the 52 farms to which reference was made at the 1887 meeting now existing

[84] Abatement of rent, *Stonehaven Journal*, 10 August 1893.

[85] Durris – estate entertainment, *Stonehaven Journal*, 17 January 1895.

Durris viewed from Bridge Toll House, Drumoak

River Dee from Durris

Durris Forest

Mill of Kirkton, Durris

Early land improvers of Durris[86]

In 1936 an article was published in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* in which the claim was made that the parish of Durris in Kincardineshire had been singularly fortunate during the last century and a half in having enlightened proprietors who were devoted to the work of land improvement.[87] It was argued that the general layout of the parish had been ably and well planned. It had also been fortunate in having, until recently, only one proprietor for the greater part of the parish. When the original work of reclaiming the land from heather and bog had begun, the reclamation was not done in a haphazard fashion. The parcelling of the land into holdings had been well and ably thought out. Whilst the slogan 'employment for everyone, opportunities for all' might have sounded far too idealistic for any scheme of land settlement, it is claimed that in Durris that ideal seems to have been realised by a succession of landlords who did so much to tame and beautify the estate.

4.4 Emigration

As the chart of the population of Durris reveals there was a steady decline after 1861. This decline would have been mirrored throughout Scotland. As a consequence there was a movement to the cities in Scotland and the industrial centres in England. But there were others who went further afield. On the 17th October 1872 an advertisement appeared in the *Stonehaven Journal* entitled 'New Kincardineshire Colony'. The reader was informed that a Captain Brown had intimated his intention of assisting ten poor families, of the 'Agricultural clan', to the extent of £20 for each family. Applicants for this assistance had to be natives of Kincardineshire and to furnish a testimonial of good character.

An article was published in the *Greenock Advertiser* six months later with the title 'Emigrants for the 'Kincardineshire Colony''. It was reported that a special train left Aberdeen on a Friday evening for Glasgow, with 200 emigrants from the north-east coast – the intended settlers in the new Kincardineshire Colony, New Brunswick. Another larger party of emigrants joined the train at Stonehaven, and other intending colonists were taken up along the route, until the company numbered between 700 and 750, the largest number of emigrants that had ever left Scotland at one time for one place!

[87] Early land improvers of Durris, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 9 June 1936.

New Kincardineshire Colony

FREE FARMS.

To the SURVEYOR-GENERAL, Fredericton.

Mr. James Find Later

duly accepted Member of the Colony having complied with the conditions is located on Free Farm No. 76 of 200 Acres

Thos Pitts P Manager.

Dav Taylor Secretary.

STONEHAVEN, 13/1 1872 3

New Kincardineshire Colony

FREE PASS TICKET.

FREE PASS TICKET No. 76

from St. John, N. B., to New Stonehaven for

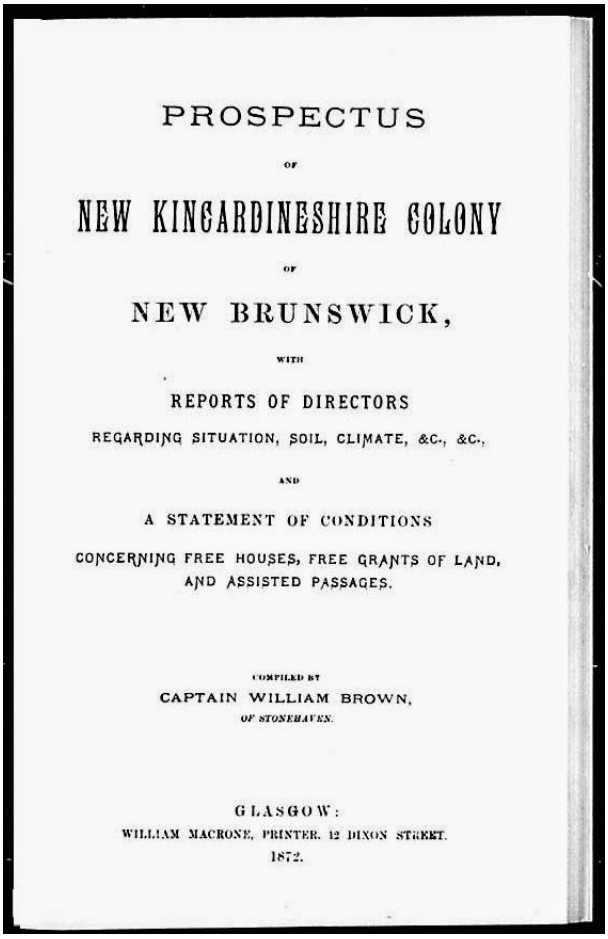
Mr. James Find Later

and Family, consisting of 5 persons.

Thos Pitts P Manager.

Dav Taylor Secretary.

STONEHAVEN, 13/1 1872 8



PROSPECTUS

OF

NEW KINCARDINESHIRE COLONY

OF

NEW BRUNSWICK,

WITH

REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

REGARDING SITUATION, SOIL, CLIMATE, &C., &C.,

AND

A STATEMENT OF CONDITIONS

CONCERNING FREE HOUSES, FREE GRANTS OF LAND, AND ASSISTED PASSAGES.

COMPILED BY

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BROWN,

OF STONEHAVEN.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAM MACRONE, PRINTER, 12 DIXON STREET.

1872.

The ship which took them to Canada was the *Castalia*. No other ship since the arrival of the *Mayflower* had brought to North America an emigration so completely of a family character and no other vessel had ever conveyed so many young children to a port in the New World – for the *Castalia* sailed with 198 children under 12 years of age.[88]

[88] B. Stevenson (1874) *Report of Surveyor General for New Brunswick, Journal of the House of Assembly, Province of New Brunswick, 5th Session*. http://www.theshipslist.com/accounts/ScotchColonists.shtml

On the 24th July 1894 a report was published in the *Brechin Advertiser* describing this prosperous Kincardineshire colony in New Brunswick. It was noted that twenty one years earlier a company of colonists from Scotland had reached a locality on the river Muniac, in the province of New Brunswick and had founded what had since developed into the very prosperous Kincardineshire colony. At first the colonists had to battle against many difficulties, but a number had become faint-hearted and left for other parts. Those who remained and had applied themselves to farming now had very comfortable homes, good houses and barns, and all the comforts known to farm life.

New Kincardineshire, New Brunswick, Canada

It is known that a number of settlers' families came from around Durris: John Webster from Durris; Alexander Phillips from Drumoak, Alexander Croker from Banchory and William Duncan from Inchmarlo. The colonists who had been chosen from Kincardineshire were picked for established respectability and industriousness—all of the men had trades. There were blacksmiths, carpenters, cobblers, millers, painters, rotary sawyers, stonecutters, stonemasons, storekeepers, tailors and weavers to name a few of these skilled tradesmen.

Melville Church, Scotch Colony, New Brunswick

In the late 19th century, life in Kincardineshire, as elsewhere, had been lived at a slow pace. People were secure in their social positions, and they knew what to expect from life. However, the laird in each parish owned all the property and most people had to work under his directions. Working for the lairds also meant that people were unlikely to have the resources to change their situation. That was just how life was at that time —until they became inspired by the idea of owning their own land and obtaining it in this instance for free in far away New Brunswick.[89]

The settling of the Scotch Colony in Victoria County by families from Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire was in large part an exercise in faith and personal fortitude. Most of those who emigrated were fairly well educated and had skills and trades which provided the families with a decent livelihood, although by no means were they all well off. All these emigrants had strong cultural and family ties that went back hundreds of years and were also proud of their heritage and united in their religious beliefs.[90]

4.5 Local government

Up to the 18th century the lairds of Scotland had considerable power and influence over those who lived on their lands; however the situation changed with the introduction of the Heritable Jurisdiction Act in 1747. With the introduction of this Act the administration of justice was put into the hands of Justices of the Peace. They were responsible for making provision for the hiring of servants, fixing wages and no-one was permitted to pay more than the fixed rate. They made rules about such things as the maintenance of roads, bridges and dykes, the pounding of stray sheep and cattle, the certificates for beggars, banishment of vagrants, the liability of people keeping dangerous beasts and the use of properly stamped weights and measures. There were also provisions that no man should be intoxicated at a funeral or attend without an invitation!

[89] C. Allen, The settling of the Scotch Colony https://scotchcolony1873.wordpress.com/category/settling/

Criminal cases which came before the Justices of the Peace could include minor assault, breach of the peace, irregular marriages, prostitution, riot, theft and the violation of laws relating to excise cases, liquor licensing, poaching, roads and juvenile court cases. As JPs were usually more concerned to reduce local expenditure than to incur it, they tended to fine rather than to imprison and the records of their criminal hearings were usually brief. Some duties such as special tax assessments and recruitment for the militia were usually carried out in conjunction with other county officials.

Whilst the changes made by the Act of 1747 were significant, in practice it was often the same people performing these tasks. Whereas before they were acting under the authority of the laird, now as Justices of the Peace they were acting under the authority of the King. There were very few aspects of life in which the Justices of the Peace did not have an interest. Whilst Justices were not paid by the government, they were nevertheless entitled to charge small fees for their services. They were also expected to be leading men of property in their counties but over the course of the 18th century it became increasingly difficult to find landed gentlemen who were willing to assume that role.

CHAPTER 5: LIFE IN A RURAL PARISH: PART TWO

5.1 Population

In 1970 Cuthbert Graham reported that a new deal was in the making for the parish of Durris which until recently had been immune from the hallmarks of modernity.[91] Graham noted that the Glen Dye water scheme had now made it possible to bring Durris into the 20th century and remove an obstacle to new development. The shape which this development might take was foreshadowed by the Kincardine Planning Committee's recommendation to the County Council to support an application for change-of-use so that part of the former policies of Durris House could be offered as sites for seventeen high-quality houses. Each of the houses would stand in at least an acre of ground with a view of Deeside from a lofty tree-girt site. It was noted that some of the trees were around 140 years old and of great interest and value as botanical specimens: there were a number of Douglas firs grown by the proprietors of Durris from seeds brought to this country by David Douglas (1798-1834), others belonged to the Durris arboretum. It was claimed that all would be safeguarded by tree preservation orders.

A less optimistic article appeared in the *Evening Express* in 1982 declaring it to be a dismal day for the people of Kirkton of Durris - one of the most picturesque of hamlets on the south Deeside road.[92] It was noted that after a family connection spanning three generations and going back 80 years the Marrs were giving up the shop and Post Office. And once the doors were closed they were likely to remain closed repeating a pattern all over the countryside. Mrs Marr commented that the days of the little shops had passed. Before her husband had taken over the business, it had been run by his father and grandfather before him. In his grandfather's day, the family also ran a tailor's business in the back shop. The article concluded that the shop would soon become just a memory like the smiddy and joiner's shop just down the road and the old meal mill by the stream on the edge of the forest.

The population of Durris parish had reached its peak of 1109 in 1861; thereafter there had been a steady decline to 484 in 1991. Thus in less than a century the population of Durris had been more than halved. The decline had been accelerated with the mechanisation of agriculture, the abandonment and dereliction of tied cottages and the acquisition of local farmland for afforestation. Whilst Durris still had its village school, a lot of rural schools in Scotland had become unsustainable and without a school a rural area became much less attractive for young families. The closure of local facilities as a result of depopulation encouraged more depopulation and once this cumulative process was under way it became difficult to reverse.

[91] C. Graham, New deal for Durris, *The Press and Journal*, 7 November 1970.

[92] S. Hamilton, The door to the Highlands, *Evening Express*, 6 February 1982.

Population of Durris

1755	889
1769	777
1774	750
1791	651
1801	605
1831	1035
1861	1109
1871	1021
1881	1014
1891	918
1901	884
1911	872
1921	810
1931	731
1951	664
1961	584
1971	505
1981	572
1991	484
2001	596
2011	628

In less than two hundred years Durris had also witnessed a profound change from a large number of farms with many farm labourers to a situation where the land was cultivated by fewer resident farmers and where there was no significant farm labour force. Bill Blackhall, from a long established farming family, has commented on some of these changes.[93] Just after the conclusion of the Second World War, Durris had 40 farms, all with tenants, and ten crofts. There were three smiddies, two joiner's shops, three stores, a souter[94], a dressmaker, a miller and a bobby. The three smiddies were located at Denside, Crossroads and Lochton and the shops at Kirkton, Lochton and Denside. There were regular deliveries of bread from a baker in Banchory and Culter, meat from butchers from Banchory and fish from a fishmonger from Muchalls. A large 'Johnnie A'thing' van came from Crathes Emporium as did a grocer from Stonehaven.[95] The three Durris shops and the delivery vans kept Durris well supplied with provisions.

Upland agriculture in Scotland in general and in the higher parts of Kincardineshire had always been something of a hand to mouth existence. It was not possible to grow crops and given a combination of altitude and latitude the growing season was too short, the soil too poor and the weather too unreliable. Whilst sheep could be reared cattle needed indoor shelter during the winter which meant providing expensive fodder. The vulnerability of upland farming can be seen if one looks at Google Earth and focuses on the upland areas to the south of Durris where numerous abandoned farms and fields can be clearly seen.

Today large mechanised implements, often provided by contractors, can do almost all the jobs that used to employ farm labourers. It is acknowledged that some of these tasks are not always well executed, for example flail-hedging which although quick and cheap often leaves gaps to be filled by wire fences where once cut and laid beech or hawthorn hedges formed both an impenetrable barrier for stock as well as a refuge for wildlife. But then machines are cheaper than men and there are neither the incentives nor facilities to do such jobs as conscientiously as they were done in earlier days.

In the lowland areas, family farms have often given way to giant amalgamated holdings. And today a not insignificant number of those farming the land are not farmers in the conventional sense but rather individuals who see agricultural land as an investment and hire outside contractors to undertake all the main tasks (e.g., ploughing, tilling; sowing, harvesting, etc). Quite often this kind of farmer has income from other sources and is not totally reliant on the earnings generated by his farm which can be variable and unpredictable because of weather and disease. Investing in farming might for some seem like a good strategic move. After all, whether or not the overall economy was in recession or booming, people still had to eat. Because of this, many investors regard agriculture and farming as being recession-proof. Further, as the world's population increases, farming will play an increasingly important role in sustaining global societies.

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[93] B. Blackhall, Durris then and now, *Drumoak & Durris Newsletter*, June 2017.

[94] A souter is a shoemaker, *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985

[95] *Johnnie A'thing* is an owner of a small general store, *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, Aberdeen University Press, 1985.

George Marr's Shop: Kirkton of Durris

War Memorial: Kirkton of Durris May 1963 (Reproduced by kind permission of D C Thomson)

Kirkton of Durris: January 1982 (Reproduced by kind permission of D.C. Thomson)

Old Post Office: Kirkton of Durris

Kirkton of Durris (1975-1976)

5.2 Education

In 1866 the government established the Argyll Commission to look into the schooling system in Scotland.[96] It found that of around 500,000 children in need of education: 200,000 were receiving it under efficient conditions, 200,000 in schools of doubtful merit without any inspection and 90,000 were receiving no education at all! Although this compared favourably with the situation in England, with 14% more children in education in Scotland and with relatively low illiteracy rates of between 10 and 20%, similar to those in the best-educated nations in Europe such as those in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Scandinavia, this report was used as support for widespread reform.

In 1872 the Education (Scotland) Act was passed. This was based on the Elementary Education Act which had been passed for England and Wales in 1870. However the Scottish legislation provided a more comprehensive solution: primary education was made universal and mandatory in Scotland. Under this Act approximately 1,000 regional school boards were established which immediately took over the schools of the old and new kirks and began to enforce attendance. Poverty was no longer accepted as an excuse for non-attendance and some help was supplied under the Poor Laws. This policy was enforced by the School Attendance Committee, while the school boards were concerned with filling the gaps in provision. This resulted in a major programme that created a large number of purpose-built schools.

Overall administration of the newly established school system was in the hands of the Scotch (later Scottish) Education Department in London. The demand for places was high and for a generation after the Act's passing there was overcrowding in many classrooms, with up to 70 children being taught in one room. The emphasis on achieving a set number of passes at exams led to much learning by rote and a system of inspection was introduced which led to even the weakest children being drilled with facts.

However, the introduction of the Education (Scotland) Act 1872 had one other significant effect. It put an end to non-English as a medium of education; thus Gaelic was suppressed and any pupils speaking Gaelic were punished. Not only were pupils belted if they were caught speaking Gaelic but also beaten if they did not disclose the names of other students speaking Gaelic.[97] [98] The effect of the Education Act upon the Gaelic language was devastating. By denying the value of Gaelic culture and language, it helped to destroy the self-respect of Gaelic communities.

This can be seen as a continuation of a general policy (by both Scottish and, after 1707, British governments) which aimed at the process of Anglicisation. As a result of facing punishment and humiliation for speaking Gaelic, many parents decided not to pass on the language to their children.

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[96] George Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll.

[97] The belt would usually have been administered with a *tawse* which consisted of a strip of leather, with one end split into a number of tails. Pupils were usually instructed to hold out one hand, palm uppermost, supported by the other hand below, which made it difficult to move the hand away during the infliction of the strokes. It also ensured that the full force of each stroke was taken by the hand being strapped.

[98] The belt was outlawed in state schools in Scotland in 1986, with it finally being stopped in Scottish fee paying schools in March 1998.

It was not until the 1980s that Gaelic medium education was re-established in Scotland; however the impact of the 1872 Act is still being felt in Gaelic communities today.

Durris School

At a meeting of the School Board held in August 1873, it was resolved that "… a new school and schoolhouse be built on the lands of Woodlands to accommodate the east end of the parish and that the Board accept the proprietor of Durris of the Dhault School, to accommodate the west end of the parish."[99] The school was located in the hamlet of Woodlands of Durris some seven miles south east of Banchory and twelve miles from the city of Aberdeen. The school catchment area lay between the River Dee in the north and Durris Forest and Fetteresso Forest in the south. It passed westwards through Northbrae Plantation, Mulloch and over Garrol Hill while the boundary on the east was by way of Craiglug, Corsehill and Trees. Prior to the construction of Woodlands School there had been a school at Brachmont – Backdykes School which served the east of the parish and which closed about the time that Woodlands opened.[100] There was also a Free Church School which was built in 1846.

But by 1975 the future of a small village school like Durris was seen as uncertain. At a meeting of Kincardine Education Committee a plea was made for funds to build a new school at Durris to replace the existing schools at Woodlands of Durris and Crossroads. The Director of Education explained that though the two-teacher primary schools at Durris were outdated and the classrooms were too small, funds had to be allocated for expansion in the county's growth areas, with lesser projects being pushed down the list of priorities. He indicated that their policy on these schools was dictated by a meeting held in Durris when parents overwhelmingly rejected the closure of both schools with the children transferring to Banchory in favour of a new school at the Kirkton of Durris.[101] He made clear that the creation of such a school was not yet at the planning stage but if the capital was there and no other pressure priorities came up, a start would be made in 1977-1978.

Durris School was eventually established on 1st January 2000 following the amalgamation of Crossroads Primary School and Woodlands Primary School. In 2006 a further extension was made to include office, reception area and a toilet for the disabled. The accommodation consisted of an open-plan early years classroom and general purposes room in the old building and two further classrooms in the extension.

In 1935 an intriguing article concerning Woodlands School appeared in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, the topic being one rarely given press prominence – school dinners! The reader was informed that the Headmaster had reported that no fewer than 5242 dinners had been served to pupils during the twenty-one weeks of the winter. And then, an appreciation was expressed for the generous gifts to the School of rabbits, hares, fowls, potatoes, milk, turnips and carrots! What is not known is whether

[99] *Stonehaven Journal*, 28 August 1873.

[100] Old Durris School, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 7th October 1931.

[101] A. Maywood, New life for two Deeside parishes, *The Press and Journal*, 8 March 1975.

this was a practice peculiar to Durris and for how long that practice continued. Also not known is whether these gifts came to form the regular basis for the school dinner. If so, the Durris pupils appear to have been exceedingly well fed.

Woodland School: Durris

Crossroads School: Durris

But both Crossroads and Woodlands Schools have not operated simply as schools, for over the years they have hosted a range of educational, recreational and social activities. Woodlands School has acted as a base for staff from North Scotland College of Agriculture to give series of lectures: e.g., bees and bee-keeping, (November 1931); poultry keeping and dairying (November 1933).

In August 1918 a meeting of Durris farmers was held at Crossroads School to consider a proposed National Service scheme relating to school labour in connection with the harvest. At that meeting an outline was given of the scheme and the fact that camps were being set up throughout the country for boys to live in and to allow them to proceed to and from their work.[102] Earlier that year the House of Commons had discussed various strategies to find the manpower to bring in the harvest given the absence of men on military duty. Prisoners of war with agricultural experience had been employed in larger numbers and that number was to be further augmented. The strength of the Women's Land Army was also to be increased. But special arrangements were also to be made to secure the services of boys from public and secondary schools and from the Boy Scouts.[103]

Whilst Woodlands School could provide a setting for an educational, social or recreational event, it was not possible to hold events involving alcoholic refreshment. There was however a social club and badminton club based at Brachmont Hall and there is frequent reference to whist drives and dances held there in the interwar years. There were also meetings there of the 'Aunt Judy' Society which had as its principal object the provision of garments for the Royal Aberdeen Hospital for Sick Children. Whilst there was frequent reference to activities at the Hall in the interwar years, nothing appears in the local press about activities at the Hall after the end of WW2.

Adult education

There is some evidence that before compulsory education had been introduced in 1872 there was an interest in adult self education in Durris. An article appeared in the *Stonehaven Journal* in 1846 drawing attention to the first meeting of the Durris Reading Club.[104] A sketch of the proceedings revealed the highly intellectual character of the Society. At this meeting Mr George Hardie had given an account of the life of Peter the Great of Russia; and Mr David Wright, Garrol, a similar account of that of George Washington; Mr Robert Turner then gave a history of Richard Falconer; which was followed by sketches of the life of Nelson by Mr Peter Coutts; of Macbeth by Robert Walker; of Grace Darling by James Turner; and the cottagers of Glenburnie by Mr Alex Low.

Mr John Collison, Lochton, then read the sixth chapter of Combe's *Constitution of Man*, on punishment inflicted by the natural laws. This gave rise to an animated discussion of several points of physiology, as well as of many of the doctrines peculiar to the phrenological school of moral philosophy.[105] The

[102] Durris farmers on school labour, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 20 August 1918.

[103] https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1918/feb/26/harvest-labour

[104] Durris Reading Club (1846) *Stonehaven Journal*, 17 November.

[105] Phrenology is the study of the shape of the skull as indicative of character.

club which was scheduled to meet on the first Monday of every month during winter made clear its aims:

> *If conducted with good humour and propriety, as we have every reason from the character of these in management to believe it will, we venture to predict that the members will be astonished at the amount of information which they must necessarily acquire in such a course*.

It has not been possible to discover the content of any subsequent meetings of the Club or for how long it lasted or the nature of its membership. Judging by the content of the first meeting participants must have exercised considerable powers of endurance. What also is not disclosed is whether the listeners to this very varied, if somewhat heavy, literary diet were periodically offered any form of liquid refreshment!

It is worth observing that the Durris Reading Club came into existence over fifty years before the establishment of the Association to Promote the Higher Education of Working Men which was founded in 1903. In 1905 that title was changed to the Workers Educational Association and its first constitution was established in 1906. It subsequently became closely linked to the universities extra mural departments, links which were strengthened with the development of university tutorial classes. The WEA was also linked to the trade union movement and was closely involved in campaigns for better state education. The WEA is now a national voluntary organisation existing primarily to provide adults with access to organised learning.

There is also reference to a Recreation Club in Durris in 1910 which sought to address 'matters of substance'. The *Stonehaven Journal* reported an attendance of over 80 for a debate on 'Votes for Women'. The debate was conducted by two students, Douglas Spark and Ranald Macdonald. Mr Macdonald led off the debate by making an appeal to certain abstract principles, to the teaching of John Stuart Mill, and to the general advance of liberal measures. He is reported as having tried to justify the militant tactics of the suffragist and to predict the speedy triumph of their cause. Mr Spark followed and attacked the position that had been advanced in what he saw as its vulnerable points. He sought to show the insincerity of the suffragist cry of women being downtrodden and to demonstrate the many privileges that women currently possessed. On the vote being taken, the ladies' side prevailed.[106] It is worth observing that British women over 30 did not gain the vote until the Representation of the People Act of 1918. In 1928 a further Act lowered the voting age to 21 and then eventually in 1969 a final Act lowered the voting age to 18.

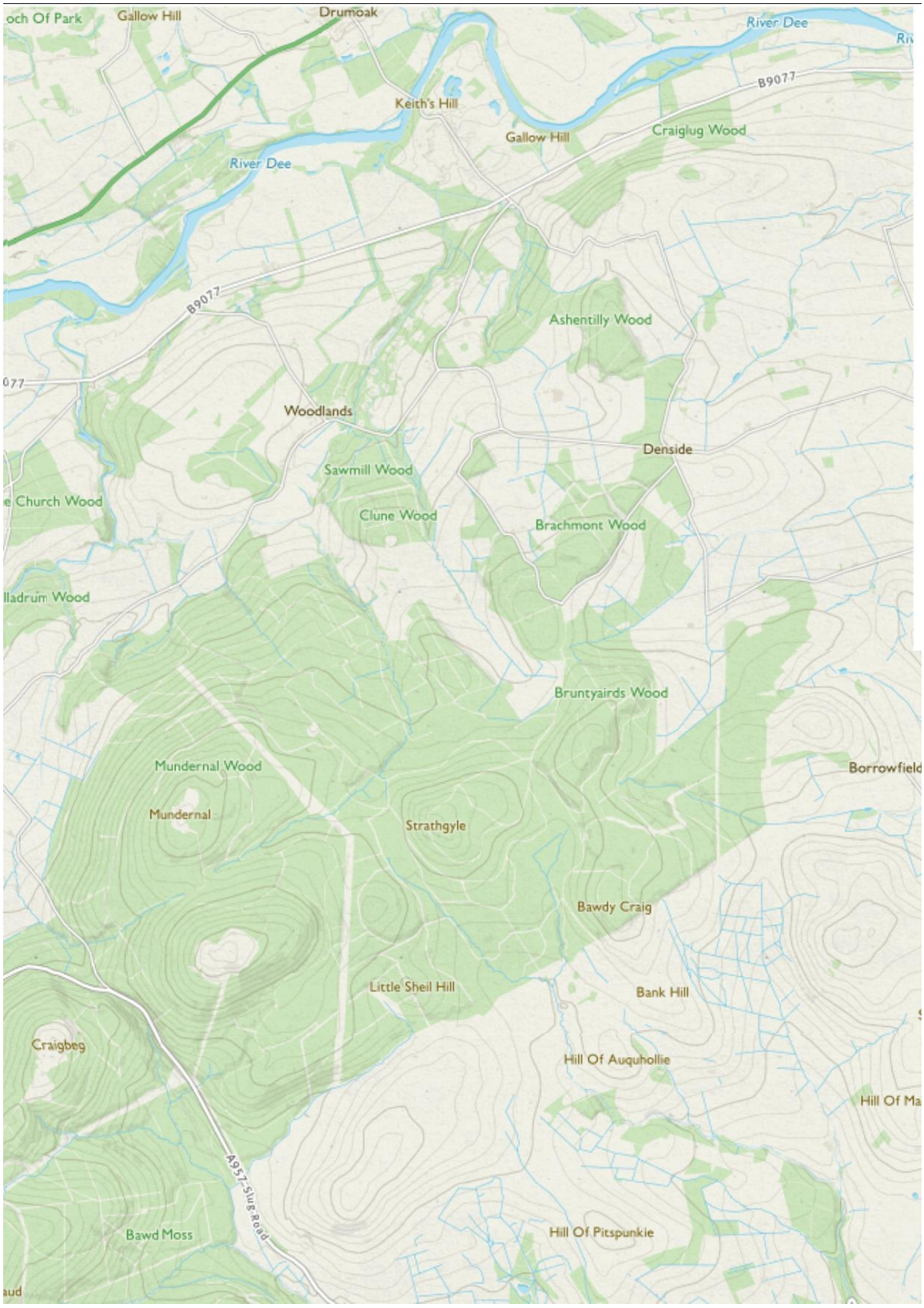
Four years after this debate the First World War broke out. Whilst one cannot and should not ignore the appalling loss of life on all sides, one positive result of the war was a national recognition of the indispensable role of women in all facets of national life. This is well exemplified in the life and work of the wife of one of the best loved proprietors of Durris estate – Mrs Florence Baird. Her contribution is examined in a later chapter.

[106] Recreation club, *Stonehaven Journal*, 20 January 1910.

5.3 Forestry

As can be seen from the two maps on the following pages a not insignificant part of the parish is covered by forest. Since its establishment over a hundred years ago there has been a close link between the parish and the Forestry Commission which came into existence as a result of the Forestry Act of 1919. This gave the Commission responsibility for woods in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. However, on the 1st April 2019 the responsibility for the development of forestry was fully devolved and two new Scottish Government agencies accountable to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament: *Forestry and Land Scotland* which manages and promotes Scotland's national forests and land and *Scottish Forestry* which is responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation.

Forestry Commission, Durris: 1964



OS OpenData

East Durris

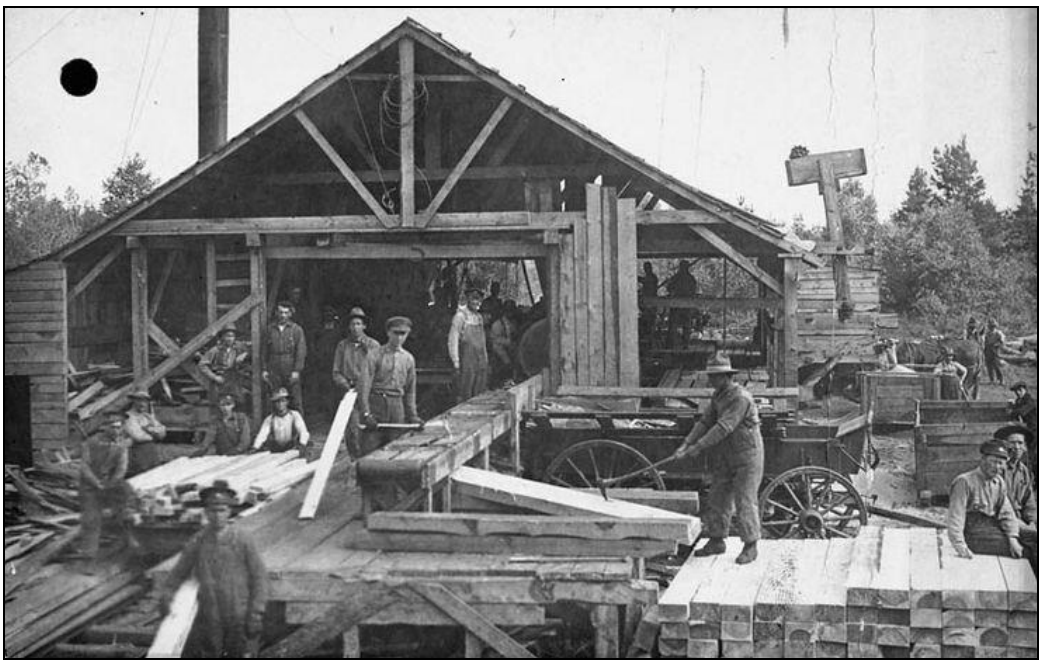

Hill Of Banchory
Ley Wood
Carlieth Wood
A93
A93
River Dee
River Dee
River Dee
B9077
Slug Road
A957
Hill Of Maryfield
Slug Road
Slug Road
Free Churc
Northbrae Plantation
Balladrum
Old Kiln Wood
Cairnshee Wood
Craig Of Affrusk
Lochton
A957
Mulloch Hill
Knock Hill
The Ord
Mongour
The Craig
Hill Of Mossmaud
Coldwell Hill
Durner Hill
Monluth Hill
Hill Of Hobseat
North Dennetys

OS OpenData

Whilst the Forestry Commission had been responsible for managing the forestry resources in Britain for one hundred years, it received invaluable assistance during wartime from two groups: the Canadian Forestry Corps and Women's Timber Corps, both of which are likely to have had a link with Durris. No apology is offered for highlighting the role of these two groups as their very important contribution to the war effort has not been given the prominence it deserves.

The Canadian Forestry Corps

The Canadian Forestry Corps, composed of professional woodsmen, was first organized during World War One at the request of the United Kingdom to help meet Britain's timber needs during the hostilities. Besides producing lumber, the Corps was also trained as infantry and occasionally served on the front lines to assist in the quick construction of rail and road systems in the wake of attacking troops. On one occasion, when a request was made for 500 men to join infantry duty, records show that almost 1300 volunteered. By the time the offensive had been halted, a large number of Corps members had served in some capacity on the front lines. When the Corps was disbanded in 1920 at the end of the war, it is estimated they were responsible for 70% of all lumber that had been used by Allied forces.



Canadian Forestry Corps in Scotland: WW1

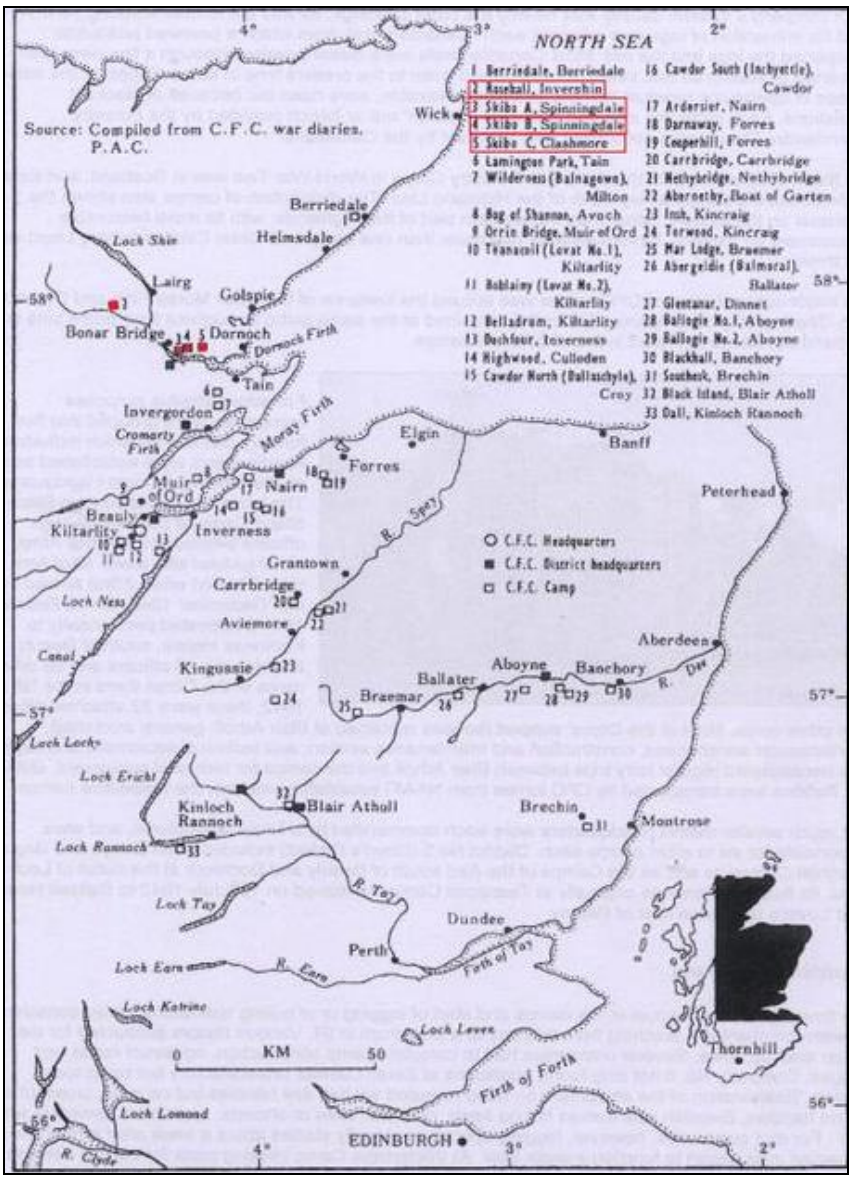
The Canadian Forestry Corps was re-formed in World War Two to play the same role. Most of its activities were centred in Highland Scotland during the latter conflict though it also participated in the north-west Europe operations following D-Day. Some 33 camps were scattered in north-eastern Scotland, from Berriedale to Brechin, with major concentrations on Deeside, Strathspey and the Moray/Dornoch Firth Lowlands. In addition to meeting its primary objective the Canadian Forestry Corps' presence in Scotland was influential in other ways: as a defensive element in the earlier years, as a social factor in many smaller communities, and in post-war forestry conditions through its widespread clearing activities and in the more modern wood-handling techniques which it introduced.[107]

Altogether about 7,000 men were deployed to Scotland. Members of the CFC were seen in uniform regularly at local parades in support of varied wartime causes. In addition to their distinctive cap badges and shoulder patches, from March 1943 the CFC were identified by a green triangle below the 'Canada' flash on the upper arm of the battle dress. Church parades also brought them to the public's attention as the No. 22 Company made use of the local church buildings as well as holding religious services in the camp.

Canadian Forestry Corps in Scotland: WW2

[107] W. Wonders (1987) The Canadian Forestry Corps in Scotland during World War II, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 21-30, 27 February. https://doi.org/10.1080/00369228718736684

The first Field Day of 1942 for District No. 2 at Aboyne saw all Deeside companies participating as well as the RAMC unit stationed there. The band of the Royal Scots Fusiliers also attended. Once again, after the events and supper in the camps, the troops returned for a street dance, despite the rain. There was much interaction between CFC personnel and the Scottish civilian population. The CFC was apparently well liked in the Scottish Highlands. The men became active participants in local functions, from fundraising to staging Christmas parties for the local children. Many times, scrap wood mysteriously fell from lorries beside homes in need of fuel. A notable tribute to the CFC was paid by Laura Lady Lovat when she stated, "you Canadians may be cutting the Scots firs of the Highlands, but in Highland hearts you are planting something far more lasting".



Canadian Forestry Corps: WW2 Camps in Scotland

Women's Timber Corps (Lumberjills)

Members of The Women's Timber Corps (WTC) were recruited during World War II to carry out the work of male lumberjacks, whose numbers had been depleted by conscription. Lumberjills, as they came to be known, carried out the same demanding and heavy work as lumberjacks, felling, snedding (removing branches from felled trees), loading lorries and trains, and sawing timber throughout the forests of Scotland. Much of the wood they produced was used as mining timber, providing pit props needed to maintain coal production for the nation's power stations. Pay rates were low, and once their keep had been deducted from their wages, the women were left with little more than pocket money. Accommodation was sparse, generally wooden huts which, due to the nature of the work, were located in very isolated sites. Women were recruited from the age of 17 but girls as young as 14 volunteered for the Corps. Training courses for the Women's Timber Corps were run at Shandford Lodge, by Brechin in Angus and at Park House in Drumoak across the Dee from Durris. It would be surprising given its close proximity if some of their training was not conducted in Durris forest.

Memorial to members of CTC: Queen Elizabeth Forest Park near Aberfoyle

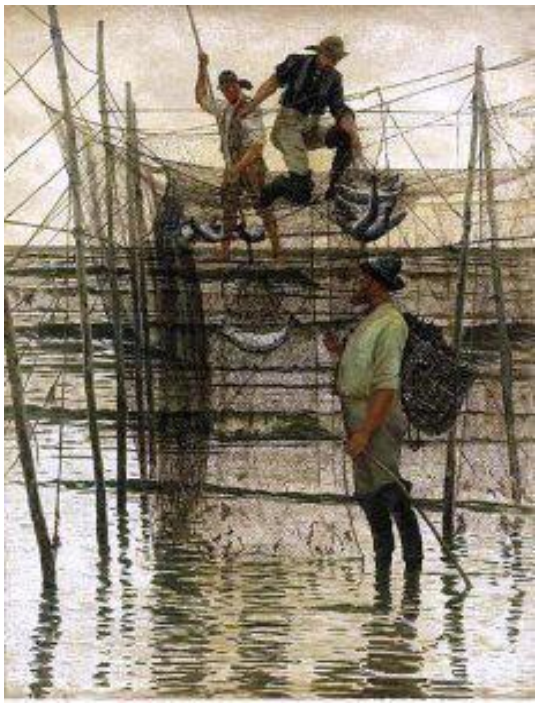
Since the Women's Timber Corps had been a section of the Women's Land Army, there was no official recognition accorded to their efforts during the war, there is no representative at official Armistice Day parades, and no separate wreath is laid at the Cenotaph - they have been described as the 'Forgotten Corps'. On October 10, 2007, in a ceremony held in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park near Aberfoyle, a memorial to the lumberjills was unveiled by Michael Russell MSP, Minister for the Environment. The memorial was created in the form of a sculpture; a life-size bronze statue of a member of the Women Timber Corps which stands on a site donated by Forest Enterprise Scotland and overlooks the forest area.

5.4 Fishing

Reference was made in the 1836 Statistical Account to the fishings on the Dee and the fact that catches from the river had progressively diminished yearly to the extent that at the time the Account was written the numbers were insignificant. As the Account pointed out this decrease in catch was attributed to the mode of fishing with bag-nets at the mouth of the Dee which intercepted the fish.

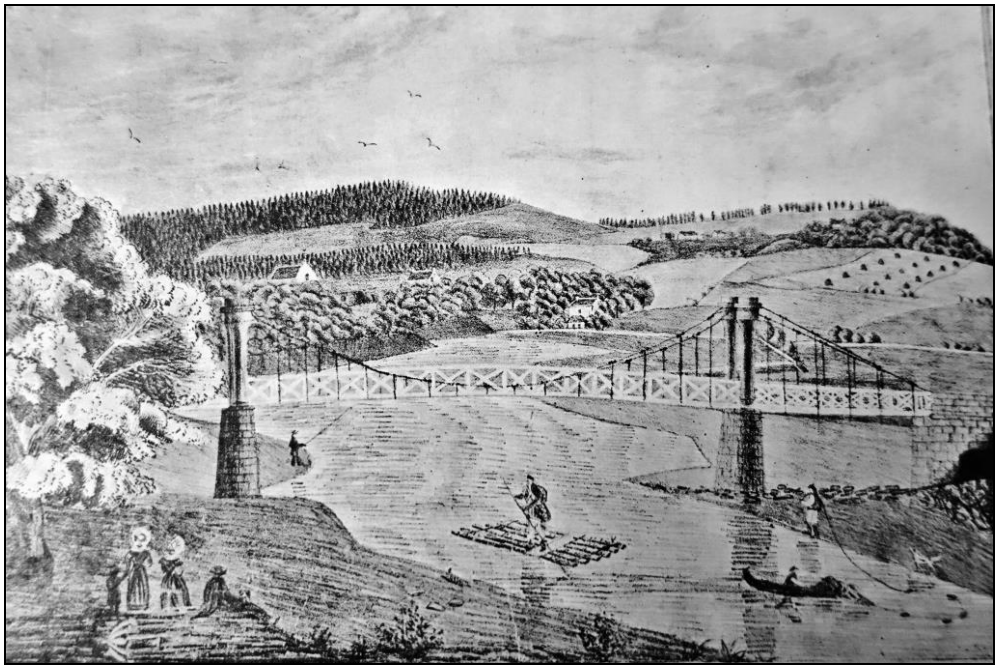
Fly fishing on the Dee as a recreational sport only became possible once the commercial fishing of salmon downstream on the Dee and in Aberdeen Bay was restricted and eventually stopped. For as long ago as the 12th century, Robert the Bruce had granted concessions for fishing by net across the Dee. This had been carried out by rowing a dingy or coble across the river and looping a net round a post upriver before returning to the shore to check the content of the net. This was known as pot and ford fishing. But then a later form of fishing using stake nets or bag nets was introduced which operated funnel traps into which salmon swam and could not escape.

The bag nets and leader were run out at right angles to the coast line and typically the salmon, entering Aberdeen Bay would swim diagonally towards the shore as they sought the 'scent' of the river they were trying to return to. This behaviour would inevitably lead them into the path of the leader of one of the bag nets thus causing them to turn and swim away from the shore along the leader with the result that they would enter the bag net system at the end of that bag.



Fly fishing for salmon was also made difficult by the use of the river to float logs down to Aberdeen. Log floating as a method of extracting timber had begun in the 18th century. The loggers of Deeside have perhaps never been given the recognition they deserve for they had a tough and dangerous job. The logs were tied together with ropes, rings and 'dogs' (mechanical grips) and the loggers, or floaters, used guiding ropes and poles to float the rafts down-river.

Timber was floated down the Dee to Aberdeen from as far away as Glen Derry. A large dam was built in 1820 on the Derry so that there was enough water to float the logs down the Dee. A big jam of logs was called a 'cairn' and floaters trying to free them with crowbars often found the whole mass breaking loose under their feet. Many were crushed to death trying to break up a 'cairn'. The most dangerous part of the Dee for the floaters was 'the glisters', opposite Invercannie Waterworks, on Blackhall water. Here, rocks in the bed of the river were blasted to make an easier passage for rafts. It is reported that the loggers worked hard and played hard. There were a number of 'river-inns' where they could pull in to eat and drink.



Timber rafting: Scottish River

Today there has once again been an alarming decline of stocks in Scotland's fishing rivers including the Dee but for different reasons. Scottish Government figures show a fall in the number of Scottish Atlantic salmon of more than 50% from around 1.25 million in the 1960s to 600,000 in 2016. So serious is the situation that angling is now under threat. One of the most potent threats has been the invasion of non-native species such as ranunculus into river systems. Other threats include predation by seals, cormorants and goosanders as well as increased competition from mackerel and herring in the sea.

The River Dee: Muckle Spates of 1829 and 2015

There have been two particular events which have had a profound effect on the Dee and the livelihood of those dependent upon it. These occurred in 1829 and more recently in 2015: the Muckle spates. As a result of the 1829 spate some parts of Deeside were left with scarcely a bridge. The bridge at Ballater was completely destroyed. One of the arches of the bridge of Invercauld was carried away; and the bridge of Banchory received so much damage that a part of it had to be taken down. The Water of Feugh rose sufficiently high to cover the bridge but apart from carrying away part of the parapet, it suffered no other damage.

Was the Muckle Spate a catastrophe? Dundee University has devised a formula based on a "catastrophic curve" which scientifically measures the force of a flood. When this measurement is applied, it has been conclusively established that the 1829 Spate was indeed a catastrophe.

A similar claim can be made for 2015. Television pictures showed water flooding shops, homes and the caravan site in Ballater; the main road leading to Braemar was washed away and Abergeldie Castle came within feet of disaster.[108] The events of December 2015 and the two spates that followed in quick succession in January 2016 left the River Dee Valley and surrounding areas badly damaged, more damaged than most people initially realised. Vast areas of land, river banks and farm land had been washed away, fishing huts, roads, fencing and trees wrecked and destroyed. Livestock had been lost in large numbers and there had been an untold loss of wildlife. Stories circulated of sheep surviving having been swept downstream and cattle being stranded in fields until water levels dropped.

The huge volumes of rain which fell in the upper reaches of the Dee resulted in vast amounts of shingle, gravel, rocks and boulders being moved and on occasion for incredible distances. River beats and pools were washed out, others filled in and changed. On the Lower Crathes beat, pools, roads and banks had been changed to varying different degrees. After the spate the priority was to get access roads passable for 4x4 vehicles to permit anglers access to the beat. According to Mr Foster, proprietor of Park Estate, the flood mark on the Main Hut at Park from the 2015/16 spate was 2.5ft higher than the Muckle Spate of 1829! The river had peaked there at 16.5ft compared to the usual level of one or two foot on the gauge. The force of the river can be gauged from the photograph below of Cambus O'May footbridge higher up the Dee.[109]

[108] R. Harper (2016) News from the River Dee, *Drumoak-Durris Newsletter* (Spring).

[109] R. Harper, op. cit.

The Cambus O'May footbridge over the River Dee: 30th December 2015

Subsequent to the spates of 2015/6, great concern was expressed for the fish, especially the young, for eggs had been laid in the redds over the winter.[110] Ghillies and anglers alike would have to face a steep learning curve as far as the river was concerned as traditional fishing areas and pools had gone, changed or moved. Given the fact that the previous two seasons had been difficult with low salmon numbers coupled with the impact of the devastating floods, there was serious concern as to whether there would be a return of visiting anglers to the Dee – a vital part of the local economy.[111]

5.5 Ferries and fords

Ferries

The most comprehensive list of the ferries and fords on the Dee in the nineteenth century was published by the Spalding Club in 1843:

- Ferry at Inch (that is, the Island) of Culter, known as the Inch Ford. A ferry boat is still available there, slightly above the old Inch Ford. The ford road still leads down to the river on the north side, past the entrance gate of Camphill. On the south side, the ford road ascends the bank obliquely, and, as an old rough road, strikes south-eastward to the main road at Mill Inn. This was used also as the road to the ferry.

[110] A salmon redd is a depression created by the upstroke of the female salmon's body and tail, sucking up the river bottom gravel and using the river current to drift it downstream. The female salmon digs a number of redd, depositing a few hundred eggs in each during the one or two days she is spawning.

[111] R. Harper, op. cit.

- Kennerty ferry, Culter, that is, the ferry at Coblestock, where the old ferry road can be seen, nearly opposite old Maryculter Church

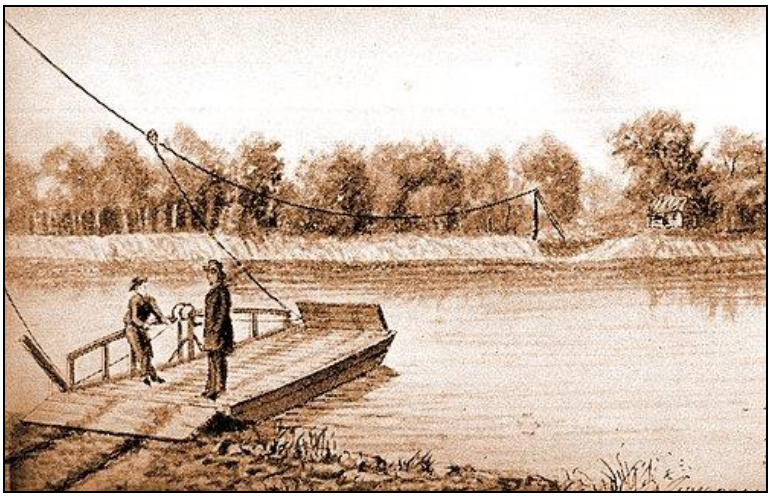
- Boat above old Dalmaik Church – in the near neighbourhood of Dalmaik Farm. There was a ferry east of Dalmaik Church, opposite to the farm of Hilton, Peterculter, and west of the old ford of Tilbouries, but it seems to have been a private boat.

- East boat at Mills of Drum, slightly west of the Church of Durris

- West boat at Mills of Drum, about 300 yards east of where Durris Bridge is now. The ferry boat house is still standing, and the fine sward along the level bank of the river, on each side of the boat-house, tells of the long-continued and important traffic that went on at the West Ferry. On the north side of the river the remains of the old road leading down to the ferry can be traced easily, leading down by Nether Mill of Crathes. This ferry was discontinued on the erection of Durris Bridge in 1862. On the south side of the river stood the 'Boathole Inn'.

- Ferry at Crathes, opposite Balbridie, on the line of communication commanded by Tilquilly Castle, on the south side of the river, and Crathes Castle on the North. It also served the western fork of the Cryne's Cross route. The old cross road from the Slug road to the ferry can still be traced, as also the ferry road on the north side of the river to the Mill of Hirn and Monymusk road.

It is possible that some of these ferries may have operated where a rope was attached to a stake or tree on either side of the river and the ferryman or woman used the rope to guide the boat across the river oar as in the illustrations below.



Basic Principles of Rope Ferry

Fords

The fords on the Dee exceeded the number of ferries, although, as a rule, a ford and ferry tended to be found in the same neighbourhood.

It is known that there were fords in the following locations:

- Ford at Inch of Cults
- Coblestock ford, Culter – for Maryculter and Netherley
- Old ford, Tilbouries, opposite the Roman Camp. Used for Drum by way of Cairnton.
- Ford at Dalmaik Farm. Used for droving as well as wheeled traffic, and in use for carts till Park Bridge was erected.
- Fords of Mills of Drum. The most important crossing on the lower reaches of the river.
- Ford at Balbridie, nearly opposite Crathes Castle.

5.6 Roads and turnpikes[112]

The period between 1750 and 1900 witnessed a series of revolutions as far as communication was concerned. By the mid-eighteenth century a quiet transformation was under way in Scotland's rural heartlands where innovative agrarian practices were being introduced by progressive landowners. Since 1686 these same proprietors, in their capacity as commissioners of supply or justices of peace, had among their duties the management of roads and bridges for their county.

The responsibility for the maintenance of roads lay with the local parishes which imposed a statutory duty on each man with a team of horses to provide labour for six days annually for road upkeep. The parishes were provided with the power to collect money through levying a local rate (tax) to supplement the labour provided by the horses for the upkeep of roads. The standards of road maintenance varied greatly and, as most travel was local, parishes tended to focus solely on local roads.

By 1787 the minutes of the Aberdeenshire commissioners recognised the inadequacy not only of the roads themselves, but also of the system for financing their maintenance and of the practical difficulties associated with organising statute labour. The remedy was to apply for an Act of Parliament abolishing statute labour and converting it into money, while continuing to impose an assessment on landowners for road and bridge repairs. A committee was appointed for this purpose

[112] http://oldroadsofscotland.com/1859%20report.htm

in 1789 with unanimous support, but a decidedly lukewarm reception attended their report, not least because there was little enthusiasm for their proposal of introducing turnpike roads, despite evidence of their effectiveness elsewhere.

The extent to which poor roads continued to impede economic development was highlighted in a 1794 report to the Board of Agriculture. In this report the author James Anderson unreservedly reproached the 'gentlemen of Aberdeenshire' for delays in taking action with the deplorable consequence that 'they not only retard the advancement of their own interests ... but also condemn ... the whole body of the people to a comparative state of poverty and indolence'.[113]

Under the 1795 Act management of specified roads was transferred to turnpike trustees and similar administrative arrangements were made for commutation roads under the 1800 Act.[114] This might suggest some shift in responsibility for roads and bridges, whereas in practice, control remained in the hands of the same élite group of individuals, i.e. those qualified by ownership of land above a certain valued rental. A major disadvantage of this system was that proprietors were not necessarily resident on their Aberdeenshire estates.

The demand for better and cheaper transportation was also the trigger for alternative modes of travel, which were to have an increasing impact on the revenues of Aberdeenshire turnpikes and would contribute to their eventual demise. Within five years of the opening of the Inverurie turnpike road in 1800, it was facing competition from the newly constructed canal linking Inverurie to Aberdeen. Other proposed canal schemes came to nothing, but a more significant threat was posed by railways which, over the course of just a few years in the 1850s opened up new routes radiating outwards from Aberdeen. Although the brief period of railway building saw a temporary boost to turnpike revenues as construction materials were transported by road, an inevitable slump followed the opening of each new railway line.

The loss of business to the railway companies was only one of the problems which confronted the road trustees. After sixty years in which the dual system of turnpikes and commutation roads had operated, the flaws of both had become evident and in 1858 proposals were approved by the county turnpike trustees for introducing a new system of road management, including the abolition of turnpike tolls.[115]

At the same time similar disquiet was being expressed throughout Scotland concerning the state of public roads and to recommend alternative arrangements for their funding and maintenance. Opinions in Aberdeenshire varied a great deal as to the most equitable and effective means of

[113] J. Anderson (1794) *A General View of the Agriculture and rural economy of the county of Aberdeen*, Edinburgh.

[114] Commutation roads were maintained by a local tax. Justices of the Peace were authorised to mend highways and passages to any market town or seaport and from any town to churches. They could impose penalties on those who refused to mend the roads or who damaged them. They were also able to identify where new roads were required.

[115] Aberdeenshire Archives, AC2/3/91, Aberdeenshire Turnpike Trustees, Committee Report, 1857.

financing roads, and especially on the thorny question of dealing with the considerable debts accumulated by the turnpike trusts. Given this lack of consensus, discussions were protracted and it was not until 1865 that the Aberdeenshire Roads Act reached the statute books. The provisions of this Act included the consolidation of all county road management into a single authority, the abolition of tolls and a new system of financing road maintenance, based on occupancy of property as determined by valuation rolls which had come into use in 1855. Thus responsibility for roads and bridges was passed to the Aberdeenshire County Road Trust.[116]

5.7 Bridges

In 1853 the Great North of Scotland Railway (GNSR) opened a single-track railway (originally from Ferryhill in Aberdeen, through Cults to Banchory).[117] In order for residents in Durris to access the railway at Park Station a bridge was built but as both the road and Park Bridge were private property, the Railway Company charged a toll. This was still being charged by British Railways into the 1950s, when the cost per car was 3d (1.2p). The former tollhouse is located on the Drumoak side of the bridge. The toll to cross was not abolished until 1962.

As Park Bridge is the only Grade 'A' listed building in the parish of Durris, it is worth saying a little more about it. The bridge comprises two cast iron arched spans of over 100 feet, cast in four sections and bolted and cross-stayed underneath, with arcaded spandrels, wooden deck and parapets. It was built in 1854 by James Abernethy of Aberdeen for the Deeside Railway Company. James Abernethy & Co is best known for the fact that they were at one time the world's leading manufacturer of granite working machinery from the 1820s until the 1950s. Aberdeen was at that time the largest granite producing area in the world with 25,000 men employed in the industry in Aberdeen and the surrounding area.

After 1850 their interest moved to bridge construction, generally to the design of Alexander Gibb and James Willett. The bridges were mainly for the Great North of Scotland Railway. By 1882 the GNSR had more than 300 under-bridges with cast iron beams as well as many arch and lattice-girder bridges. Their business continued into the 20th century and closed in the 1960s.

Cast iron bridges do have a chequered history. It is known that cast iron has a very high resistance to compression which makes it ideal for use in arch bridges where the entire cast iron piece is put under compression. During the Industrial Revolution, manufacturing cast iron became easier as there was a widespread rise in factories and furnaces. Bridge designers saw the opportunity in its use and set about building dozens of new bridges with the material. The advent of railway bridge construction led to an even bigger demand. The cheap cost and availability of the material made it ideal for these new projects.

[116] Aberdeenshire Archives, AC2/5/1, Minutes of Aberdeen County Road Trustees, 29th August 1865.

[117] The GNSR became part of the London & North Eastern railway (LNER) during the 1923 grouping, then in 1948 British Railways assumed responsibility for the Deeside Line.

Park Bridge

Although cast iron has a very high resistance to compression it is also very brittle and has a poor tensile strength. This is not typical of most metals or even other types of iron. When the bridges were designed, many architects mistakenly put the cast iron beams into tension rather than compression in their designs because no-one yet knew about this property of cast iron. The combination of widespread use and weak strength led to many disastrous collapses of cast iron bridges. The Tay Bridge in 1879 was one of the most serious examples of such a collapse. The centre portion of the bridge collapsed taking a train with it during a violent storm. All 75 people on board the train were killed. As a result, many cast iron bridges were rebuilt or demolished and most surviving bridges have been refitted with steel.

Artist unknown: Railway accident at Inverythan, Aberdeenshire, 9 December 1882

The point might be added that a number of other cast iron bridges built in 19th century Scotland have failed due to structural weakness (e.g., Inverythan, Aberdeenshire, 1882). Regular maintenance checks of modern steel bridges generally reveals signs of stress and, where found, appropriate

remedial action is taken. However, it is a moot point as far as the Tay Rail Bridge is concerned whether appropriate action was taken when the problems were first reported. The problem with cast iron bridges is that when they fail, they can do so with little warning.

The Old Bridge of Sheeoch, Kirkton of Durris

Balladrum Bridge, Durris

Park Bridge (Built 1854)

Durris Bridge (Built 1862, replaced 1977)

5.8 Poaching

During the 19th century Durris estate earned a significant income from hosting shooting parties. It is also known from figures published on the occasion of the sale of Durris estate in 1890 that the estate had significant numbers of grouse, partridge and pheasant on its lands. Given this valuable asset it is understandable that proprietors of gaming estates were jealous to ensure that that asset was not threatened. The most obvious threat was the poacher or teams of poachers. Advertisements were not infrequently published in the local press encouraging readers with an offer of a monetary reward to provide information leading to the arrest of poachers. For example, a notice was published in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* on the 6th September 1809 announcing a reward for information leading to the conviction of poachers:

REWARD

> *It being reported, notwithstanding the repeated notices given for preservation of the GAME on the estate of DURRIS, and of the examples made of poachers and trespassers, that persons residing in the estate keep and use Guns and Dogs for Sporting, without paying the tax for them to Government, and have been out this season to kill and destroy the Game:- a Reward of FIVE GUINEAS is hereby offered to give such information at the House of Durris, as will be the means to convict any one of these persons of poaching or trespassing on the estate – to be paid on conviction of the offender and the informer's name concealed.*

One rather unusual case of poaching was brought to the Stonehaven court in 1885.[118] Before Sheriff Brown was a Barbara Cumming, 'a respectable looking woman', servant to Alexander Morrison, farmer, Strathie, Durris, who was charged at the instance of the trustees of the late Dr Young of Durris, with having on the 12th March trespassed on a field of turnips on that farm in search of game. Mr. Caird appeared for the prosecutors, and Mr. Falconer, for the accused. Mr Caird said that in justification of the action of the trustees in prosecuting the woman he had to explain that the land in question had been let for the season's shootings, and that the woman had been often reported on for poaching and fined. The Sheriff asked 'By whom?' Mr. Caird explained that she had not been fined, but that she had paid money to the factor to settle actions. Although it was rather an unusual course to bring up a woman for poaching, they were really constrained to do so, as her master declined to give any guarantee that he would prevent her.

Mr. Falconer stated that the woman's master had the right to kill ground game, and that he had given her permission to do so, although, as the permission was not in writing, she had been guilty of a technical offence. All she did was to set a trap – which was not a thing that regular poachers used – near what was alleged to be a rabbit's hole, but as it required the Court of Session to define what a rabbit's hole was the accused might be excused if she did not know. She only set the one trap, and a keeper having seen it came to her, when she at once admitted having set it. The case had been brought into Court, according to his information, because the woman would not pay £4 for the offence.

[118] A woman charged with poaching, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 25 April 1885

The Sheriff, in giving judgment, after remarking that it had not occurred to the accused or her agent to suggest that poaching could not be committed by a woman, said what he had to do was to administer the law in regard to criminal offences as he found it. The criminal law made no distinction between the sexes, and the present was a criminal offence as it might be followed by imprisonment. However, considering the circumstances submitted on the accused's behalf, substantially without challenge, he (the Sheriff) was disposed to look upon the case as quite an exceptional one, and that the ends of justice would be attained by the publicity which had been given to it. After warning the accused against repeating her conduct, his Lordship dismissed her without imposing a fine, or finding her liable to expenses.

Poaching for fish

Poaching for game

5.9 Illicit distilling

In the 1838 Statistical Account for Durris reference is made to the number of inns located in the parish. It was noted with a measure of disapproval that there were four inns which was viewed by the Minister as too many; one, or at most two, would have been sufficient. Whilst four does seem excessive given the size of the parish, it needs to be remembered that at least two major drove roads passed through the parish.

Drovers moving south with their cattle and then returning to north Aberdeenshire after their journey were likely to have been thirsty from their travels. So it would not be entirely surprising if there had been a number of inns where the fords crossed the Dee. But the river was also used by loggers bringing timber down the Dee to Aberdeen. And it is known that there was at least one a logger's inn located at the ford opposite Dalmaik farm. It is a moot point as to how much of the liquor dispensed was lawfully made!

What is known is that there was another source of alcohol in Durris parish: a fact reported in an issue, not of the local press but, of the *Oxford University and City Herald* of the 19th December 1812![119]

> *On Saturday 28th inst. a discovery was made of an illegal distillery situated on the burn of Sheeoch, which runs through the Grampian hills, in the parish of Durris in Kincardineshire by Mr. Gillespie, Officer of Excise. The situation of the hut was so aptly chosen, and the hut itself so carefully built and covered with heath, that its roof appeared to compose part of the surface of the hill, and it could not have been discovered by an indifferent observer. It was 20 feet long and 14 broad. The still, made use of, contained about 35 gallons, and the quantity of wash discovered amounted to 275; so that the weekly consumption of the distillery could not have averaged less than 20 bolls of barley. Mr Gillespie was aided in giving effect to the discovery, which he had made, by a party of the Kincardineshire militia staff.*[120]

Long-term community collusion in various parts of Scotland – including Durris – allowed the development of very effective and long-lasting hiding places for large amounts of spirit; routines for raising the alert included optical signalling via fires, smoke, and flags; and the development of close relationships with local members of the judiciary, and even certain members of the Excise service itself![121]

Inevitably, however, situations arose when none of these preventative strategies were of any use, and amid enormous demand – particularly in Scotland's thirsty port towns – whisky had to be smuggled from the interior to the coast by unarmed men and women in broad daylight and in plain sight of the authorities. Such expeditions led to the exercise of great ingenuity: with women wearing two-gallon

[119] A search of local newspapers covering Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire for December 1812 revealed no mention of this discovery. This does not mean that no local papers covered the story simply that no newspaper archival evidence was found.

[120] Extraordinary private distiller, *Oxford University and City Herald*, 19 December 1812.

[121] C. Maclean and D. MacCannell (2017) *Scotland's Secret History: the illicit distilling and smuggling of whisky*, Edinburgh.

'belly canteens' made of sheet iron, simulating pregnancy bumps; phoney funeral processions convened simply to move whisky from point A to point B in the coffins or hearses; and bottles concealed in the heavy black knapsacks of pseudo-soldiers, and even in unplucked dead geese.

The illicit Highland whisky still: Sir Edward Henry Landseer

But the attitude to illicit distilling was by no means universally hostile as the minister of Strathdon explained in 1801:

> *The inhabitants of Corgarff, the glens and not a few in the lower part of the parish were professed smugglers. The revenue officers were set at defiance. To be engaged in illicit distillation, and to defraud the excise, was neither looked on as a crime, nor considered as a disgrace. As may be supposed, such a system of things proved most pernicious, productive of the grossest demoralization, irreligion, and sin, destructive of every habit of regular industry.*

What is not in doubt is that the profitability of illicit distilling helped maintain the populations of the remoter parts of the Highlands such as Corgarff and Strathdon. The Statistical Account of Scotland of 1843 for this district declared:

> *While this infamous and demoralizing practice prevailed, population increased through the facilities by which families were maintained in the hills and valleys by its profits.*

By mid 19th century however, it was claimed that the practice of illicit distilling was dying out. This was partly as a result of the activities of the excise men. But other measures were probably more effective. One successful way to control the practice was to make it cheaper to distil whisky legally.

Also, pressure was brought to bear on the landowners who could evict tenants who distilled illegally and this perhaps had the greatest impact.

But was the practice of illicit distilling dying out? An instructive article, in more ways than one, published in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* in 1906 posed that question.[122]

> *About the middle of the last century, smuggling was very common in the wild, isolated parts of the Highlands, and even at the present day it is surprising how this 'trade' is beginning to assume formidable proportions, in spite of the utmost endeavours of the Revenue authorities. The smuggler, instead of being the romantic creature depicted in literature, is usually a very low type of Highlander, much addicted to drinking, laziness and lying. In fact, he bears a striking similarity to the poacher found in all parts of Scotland.*

The writer went on to outline the ideal setting for a still!

> *For his operations, he selects a secluded spot far from the haunts of men, in the side of a well-wooded burn. A square part is dug out of the high bank till it is level with the water. The front is roughly built up with stones to appear as natural as possible, in keeping with the surroundings. The bank forms the other three sides of the bothy, which is roofed with tarpaulin or wood. The whole 'fabric' is so cunningly adjusted and concealed by brushwood and heather that it requires the practised eye of a naturalist to detect that Nature has been at all disturbed.*

Having outlined the ideal location, the writer proceeded to describe in helpful detail the nature of the distilling process.

> *In this building, the smuggler brews and distils. Brewing consists in pouring boiling water over ground malt placed in a vessel. The liquid thus obtained is termed 'wort', to which yeast is afterwards added to bring on fermentation. This reduces the specific gravity and makes it fit for the distillation process. In this latter operation, alcohol is separated from the other ingredients of which the wort is composed. The liquor is now placed in a 'still' – generally of copper in order to prevent noxious flavours to the alcohol. From the top of this kettle is a pipe of considerable length, but of a zigzag form, called the 'worm' which lies in cold water. Fire is applied to the still; and, as alcohol has the property of assuming the form of vapour at a lower temperature than any of the other ingredients, the liquor escapes into the worm in the form of steam, which is condensed in its passage along the coils of piping. The condensed steam runs into a vessel from the end of the worm in the form of whisky; and when all the spirits are run off, the operation is finished.*

Contrary to the intent of this article, which was to represent the illicit distiller as a 'very low type of Highlander', the rogue distiller comes across as someone of not a little resource, ingenuity and enterprise, presumably not the kind of picture the writer had intended to portray. Wittingly or not, the writer also provided useful information concerning the ideal location for a still along with

[122] Illicit distilling, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 14 May 1906.

a fairly detailed description of the distilling process. One wonders what kind of reaction this article might have generated among readers of the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* - not least local Excisemen!

5.10 Proposed Aberdeen and North East Railway

In March 1844, the *Dundee Courier* and *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported on a discussion that had been taking place in Aberdeen about possible routes for an Aberdeen and East Coast Railway. An argument was being advanced that there was one route from Edinburgh that was shorter and less expensive than the other. The line, which was recommended by experienced engineers, ran from Aberdeen along the north side of the Dee, and, crossed the river opposite the estate of Durris, proceeded through that property and the parish of Glenbervie, near to the village of Auchenblae and onwards to Laurencekirk, Montrose, Brechin, etc.

Great Northern Railway Express locomotive (1850-1922)

It was argued that the cost of a coastal line (via Stonehaven) would be enormous, in consequence of the rugged and rocky nature of the coast along which it must be constructed for a considerable distance; and there was reason to believe an expensive tunnel would have to be constructed through the rocks, at least at one part of the line. The choice was therefore simple! Should it be the more expensive line of railway running along the rocky coast of Kincardineshire and through the town of Stonehaven, Bervie and Johnshaven or the route favoured by the engineers serving the villages of Auchenblae, Laurencekirk, and the town of Brechin, and including Banchory on Deeside? Of course, we now know the answer. But it would be interesting to discover why the favoured option was discarded. A search has been made but so far no answer found. Now – there's a challenge for the reader!

5.11 The curious case of the one-eared corpse[123]

In February 1854 an article was published in the *Journal of Medical Sciences* by Dr Alexander John Kinloch of Park entitled the 'Extraordinary case of mistaken identity'. The doctor explained that he had been induced to give publicity to the case by seeing in the English newspapers an advertisement requesting information regarding "the body of a man found drowned in a North of Scotland river some years ago".

Dr Kinloch wrote:

> *"While out early one morning walking by the banks of the River Dee on the estate of Park, I was halted by two of the men whose usual mode of livelihood is the rafting of timber to come and see the body of a man which they had discovered in the sand of the river. The Dee had been much swollen for two or three days previously and had just subsided.*
>
> *The body was lying slightly embedded in sand. The hooded crows had picked out both the eyes but decomposition had made no progress. The body was that of a man between sixty and seventy years of age, apparently belonging to the labouring class of middle height and rather stout. A pair of spectacles and a few halfpence were all the articles found on him but the body presented the following peculiarities.*
>
> *The left ear was missing and also was the first finger of the left hand both showing the appearance of having been lost in early life. The body was conveyed to a suitable place of reception and intimation of the discovery was sent to neighbouring parishes. An advertisement was printed in the local newspapers requesting any person to come and see the body for the particular purpose of identifying it.*
>
> *This request was made in vain until two young women (who were sisters) from the opposite parish of Durris put in an appearance stating that their father was missing, that he was a sawyer by trade, that he was in the habit of leaving them for weeks at a time, not telling them where he was going, and that he had lost the left ear and first finger of the left hand.*
>
> *The clothes of the drowned man were shown to them and from these and the pair of spectacles they at once apparently recognised as having been worn by their father. On being shown the body itself, they both gave vent to their feelings in the usual feminine manner.*
>
> *After a short time, however, the younger sister, on making a more careful examination of the body, expressed some doubt and then stated that she did not think it was her father after all. But finally, on the persuasion of her elder sister, she joined in making preparations for the funeral, under the impression that the body was really that of their father.*
>
> *At the appointed time the funeral took place. Friends and relatives crossed the river from Durris to Drumoak, using the west, or upper, ferry boat. The body was duly buried in Drumoak churchyard.*

[123] Unsolved mystery of the one-eared corpse, *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 18 September 1954.

Mourners including the two women recrossed the Dee by the east ferry boat. The boatman knowing the passengers well and seeing them in mourning clothes asked who they had been burying and remarked he had never heard of any of their friends being dead. On being told that it was the father of the two girls who had been laid in his grave he laughed and said that such a thing was impossible – quite impossible as he himself had ferried their father across the river not more than half an hour before. He said that if they went to the public house on the roadside they would likely find their father there. The boatman was not believed. But the women and an escort of friends went to the drinking-place. There to their amazement they found the supposedly dead man regaling himself with whisky and ale.

The minister of Drumoak on learning of this extraordinary circumstance and having doubt that the Durris sawyer was alive addressed an inquiry to the minister of that parish. Back came the reply that the man in question was not only alive but had been in Durris church on the Sunday following his supposed burial. Dr Kinloch concluded by writing:

This man has since died but who was the person whose body was buried at Drumoak has never been ascertained. The unusual circumstance of two individuals wanting the left ear and the first finger of the left hand being brought into the same locality, and one of them being mistaken for the other, renders this case a very remarkable one.

CHAPTER 6: A DURRIS KIRK MYSTERY

6.1 When was the set made and by whom?

There is now another Durris mystery, on this occasion connected with the Kirk. The Kirk Session has had in its possession for over 400 years a rare silver communion plate and two goblets with an unexplained dedication and an unknown benefactor.

Silver Communion Set: Durris Kirk

From the hallmarks it is known that the set was made in London in 1694.

The hallmarks reveal:

- a *lion passant* which indicates it is English silver and the duty has been paid
- a *leopard's head* which is the London Assay Office
- a date letter of a *small gothic 'r'* which indicates 1694.

Unlike other hallmarks of this period there are no initials of the maker. However, close inspection of the maker's mark appears to show *a rose*. It was not unusual for a symbol to be used instead of initials. The custom of using signs or symbols for makers' marks gradually fell into disuse in the 17th century and (except in conjunction with initial letters) by the time of Charles II, there are few marks consisting of just symbols. A rose in a pentagon, an escallop, a goose, three storks and perhaps one or two others are all that have been used without letters accompanying them.[124]

According to Mitchell it is possible that the mark is that of Henry Rose who was a silversmith apprenticed to Thomas Cory from 1684 to 1691.[125] Henry Rose's maker's mark appears on the Goldsmiths' Company 1682 mark plate. Apart from his apprenticeship details we know nothing more about Rose: he does not register a Britannia mark in 1697 and disappears from the record. A further fact that cannot be ignored is that whoever purchased the communion set from the London silversmith would have had to be wealthy as these items would have been extremely expensive.

6.2 What does the dedication on the communion plate mean?

> *Given to the Church of Durris by Mr Tho. Ffraiser Chapline & Judge Advocate*
>
> *Aboard the English Admirall obit in the Straits of Gibralterr the 19 of Feby 1694*

There is reference on the plate to 'English Admiral(l)'. It should be explained that the flagship of any naval fleet in the 17th century was called 'The Admiral' irrespective of the actual name of the ship. The admiral of the fleet in question here was Sir Francis Wheler. In October 1693 Sir Francis had been

[124] C. Jackson (1905) *English Goldsmiths and their Marks*, London, Macmillan.

[125] Thomas Cory had a workshop in Warminster and London.

promoted to *Rear Admiral of the Red* and ordered to the Mediterranean as commander of a fleet.[126] The *Sussex* which was his flagship was launched at Chatham Dockyard on 11 April 1693 and was the pride of the Royal Navy.[127]

6.3 Who was Thomas Fraser?

Whilst the Will of Thomas Fraser has been located, it provides no direct information about him![128] Nevertheless the content of the Will is of great interest as it provides possible clues as to his identity.

In the name of God Amen

If I should not return to London I appoint this as my last will….. …… I owe no man any money except three or four pounds to Mr. Robison for letters and at present I have a bond of Mr. Chalmers writing master for seventy pounds English with bonds. Mr. Robison has in keeping at this present time. The King owes me for my service aboard the St Michael *130 pounds which by his proclamation is to be paid Martinmas next. So at present I have of money two hundred pounds which after my decease I order to be distributed as followeth in primis fifty pounds of the first and best money to be given to the Church Of Doors. Thirty pounds for buying two silver cups and a silver 'bason' to serve at the Sacrament of the Lords Supper and the other twenty pounds which remains to be secured and the interest may annually be divided among the poor of the parish.*

- ***Item:*** *fifty pounds to be given to my parents if both or either them is alive and if neither, to be given to my elder brother and if he is not alive to be mortified for the use of the poor of the parish of Doors.*
- ***Item:*** *to my Lady Fraser a piece of plate worth six pounds of what fashion she pleases.*
- ***Item:*** *to Madam Scarburgh six pounds for a piece of plate of what fashion she pleaseth.*
- ***Item****: to Kilmundie a ring of twenty shillings value*
- ***Item:*** *to Balbridie a ring of the same value*
- ***Item:*** *to Robin Fotheringham a ring of the same value*
- ***Item:*** *to my brother Simon a ring of the same value*

[126] The squadrons were ranked in order Red, White, and Blue, with admirals ranked according to their squadron: Admiral of the Red (Admiral of the Fleet); Admiral of the White; Admiral of the Blue; Vice Admiral of the Red; Vice Admiral of the White; Vice Admiral of the Blue; Rear Admiral of the Red; Rear Admiral of the White; Rear Admiral of the Blue.

[127] The use of 'His Majesty's Ship' or HMS to designate a British Royal Navy vessel is well-known today, as it has been for more than 250 years. However, this was a new convention at the time Sussex sailed and sank. The term had first come into use during the reign of Charles II but even by the end of the 17th century it was not routinely applied to Royal Navy ships.

[128] England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858 for Thomas Frasier PROB 11: Will Registers > 1688-1696 > Piece 419: Box, Quire Numbers 46-90 (1694)

- ***Item:*** *to John Fraser of Milton of Balladrum a ring of the same value*

- ***Item:*** *to John Reid, Minister of Doors appoint my books to be given and a ring of twenty shillings value and a silver tobacco bag of thirty shillings value*

- ***Item:*** *to Mrs. Reid the said Mr. John Reid's wife three pound for a petticoat of what she pleaseth and a ring of twenty shillings value*

- ***Item:*** *to Balbridie's daughter Mrs. Elizabeth a ring of twenty shillings value and…… …… of forty shillings value,*

- ***Item:*** *to Mr. George Fraser, Sub Principal of King's College of Aberdeen and who was my Regent and a ring of twenty shillings value*

- ***Item:*** *to Robin Fraser late living in the parish of Doors a tobacco bag of twenty shillings value and these pounds in money*

- ***Item:*** *to Alexander Reid living there if either he, his wife or his son Peter be alive forty shillings in money*

- ***Item:*** *to Mr. Robison periwig maker in the Pall Mall five pounds for a piece of plate ----- reasonable charge for performing this Will also a ring of twenty shillings value*

- ***Item:*** *to the poor of the parish of Doors four pounds to be divided in years time to the most necessitous*

- ***Item:*** *forty pounds for building of a stout bridge at the Mill of Balladrum or higher up if the landlord will suffer my name and coat of arms upon it, if not this money is to be secured that the interest of it may maintain the poor of the parish the management of this summer, whether it be employed for the building of the foresaid bridge or the use of the poor is left to Mr. John Reid and if he is dead to the Minister of Doors and such of the ancientist Elders of the Session, he and the Minister is to have but one voice*

- ***Item****: for the maintaining of the fabric of the bridge and appoint seven pounds and if I live till more money is due appoint ten pounds that the interest of it may be laid out as the work require it & if the bridge for this foresaid reason is not built – appoint the said ten pounds for the foresaid person or persons to be settled for the use of the poor of the parish.*

- ***Item:*** *I appoint my watch to be given to Kilmundie and my two pair of Gold Buttons to Rear Admiral Hobson.*

18th April 1694

The list of beneficiaries in the Will can help us learn something about Thomas Fraser. An assumption has been made that this list has been presented in a particular order reflecting the status of the beneficiary and their closeness in kinship to Thomas Fraser.

- The first beneficiaries are the parents of Thomas Fraser. The manner in which this gift to his parents is described – "if both or either of them is alive" – suggests that he may have been living away from home for some time and perhaps had lost touch with his parents.

- The identity of his elder brother is not disclosed.

- The Lady Fraser to whom reference is made is almost certainly Lady Mary Fraser (née Carey) second wife of Sir Alexander Fraser.

- Madam Scarburgh would have been – Catharine Fraser – the daughter of Lady Fraser and Sir Alexander. Catharine had married Charles Scarburgh, son of Sir Charles Scarburgh, Royal Physician to the Charles II and a professional colleague of Sir Alexander.[129]

Charles Scarburgh (junior) went on to hold an important post within the Royal Household, namely Clerk to the Board of Green Cloth.[130] However he did not assume that role until 1697, three years **after** the death of Thomas Fraser in 1694. Nevertheless at the time Thomas Fraser was living, Charles Scarburgh may have held a position in the Royal Household where he could have exercised some influence, possibly by making a recommendation for the appointment of Thomas Fraser as Chaplain and Judge Advocate to the Royal Fleet in 1693. But this is speculation.

- There is then a bequest to 'Kilmundie'. It was customary at that time to refer to a person of high standing by the name of the place with which they were associated. The Kilmundie cited here is almost certainly Kinmundie, so the bequest was to Fraser of Kinmundie.[131]

An examination of the following three extracts from the Register of Burgesses for the City of Aberdeen is helpful as reference is made there to a number of Frasers of Kinmundie.[132]

[129] Sir Charles Scarburgh was a practising doctor and physician to Charles II, James II and William and Mary. He had been the chief physician at the death-bed of Charles II, which exonerated James II from the widely-held suspicion that he had poisoned his brother. He was important for a number of reasons: his influence in the creation of the Royal Society and the development of mathematics.

[130] This Board took its name from the tablecloth of green baize that covered the table at which its members sat. It audited the accounts of the Royal Household and made arrangements for royal travel. It also sat as a court dealing with offences committed within the neighbourhood of the palace.

[131] Kinmundy is located just north of Dyce, Aberdeen

[132] A burgess was a freeman of a burgh. In Scotland it was necessary to join a guild of craftsmen or merchants and then gain a burgess ticket as a freeman of the burgh. The rolls listed those admitted as a burgess and entitled to vote in local elections.

8th November 1661[133]

Andrew, lord Fraser; Patrick Barclay of Towie; Francis Fraser of Kinmundie, and Andrew Fraser, son of John Fraser of Kinmundie; Francis Fraser, servant to lord Fraser, and David Sinclair, servant to Patrick Barclay.

30th September 1668[134]

Sir Alexr. Fraser of Durris, first phisitiane in ordinary to the King's Majestie; James Chesses esquire, sone to his maties, chief appothecar; Andro Fraser, yor. of Nether Kinmundy; Alexr. Fraser, nephoy to the sd. Sir Alexr. Fraser; Mr. Robert Reid, minister at Banchory Trinity; William Irvine, sone to the deceast Mr. Alexr. I., somtyme minister at Longsyde, and Thomas Fraser, servant to the sd. Sir Alexr.

10th February 1674[135]

Kenneth Mackenzie, eldest son of Kenneth, Earl of Seaforth, Lord Mackenzie; Peter Fraser, son of Alexander F.; physician to the King, pupil; John Blackwell, son of Edward B., alderman of London.
Mr. George Fraser, governor to the said Kenneth Mackenzie; Mr. James Innes, tutor to the said John Blackwell; Mr. Alexander Ramsay, governor to the said Peter Fraser; Robert Fodringhame, chirugeon, servant to the said Alexander Fraser; and James Mackenzie, servant to the said Kenneth Mackenzie.

The entries for the 8th November 1661 and the 30th September 1668 in the Register make reference to the Frasers of Kinmundie. It is known that the Frasers of Kinmundie were related to Andrew Fraser of Muchall, later to be created Lord Fraser.[136] From a Testament Dative dated 13th April 1683 it is also known that the executor of Sir Alexander Fraser's Will was an Andrew Fraser of Kinmundie.[137] The fact that Andrew Fraser of Nether Kinmundy was made a burgess at the same time as Sir Alexander Fraser and Thomas Fraser (servant to Sir Alexander) appears to confirm a family link between the families. It is not clear from Thomas Fraser's Will which particular member of the Fraser of Kinmundie family is the beneficiary.[138] It is also known that a Sir Andrew Fraser of Kinmundie was a factor of the laird of Durris between 1666 and 1670.[139]

- There is reference both in the Will of Thomas Fraser and the Will of Sir Alexander Fraser to a Robin Fotheringham.[140] Whilst he is described as a 'servant' in Sir Alexander's Will, he is

[133] *Register of Burgesses*: *The Miscellany of the New Spalding Club*, Volume II, Aberdeen; Printed for the University, 1908, p. 61. https://archive.org/details/miscellanynewsp00smitgoog/page/n445

[134] op. cit, p. 73.

[135] op. cit, p. 86.

[136] There was an Andrew Fraser of Kinmundie who was Sheriff-depute of Aberdeen from 1687-1707.

[137] *Register of Testaments of Edinburgh Commissary Court* – CC8/8/77, The National Archives.

[138] Kinmundy is located just north of Dyce, Aberdeen.

[139] https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158538

[140] *Will of Sir Alexander Fraser* – PROB 11/367/137, The National Archives.

referred to as a surgeon (Chyrurgion) in Thomas Fraser's papers.[141] Given the fact that Sir Alexander was a Royal Physician, it is highly probable that he would have had as an assistant (servant) a medical practitioner.

- There is a bequest to George Fraser, Sub Principal of King's College, Aberdeen. It has been confirmed that George Fraser was Sub Principal at the University during the period 1679 to 1684.

- There is a bequest to Mr. Reid and his wife. It is worth recording here that when the Fraser Aisle at Durris Kirk was undergoing repair, two mutilated gravestones were found with the following remains of inscriptions:

  Here lyes ISOBEL FR…ER, spous…. aster John……minister of Duries, who departed this life the 13 of May 1716, in the -2 of her age.[142]

  These were almost certainly the gravestones of Mr. John Reid and his first wife, as it is known that he left a widow. It is possible that Isobel Fraser may have been Thomas's sister.

- A not inconsiderable amount of money was bequeathed to construct 'a stout bridge' at *Balladrum* over the Sheeoch Burn. The nature of this bequest indicates a familiarity with this location which may have been near to his home. The fact that he instructed that *his name and coat of arms* be placed upon the bridge indicates not only that Thomas Fraser was a person of high status but also that he wanted to leave his personal mark on a bridge near to his home.

  According to the Register of Testaments held by the Commissariat of St. Andrews, there are records for the following Frasers in Durris:[143]

Alexander Fraser, sometime in Balladroun, parish of Durris	18 July 1694
James Fraser in Easter Balbrydie, parish of Durris	6 May 1641

  The record shows that an Alexander Fraser lived at Balladroun (variously spelled Balladrum and Belladrum) adjacent to the site of the proposed bridge. The bequest by Thomas Fraser to 'Balbridie' may have been to a descendant of the James Fraser of Easter Balbridie cited above. What remains unknown is the nature of the link between Thomas Fraser and these two families.

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[141] *Will of Thomas Fraiser, Clerk sometime Chaplain to their Majesty's Ship Sussex* – PROB 11/419/386, The National Archives.

[142] J. Henderson (1892) *Annals of Lower Deeside, being a topographical, proprietary, ecclesiastical and antiquarian history of Durris, Drumoak and Culter*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Wyllie & Sons; p. 105.

[143] Scottish Record Society (1901) *The Commissariat Record of St. Andrews. Register of Testaments, 1549-1800* printed for the Society by James Skinner & Company, Edinburgh.

It is of interest to note that in these same records there is reference to an Alexander Fothringhame (Fotheringham) of Ballindron (Testament dated 18 May 1624). Could Ballindron be an alternative spelling for Balladroun? And is it possible that Robert Fotheringham, Sir Alexander Fraser's professional assistant, was related to this Fotheringham family?

- One of the final bequests was to Rear Admiral Hobson (a misspelling). It can be confirmed that this was Admiral Thomas Hopsonn.[144] It is known that Hopsonn had two lengthy commissions as captain of the *St Michael* (1690–93), the ship upon which Thomas Fraser had served.[145] The *St Michael* under his command took part in the battle of Barfleur which lasted from 29th May and 4th June 1692. It occurred during the Nine Years' War in which the French were attempting to restore James II to the English throne. The claim has been made that the victory at Barfleur prevented any realistic prospect of a full-scale pro-Jacobite invasion, and constituted one of the most spectacular and complete British naval triumphs before the age of Nelson.

  In 1693 Hopsonn was promoted to Vice Admiral and sailed for the Mediterranean under Sir Francis Wheler in the same fleet as the *Sussex* on which Thomas Fraser sailed. In February 1694 Hopson returned home, conducting a convoy of nearly a hundred ships from Cadiz. In other words, it appears that Hopsonn was part of that Fleet that encountered the storm off Gibraltar which led to the sinking of the *Sussex* and the death of Thomas Fraser.

Sir Thomas Hopsonn
Painted between 1705 and 1708 by Michael Dahl

[144] Hopsonn has been mentioned as being a particular friend of Samuel Pepys's brother-in-law, Balthazar St Michael in 1666.

[145]Personal communication from Dr Davies, Chair of the Research and Programmes Committee, the Society for Nautical Research, 29 September 2019. Admiral Hopsonn was knighted in November 1702 and appointed a commissioner of the navy.

The question arises as to why Thomas Fraser should bequeath *two pair of Gold Buttons* to Admiral Hopsonn. It is known that gifts of moderate value *in memento mori* were not unusual in this period: rings were particularly common but gold buttons would have served the same purpose equally well.[146]

Roll of Officers and Graduates from Aberdeen University[147]

It has been established that Thomas Fraser was at Aberdeen University when George Fraser was Regent and that was the period 1679 to 1684. From an examination of the Roll, it is possible to identify the following Thomas Frasers who graduated from the University with a Master of Arts during that period:

Thomas Fraser, major	1682
Thomas Fraser, minor	1682

It is not clear what the major/minor distinction relating to the two Thomas Frasers means here. What is known is that 'Thomas' was a common Christian name among members of different branches of the Fraser family. It cannot be ruled out that one of these two Thomas Frasers may be the one we are seeking. But a note of caution should be sounded. We cannot be certain that the University records are complete. In other words, there may have been other Thomas Frasers who graduated from King's College but whose names have not been included in the Roll.

It is highly probable that both these Thomas Frasers enrolled at Aberdeen University when they were quite young – possibly as early as fourteen years of age – as was the practice at that time. And they are likely to have studied for up to four years making them around eighteen years of age on graduation. If that is the case, they will have been born around 1664. If one of these Thomas Frasers is 'our Thomas Fraser' then he will have died around thirty years of age – 1694 being the date of Thomas Fraser's death.

Finally, there is reference in the Register of Burgesses for 30th September 1668 to a Thomas Fraser who is described as 'a servant' to Sir Alexander Fraser. Could he have been the father of Thomas Fraser?

6.4 Role of Judge Advocate

From the communion plate it is stated that Thomas Fraser was Chaplain and Judge Advocate aboard the ill-fated 'English Admiral'. There had been Chaplains on the King's ships as early as the time of Edward I (1272-1307). For a long period there was seldom more than one Chaplain to a fleet or squadron although the Duke of Buckingham announced in 1626 that the King had given orders for

[146] J. Davies (2017) *Kings if the Sea: Charles II, James II & the Royal Navy*, Barnsley, Seaforth Publishing: email communication, 5 October 2019.

[147] P. Anderson (ed) (1900) *Roll of Alumni, University and King's College: 1596-1860;* Aberdeen University Studies: No. 1.

preachers to go in every ship at sea. During the 17th century Chaplains were rated with ordinary seamen for pay purposes. In 1629 the wages were raised to nineteen shillings per month. Samuel Pepys as secretary of the Navy laid down that the Chaplain should be appointed by warrant from the Admiralty so that they became officially a 'Warrant officer' though they did not receive any increase in pay.

It was Samuel Pepys, too, who sought to advance the case for Chaplains and Judge Advocates in the Navy. In his Naval Minutes Pepys wrote:

> *"No provision made here (as everywhere else) at the public, but only at the private seaman's own charge, for the maintenance of chaplains at sea; and even that very contribution begged away to the benefit of private men, out of the very souls and bodies of the poor seamen. Which practice had I not got stopt, there would in a little time have probably been very few chaplains on board the King's ships."*[148]

Pepys was also scathing at the lack of interest shown by leading members of the legal profession concerning the question of maintaining law and upholding justice aboard His Majesty's ships:

> *"…my Lord Chief Justice Coke used often to boast of it as a matter of prudence that he never had cast his penny into the water nor dipt his finger in mortar, meaning that he had never been a trader nor been a builder; which is not only an extraordinary instance of the general aversion of our greatest and most learned men to the sea and trade, but particularly is capable of further use in reference to the discouragement the Admiralty Law finds among us."* [149]

Whilst it is not known for how long Thomas Fraser had been a Naval Chaplain or a Judge Advocate, it is clear from the observations of Pepys that he was entering new and uncharted territory.

The Judge Advocate was the official responsible for convening and conducting courts martial. As it was a very occasional role, it was often impractical to make a permanent appointment, so they were appointed on an *ad hoc* basis. Chaplains - generally highly literate - were an obvious choice to fill the role, especially on foreign stations or fleets that would be away from home waters for some time; ships and fleets in British harbours could easily call on the services of professional lawyers.[150]

The Judge Advocate was a pivotal figure in a court martial. Appointed by either the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty or the commander in chief of a station, he read the warrant to convene the court and administer the oaths to both the judges and the witnesses alike. Moreover, he advised the magistrates at sea 'of the proper forms' and rendered opinions on problems as they arose during the trial. Furthermore, he questioned witnesses, directed the deliberations of the justices and drew up as well as announced the sentence. And, most important of all he took the

[148] J. Tanner (ed) (1926) *Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes*, Publications of the Navy Records Society, Vol. 60, p. 76.

[149] op. cit. pp. 167-168.

[150] J. Davies, email communication, 30th September 2019.

minutes of the proceedings, which he read to the members of the tribunal so that errors could be identified and revised. The Judge Advocate was the key person in a court martial.[151]

During the period in question the names of the *Judge Advocate of the Fleet* are known:

1663	17 January	J. Fowler
1672	30 September	J. Brisbane
1680	29 July	H. Croone
1689	23 May	P. Foster
1689	12 October	F. Bacher
1690	23 July	V Bathurst

6.5 Naval record of Thomas Fraser

It can be confirmed that there is no reference to Thomas Fraser as a sea officer in the Navy according to *Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy, 1600 -1815*. He could have served as a Captain's Servant, a first step towards being an officer. However a check of Muster Rolls from April 1693 to January 1694 and Pay Books from 11 April 1693 to 19th February 1694 for the *Sussex* revealed no-one named as Thomas Fraser.

But the letter from Thomas Fraser which accompanied his Will makes clear that he had been transferred to the *Sussex* from the *St Michael* a 90-gun second rate ship of the line which had been built by John Tippetts of Portsmouth Dockyard and launched in 1669. If Thomas Fraser was a Chaplain it is possible that ships of the class of the *St Michael* would have had one. The key point here is that the lead ship in a fleet – the *English Admiral* - would have had a Judge Advocate aboard.

6.6 One final avenue is explored

Charles II kept a fleet of yachts at his disposal, the composition of which changed as each new one was added to the fleet and the older ones assigned to more routine duties. The latest most lavish yachts were from time to time 'principal yachts' - meaning ones that Charles had use of at his 'first refusal' but many others were more functional from the start such as ones assigned for dockyard duties. But even the principal yachts were not kept solely for use by the Royal family or their associates and when not required for Royal duties were often loaned out to other functionaries of the 'quality' as well as more serious duties such as acting as dispatch vessel to the fleet in war.[152]

[151] J. Byrn (2009) *Naval Courts Martial 1793-1815*, p. 28.

[152] I am indebted to Effie Moneypenny of the Stuart Yacht Research Group for this valuable information.

When Sir Alexander Fraser died in 1691, Charles II ordered that one of his yachts should convey his body from Greenwich to Leith.[153] It is known from Admiralty Board Orders and Letters dated the 10th May 1681 that on board the yacht was a Mr Fraser and his wife.[154]

The relevant Admiralty Board Orders are set out below:

4th May 1681 Admiralty Board Orders and Letters to Captain Davis of the Katherine yacht

'You are hereby directed and required to receive on board his Majesties yacht under your command the corpse of Sir Alexander Fraser, Knight and Baronet[?] with John Clifford, Thomas Robinson, two men servants, Sarah Hacke a maid servant, three trunks, a case of drawers, a suit of hangings, and some other necessaries, and with first opportunity of wind and weather transport them unto Leith in Scotland, where being arrived, and having landed the said corps and persons, you are to obey such commands as you shall from time to time receive from his Royal Highness [James, Duke of York and his wife Mary of Modena were currently in temporary 'exile' in Scotland until March of 1682] until further order.' ADM2/1726f256

4th May 1681 Admiralty Board Orders and Letters to Captain Davis of the Katherine yacht

You are hereby directed and required in your present voyage to Scotland with Sir Alexander Fraser's corps to receive on board his Majesty's yacht under your command Mrs Elizabeth Pearse, with Katherine Bramley, Mary Hardcastle, Sarah Forster and Edward Pritchett [and] her servants together with their goods and necessaries, and transport them unto Leith, and there land them. ADM2/1726f256

5th May 1681 Admiralty Board Orders and Letters to Captain Davis of the Katherine yacht

'You are hereby directed and required to receive on board his Majesty's yacht under your command Mrs Elizabeth Bettenfield and Elizabeth Lee her maid and also two of his Royal Highnesses Footmen their wearing apparel and other necessaries and transport them with you in your present voyage to Scotland.' ADM2/1726f257

10th May 1681 Admiralty Board Orders and Letters to Captain Davis of the Katherine yacht

'You are hereby directed and required to receive on board his Majesty's yacht under your command Major Slingsby, with two servants, the Lord Leviston, Mr Constable, Major Oglethorpe, Captain Barnes

[153] His body was subsequently interred at the Kirkyard at Durris on the 20th July 1681.

[154] I am indebted to Effie Moneypenny of The Stuart Yacht Research Group for this valuable information. This Group is a small international group of naval historians specialising in the design, construction and history of the yachts built during the 17th and early 18th centuries by, or for, the Stuart Royal family or their close associates. info@syrg.org.uk/

and one servant, Captain Baggett and one servant, Mr. Slingsby and one servant, Mr Fraser and his wife, Mrs due Fowre[?], and Dr. Turner's servant Thomas Barry, their wearing apparel and other necessaries and transport them with you in your present voyage to Leith.' ADM2/1726f257

Accompanying the Frasers on the *Katharine* appear to have been a number of members of the Duke of York's (later James VII) court; for example, on board was Major Theophilus Oglethorpe who subsequently became James VII's principal equerry. Mr Leviston (alternative spelling: Levingston) may have been Charles Levingston, 2nd Earl of Newburgh, whose father had been a member of the House of Commons from 1661 to 1670 and had supported the Royalist cause in the Civil War. Mr Slingsby may have been Henry Slingsby, the second oldest son of Sir Henry Slingsby who had been executed in 1658 for his adherence to the Royalist cause during the Civil War. Henry Slingsby was Master of the Mint and a gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Charles II.[155]

The intriguing question remains unanswered as to the identity of the Mr. and Mrs. Fraser aboard the *Katharine*.

What can we confidently say we know about Thomas Fraser?

We know that:

- he attended the University of Aberdeen and that George Fraser (one of the beneficiaries) acted as his Regent

- he was acquainted with Lady Mary Fraser, the widow and second wife of Sir Alexander Fraser

- he was acquainted with Catharine Scarburgh (née Fraser) daughter of Sir Alexander Fraser and Lady Mary Fraser

- he was acquainted with Robin Fotheringham, a long-time close medical colleague of Sir Alexander Fraser

- he was acquainted with a member of Lord Fraser's family, Fraser of Kinmundie

[155]He was the third son of Sir William Slingsby of Kippax, West Yorkshire. He was appointed Deputy Master of the Mint from 1662 to 1667 and sole Master from 1667 to 1680. Slingsby introduced the idea of stamping the inscription "Decus et Tutamen" around the edge of silver coins to prevent clipping. The position of Master was normally held for life, but in 1680 Slingsby was suspended from office on the grounds of incompetence. His financial accounts were so faulty that he was suspected of fraud and his property temporarily seized to make good the losses. The duties of Master were then executed by a commission pending Slingsby's resignation in 1686. He died a debtor around 1690. Elected an Original Fellow of the Royal Society in 1663, he was expelled from the Society in 1675 for non-payment of dues.

- he was acquainted with Admiral Hopsonn who had been captain of the *St Michael* upon which ship Thomas Fraser served; and

- he had a very close association with the parish of Durris evidenced through the nature of his bequests to certain residents, the parish poor, local bridge construction and the church.

What has not been established is the nature of Thomas Fraser's relationship with either the Frasers of Durris or the Frasers of Kinmundie. We do know that Sir Andrew Fraser of Kinmundie acted as factor at Durris House for a short while. What is rather curious is that there is no bequest to Peter Fraser who inherited the title on Sir Alexander Fraser's death, yet there is a bequest to his mother and sister Catharine. We have no information about when Thomas Fraser left Aberdeen. At some point it is clear that he moved to London but we have no knowledge of the position or positions he took up there. The Will suggests that he maintained a strong link with the widow of Sir Alexander Fraser, his daughter and Sir Alexander's close professional colleague Robin Fotheringham.

Whilst the mystery surrounding the identity of Thomas Fraser has not been solved, we are a little nearer. Perhaps someone reading this chapter can take up the search and find the answer.

6.7 What were the consequences of the loss of the Sussex?

The consequences of the loss of the *Sussex,* upon which Thomas Fraser served, are of significance and are worthy of further examination as they led to important changes in vessel design in the Royal Navy.

Background

As the flagship of Admiral Sir Francis Wheler the *Sussex* set sail from Portsmouth on 27 December 1693, escorting a fleet of 48 warships and 166 merchant ships to the Mediterranean.

> *'Instructions for Sir Francis Wheler, knight, commander-in-chief of a squadron fitted out for the Straits. As soon as you join the Spanish armada, pursuant to the instructions of the Lords of the Admiralty, you shall act as most advisable for the annoying of the French, and shall give the Duke of Savoy notice of your arrival in the Mediterranean; and in case he desire your co-operation in any design against the French, you shall use your best endeavours to bring the same to a happy issue. During your stay in the Mediterranean you are to correspond as frequently as you can with Viscount Galway, our envoy extraordinary to the Duke of Savoy; and, as far as may be consistent with the service you are employed in, to act according to the advices you shall receive from him*.'[156]

The actual mission of Sir Francis Wheler on board the *Sussex* is of interest. It appears that the *Sussex* sailed at the request of King William in late 1693, as the flagship of a British fleet aimed at containing

[156] H.O. Admiralty Entry Book 1, p. 84. Calendar of State Papers Domestic: William and Mary, 1693.

the expansionist plans of King Louis XIV of France. At that time Britain was part of an alliance – *The League of Augsburg* – with Spain, Holland, the Holy Roman Empire and Sweden to thwart Louis XIV's plans. However, in order to achieve that aim it was necessary to secure the support of the State of Savoy, a small but strategically placed state on the south-east border of France that held the key to successfully capturing Paris.

While the Duke of Savoy was nominally on the side of the anti-French alliance, he was notoriously fickle and by late 1693 appeared to be wavering. In order to secure the Duke's support, King William decided to provide an incentive. According to a document in the National Archive dated 1693, William ordered the exchequer to transfer to the fleet a million pounds sterling in coins equal to 10 tonnes of gold and 100 tonnes of silver. The fleet, consisting of twenty ships of the line and frigates was ready to sail by November 1693 but were detained in port by contrary winds until 27th December. He was finally able to sail from Plymouth and was joined on the 29th December by a merchant convoy, which he escorted as far as Cape Finisterre.

Wheler reached Cadiz on the 19th January, having safely brought his convoy of 165 merchant ships to port. After staying at Cadiz for a month, Wheler left port on the 10th February and attempted to pass through the straits but was prevented by contrary winds. He tried again on the 17th February but was again forced back by the winds, which rose to hurricane force early on the morning of the 19th February. It is believed that the fleet was caught in a violent Levanter and faced with the risk of being forced against the rocky Spanish coastline, Sir Francis attempted to tack into the wind and head back behind Gibraltar but in the process water entered the open gun ports and the ship swiftly sank.[157]

HMS Sussex

[157] The Levanter is a strong wind of the western Mediterranean sea coasts of France and Spain. It is most common in Spring and Autumn. Its name is derived from Levant, the land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and refers to the wind's easterly direction. The Levanter reaches its maximum intensities in the Strait of Gibraltar.

In this storm the following English ships of war, besides many merchantmen, were lost:[158]

Ship	Tons	Guns	Commander	Complement	Lives lost
Sussex	1203	80	Charles Hawkins	550	548
Lumley Castle	not known	56	George Meester	280	130
Cambridge	881	70	John Ward	420	100
Serpent (bomb)	260	18	Abraham Colfe	65	15
William (ketch)	not known	10	not known	50	15
Mary (ketch)	not known	10	not known	50	16

The loss of the *Sussex* in February 1694, with Rear Admiral Wheler and all hands confirmed conclusions reached by professional officers of the naval administration *two months earlier*.[159] The question arose as to whether the structure of 80-gun ships with only two decks was dangerously weak, and whether this weakness could be overcome by building them with three decks. This was investigated in a report to the Navy Board dated 18th December 1693.

Defective structure

The report was most probably drawn up by Edmund Dummer, the Surveyor of the Navy. The opinions of the master shipwrights at each of the Royal Dockyards were sought in the form of a questionnaire. Though differing in matters of detail, all agreed with Dummer's proposition that future 80-gunships should be built with three decks. This principle was accepted by the Admiralty, though not all the details proposed by Dummer were approved.

[158] Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust, Royal Navy Loss List complete database, pages 129 of 208.

[159] At the time the *Sussex* sank, Britain followed the Julian calendar first introduced by Julius Caesar. Although the Julian calendar greatly improved on the earlier Roman system, over the centuries following, a number of days were missed because of a minor inaccuracy in the Julian system. At the time of William and Mary, most of the Catholic nations of Europe and some of the Protestant countries had already adopted the same calendar in use today – the Gregorian calendar. It was not until the 1750s that Britain also embraced that system. Thus in 1694 there were 10 days difference between the calendars of Spain and Britain. By Julian reckoning the *Sussex* was lost of February 19th, 1694. By the Gregorian calendar, the loss was March 1st 1694. One peculiarity of the Julian calendar was that the New Year started on March 25th rather than January 1st of the Gregorian calendar. It was the custom when writing dates for December through to March in the Julian calendar to use a combination of years – when the *Sussex* sank the reports about her loss were dated '1693/94'.

On the 27th March 1694 shortly after the loss of the *Sussex* a letter was sent by the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Danby – First Minister – to the Admiralty:

'I beg your Lordship's pardon since the unfortunate loss of the Sussex *the manner of which I have had an account from Secretary Southby, if I venture to desire you will consider how much more liable than any others, the 80-gun ships are, to come to such unhappy ends:*

(1) they carry a great weight of metal, which makes them fall very heavy in the sea;

(2) they have very deep waists so that if the sea makes a breach upon them, the very weight of water which such deep waists will entertain, joined with the great weights they have on their decks, is certainly sufficient, upon a ship's scending in the sea, to make her founder, if not stave in her decks.

(3) I fear the loss of the Sussex *has been occasioned by that reason. Therefore, I cannot but at this time, mention my opinion concerning the rest of the 80-gun ships which are not yet built, especially that now building in this place;*

(4) the foundation of which is laid, as fitting to bear three decks as any ship whatsoever. And the advantage she will have by a third deck is as follows:

- *A third deck will keep her sides fast together when she rolls and tumbles in a sea, which cannot possibly be done by two decks, if the bigness of her body, depth of her sides and weight of her guns (which depend on those sides) be considered;*
- *She will not only be much better fortified against the sea, but also against an enemy, by having two decks enclosed;*
- *She will then carry no guns with more ease than now 80;*
- *Her men will have a great deal of health and ease by it;*
- *And lastly: this ship needs not be built above 18 inches higher for it in the waist, and no higher afore and abaft, she being then to have no poop nor forecastle, as may appear to your Lordships by Mr Stigant's draught, whenever you will command it.*

The extra charge will be very inconsiderable, and I am certain your Lordships will find my opinion in this matter to have agreed with the majority of shipwrights and seamen, otherwise I would not have troubled your Lordships with this long scrawl about it. I am sure it will be at least worth your trial on one ship, and I cannot hear the extra charge will amount to above X 200. And no ship is so fitting to carry this experiment out as this shipbuilding here, the builders having received all possible encouragement by me from the King, for her to be made a three decked ship. Therefore I hope your Lordships will please to stop his further proceedings on her till you have well considered this proposal.' [160]

[160] R. Merriman (1950) *The Sergison Papers, 1688-1702,* Navy Records Society.

What is of interest here is the fact that Edmund Dummer, the Surveyor of the Navy, had drawn attention to the weakness in design of the *Sussex*; an assessment that had been endorsed by the master shipwrights in the Royal Dockyards. The question arises as to why one of the most expensive cargoes ever conveyed by a British naval ship should have been placed in a vessel which was known to be structurally suspect (i.e., possibly unseaworthy). It would also be interesting to know where the coins had been located. Were they treated as a form of ballast which might possibly have improved the stability of the vessel or were they located at a higher level – perhaps gun-deck level – thereby weakening further the stability of the *Sussex*? In today's litigious climate the question would inevitably have arisen as to whether the government which knew of the weakness in the *Sussex's* design was guilty of culpable negligence in permitting the *Sussex* to sail thus knowingly imperilling the lives of the crew and the loss of a precious monetary and political cargo.

The failure to deliver the financial inducement led the Duke of Savoy to change his allegiance and ally himself with France with the result that there was a stalemate between Britain and her allies and France which lasted well into the 18th century. Even had the fleet arrived safely there is no certainty that the Duke of Savoy would have changed his position.

The millions of pounds worth of gold and silver still rest on the bed of the Mediterranean Sea: their location is known but there is an international dispute between Spain and the United Kingdom as to which country has the right to salvage.

CHAPTER 7: DURRIS HOUSE

7.1 Durris House

The portrayal of Durris House below is based on a description written by Nigel Tranter. The House is described as standing in a large and ancient estate on the south bank of the Dee, at the northern extremity of the county and eight miles east of Banchory. The house is particularly interesting as being other than it seems. At first glance it would appear to be a simple smallish oblong laird's house of the early 17th century, to which a larger mansion has been attached in later times. What remains probably represents portions of a larger courtyard-type castle of an earlier date, much of the present basement foundations which survive are below present ground level.[161]

The tower is not even oblong but L-planned, comprising a main block and taller stair-wing, which culminates in a little watch-chamber slightly built out on a series of simple individual corbels. The re-entrant angle of the L has been filled in with later work, probably in the 17th century, and the roof-level somewhat altered, the yellow-washed harling now covering the traces of this addition. It is possible that the tower originally finished in a parapet with walk, and the two very small and unusual angle-turrets at the western corners might represent the former open rounds for this; in which case the squared watch-chamber would have served as a caphouse.

The two doors in the south gable are modern, the original entrance being now internal in the foot of the stair-wing, as was normal. The present ground-floor chamber is not vaulted, but there is a vaulted basement below this level. Whether the entire ground level has been altered, or whether these basements were always subterranean, remains to be settled. The strong position on the edge of the steep bank of a stream could have facilitated a terracing operation. The ceiling of the ground-floor chamber has been raised, the corbels for the former joists still projecting. The Hall is on the first floor above, and is unusual in that it contains two fireplaces, despite its comparatively modest dimensions – a large one near the door, and a smaller one opposite. The room seems rather too small for one of these to have been used for cooking purposes, divided from the rest by a timber screen, as was frequently the arrangement. There are bedrooms higher, and on each floor there is a small chamber in the filled-in re-entrant angle. A tiny turnpike stair without external projection admits to the watch-chamber at the main stairhead. This little room has an unusual stone seat at one side of one of its small windows.

There has been much modern addition to north and east, but directly across from the old tower, at the eastern extremity, there is a tall squared building which might represent at least the base of a former courtyard flanking-tower. It has another subterranean vaulted basement, from which other vaults extend below the present modern house. Altogether the house confronts the viewer with a fascinating puzzle.

[161] N. Tranter (1986) *The Fortified House in Scotland*, Edinburgh: James Thin, 155-157.

Durris House (Deeside Field): 8th October 1928

Around 1824 Archibald Simpson of Aberdeen added the South Wing for John Innes of Leuchars, father of the noted advocate and historian, Cosmo Innes, who was born at Durris House in 1798. John Innes leased the estate from 1795 and carried out many other improvements. However, in 1824 he was ejected by the Duke of Gordon, after protracted litigation, and financially ruined. In 1837, the Gordons sold Durris to Anthony Mactier, Registrar of the High Court in Calcutta. He too made many improvements, including alterations to the north and east wings of the house and, most notably, improving the farms and laying out the policies, and planting thousands of trees. After his death, his son sold the estate in 1871 to the chemist, Dr James Young, the originator of paraffin. The Baird family owned the estate from 1890 until the early 1930s when it was purchased by Viscount Cowdray. But in the mid-20th century Durris House came to perform a rather more unusual role.

Durris House: May 1963 (Reproduced by kind permission of D C Thomson)

7.2 Durris House: a nuclear bunker?

It has been claimed that Durris House in 1972 was a nuclear bunker for Aberdeen County Council and because it was a top secret installation, passers-by were not made welcome.[162] The bricked-up windows shown in the sketch below are given in support of this claim. However, the assertion that Durris House was a nuclear bunker is bunkum as an examination of papers held in Aberdeenshire Archives will prove.[163] What then do we know? The answer takes us on a rather lengthy and circuitous journey.

One might have expected that an issue such as Civil Defence would have been accorded some measure of urgency given that 1962 was the year in which the world came nearest to a nuclear war and that was over the Cuban missile crisis. Was the snail-like pace of the following deliberations an inevitable consequence of bureaucratic inertia or a failure to recognise the seriousness of the threat posed to the civilian population?

On the 25th June 1962 the Joint Committee (Civil Defence Group Control) met in the Town House in Aberdeen. At that meeting the Committee recommended that an enquiry be made of Aberdeen County Council as to whether it would be prepared to permit either the adaptation of the basement of an existing building at The Gordon Schools Huntly or the inclusion of a suitable basement in any future extension to the buildings there, for use as a Group Control Centre.

It was reported in a minute of the Joint Committee on the 19th November 1962 that after an inspection of the basement of the existing primary block at The Gordons School that, subject to the agreement of the Education Committee, a basement be constructed underneath the three storey portion of the new extension to provide a Group Control Centre. But at a meeting on the 9th December 1963 it was decided to defer consideration of various matters relating to the construction of such a Centre. It was pointed out that Aberdeen Council had indicated that, if the Committee so desired, the Civil Defence Control in the basement of Cults School could be made available as a 'short-lived' Group Control, pending the completion of the new building in Huntly.

However, at a meeting of the North-East Civil Defence Group Control Committee on the 4th May 1964 it was indicated that the Scottish Home and Health Department was not satisfied that Huntly was the most suitable place for the Group Control in view of the distance from the centre of local government and its unsuitability for wireless communications. At a meeting of this Committee on the 13th April 1965 it was noted that in view of the delay experienced in proceeding with the proposed new Group Control in the basement of the extension of the Huntly Gordon Schools, the Group Control Committee had instructed that inquiry be made as to the suitability of alternative accommodation. The Committee had approved a suggestion that Durris House might be leased for this purpose and that negotiations had been proceeding between the District Valuer and the Agent for the proprietor of Durris.

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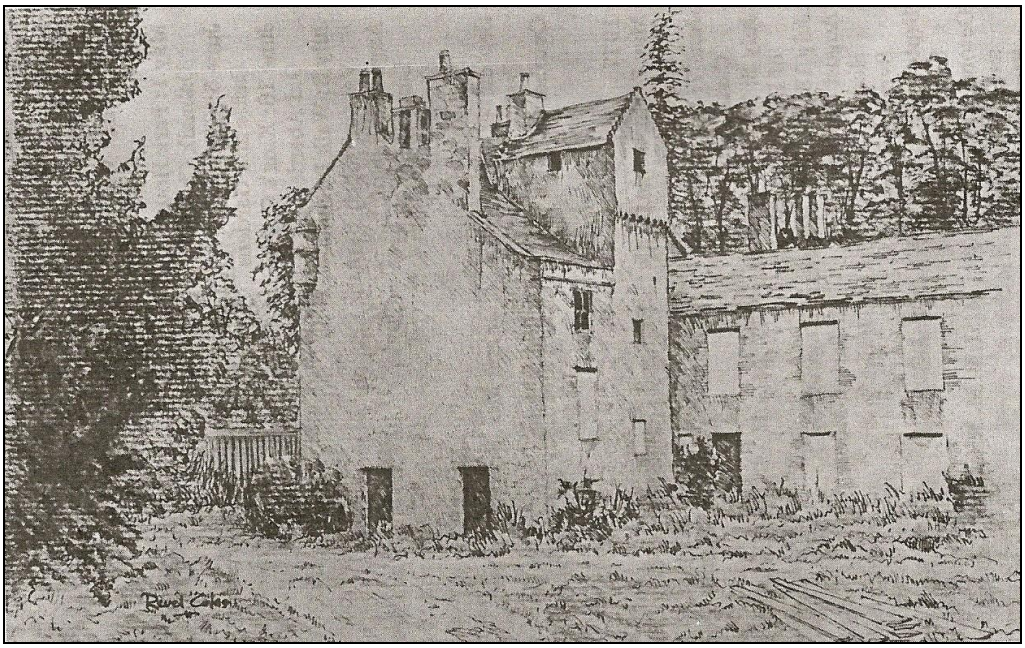
[162] https://gordoncastles.fandom.com/wiki/Durris_House

[163] I am grateful to Katy Kavanagh, Archivist, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Archives for her kind assistance.

On the 6th August 1965 a letter was sent on behalf of Mr Harry Baird, proprietor of Durris, to the Clerk of The North-East Civil Defence Group Control Committee indicating that he was not prepared to consider letting Durris House, as negotiations with the District Valuer regarding a satisfactory rent had proved abortive. The Clerk to the Committee then sent a letter to the Scottish Home and Health Department seeking approval for a further but different approach. As a result of an informal meeting between the District Valuer and the Chairman of the Group Control Committee and the Depute County Clerk, the Factor was asked if the proprietor would be prepared to consider letting the property to the Committee on the normal basis of the landlord keeping the property in useable condition and wind and water tight.



Durris House 1972 by Revel Coles

Durris House: 2018.

On the 8th September 1966 the Clerk was advised that the Factor was absent from the office and that the enquiry would be dealt with on his return. However, on the 22nd September it was noted that Durris House was being advertised to let in *The Scotsman*. In response to a further enquiry sent on the 29th September, the Factor replied that the proprietor was still interested in the possibility of reaching an arrangement with the Group Control Committee.

At a meeting of the Control Committee on the 17th November 1966 reference was made to the fact that after protracted negotiations the proprietor of Durris House had indicated that he was prepared to lease Durris House to the Committee at a rent of £250 per annum on the understanding that he would be under no obligations to carry out any repairs to the building and that the Committee could carry out such works as they might choose. The Committee Chairman explained that the Scottish Home and Health Department had indicated that they would have no objection to the Committee pursuing, through the District Valuer, the possibility of buying the property instead of leasing it, although the financial implications would have to be considered further when the terms recommended for the transaction were known. After discussion the Committee agreed that, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, they should purchase Durris House at such a price as may be negotiated by the District Valuer.

In a letter to the Scottish Home and Health Department dated 2nd December 1966, it was stated that the Group Control Committee at their meeting on 17th November were of the opinion that if the District Valuer could negotiate a reasonable price for Durris House they would be prepared to purchase the house rather than take a long lease. It was pointed out that the District Valuer had been able to negotiate a provisional purchase price of £3,700 for Durris House, the area immediately surrounding it and the East Drive. The seller would retain a right of access over the east drive for shooting purposes and for maintenance of the woodlands on either side and extraction of timber should this become necessary.

Durris House: North-East Civil Defence Group Control Centre

A letter dated the 12th May 1967 and sent by the Civil Defence Officer to the County Architect's Department set out the adaptations required at Durris House in order for it to act as a Group Control Centre. At a meeting of the North-East Civil Defence Group Control Committee on the 26th June 1967, it was reported that the Scottish Home and Health Department had expressed the hope that it would be possible to contain the expenditure to substantially less than £10,000. The fact that it took over six years to establish this Centre gives food for thought.

In June 1978 Durris House was put on the market by Grampian Regional Council.[164] Offers to purchase the property had to be submitted to the Director of Law and Administration by the 28 June 1978. It was later reported that Durris House had been converted into four homes.[165]

7.3 The real nuclear bunker: Tertowie House

Returning to the subject of nuclear bunkers: it is true is that such a bunker was created to cover Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. And certainly in 1982 there would have been few people who were unaware of a proposal by Grampian Regional Council to establish an underground nuclear bunker under Tertowie House, a 16th century house in Blackburn. This two-storey house dates back to 1506 when it was owned by Robert Keith, Earl Marischal; later in 1666 the house and the surrounding lands passed on to the Burnetts of Craigmyle.

It was confirmed in an article in the *Aberdeen Evening Express* in 1985 that Tertowie House was likely to become Grampian Region's operations base in the event of war. The property had originally been bought by Aberdeen City Council in 1944. In 1962 a complex was built by the City Council to house the activities of the Civil Defence Corps. The Corps was disbanded by the Government in 1968 with the result that the underground emergency centre was not used to any great extent after that time. The house itself subsequently provided accommodation for students from Clinterty Agricultural College.[166]

The chief officer of Grampian Regional Council at the time – Douglas Macnaughton - indicated that a search had been undertaken by the Council for a location for a wartime control centre. After the search it had become clear that the most economical method of providing such a centre would be to upgrade Tertowie. He pointed out that the purpose of establishing such a centre was not simply to conform to the statutory duty placed on the regional authority by central government but to establish a centre from which to control and coordinate the action that would need to be taken in the event of hostile attack or a threat of hostile attack.

[164] Grampian Regional Council (1978) Durris House: particulars for sale.

[165] £95,000 offer sought for Paraffin Ha', *The Press and Journal*, 2 February 1988.

[166] *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 23 May 1985

Mr. Macnaughton sought to address the criticism that such a centre was a bunker to accommodate a select few. He stressed that it was not so much a bunker as an emergency control centre which would accommodate personnel with expertise in various fields such as road, water, social work, transport, police, fire, ambulance, health, food and agriculture and military. It was estimated that the total cost of bringing Tertowie up to a minimal standard would be £168,093, although the Scottish Home and Health Department would give a 75% grant.

Tertowie House, Kinellar

The proposal to establish the Emergency Centre proved highly controversial and caused a storm of protest in the local press and even led to a demonstration outside the regional council headquarters at Woodhill House.[167] One letter published in the *Aberdeen Evening Express* observed that the British Medical Association had made very clear that in the event of a nuclear attack, medical help would be virtually non-existent. The question was then posed as to what sort of help would the occupants of the Tertowie House bunker be able to offer.[168]

Once the bunker had been completed it could be accessed through a steel blast door and then a 40 foot long concrete corridor led to a decontamination area and a second blast door. The bunker itself contained a toilet and shower, generator, ventilation system, fitted kitchen, bed space, canteen and storage facilities. There was also a scientific adviser' room and a communication room for contact with the outside world.

[167] A. Gill (1984) Nuclear protest bunker, *Aberdeen Evening Press* 14 September.

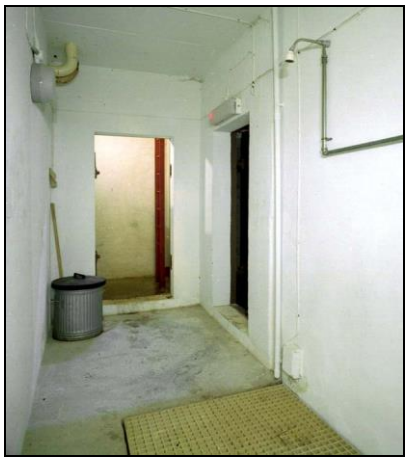
[168] E. Junor (1984) Who will occupy nuclear bunker? *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 29 August.

Morag Morrell, regional councillor for Woodside, who had taken an active interest in the funding of the emergency control centre, was not impressed by the idea of a nuclear nerve centre under Tertowie House. "In the event of a nuclear war it is surely the young who should be given first protection. Instead we have been told that the only people in the shelter would be the region's convener, chairman of the public protection committee, the finance chairman, the chief executive – and doubtless some military and police top brass."[169]

Lesley Dunbar, a member of the 150-strong Aberdeen Women for Peace Group, argued that the work should not have been started in the first place. "These centres are not needed to protect the public and they also make people believe it is possible to survive a nuclear war, when in fact 90% of the population would be wiped out if a one megaton bomb fell on Aberdeen. Notwithstanding widespread professional and public criticism, the Centre was modernised and re-activated in 1987. It finally closed in 1998.

In 2004 Tertowie House came on the market for a price of £325,000, whilst the entire estate was available at offers over £850,000. Aberdeen and Northern (Estates) Ltd which was selling the property and surrounding lands claimed that the mansion would appeal to the security-conscious homeowner given that the mansion came with its own nuclear bunker![170]

Scientific advisors room: Tertowie House



Decontamination room: Tertowie House

[169] A. Gill (1984) Nuclear protest bunker, *Aberdeen Evening Press* 14 September.

[170] Mansion is an ideal buy for security conscious in fear of terror, *The Scotsman*, 27 September 2004.

CHAPTER 8: LAIRDS AND PROPRIETORS OF DURRIS

Laird is a generic name for the owner of a large, long-established Scottish estate, roughly equivalent to an esquire in England, yet ranking above the same in Scotland. In the Scottish order of precedence, a laird ranks below a baron and above a gentleman. This rank is only held by those lairds holding official recognition in a territorial designation by the Lord Lyon King of Arms. They are usually styled [*name*] [*surname*] of [*lairdship*], and are traditionally entitled to place The Much Honoured before their name. The Lord Lyon, Scotland's authority on titles has produced the following guidance regarding the current use of the term laird as a courtesy title:

> *The term 'laird' has generally been applied to the owner of an estate, sometimes by the owner himself or, more commonly, by those living and working on the estate. It is a description rather than a title, and is not appropriate for the owner of a normal residential property, far less the owner of a small souvenir plot of land. The term 'laird' is not synonymous with that of 'lord' or 'lady'.*

The laird may possess certain local or feudal rights. A lairdship carried voting rights in the ancient pre-Union Parliament of Scotland, although such voting rights were expressed via two representatives from each county who were known as Commissioners of the Shires, who came from the laird class and were chosen by their peers to represent them. A laird is said to hold a lairdship: a woman who holds a lairdship in her own right has been styled with the honorific "Lady".

8.1 Sir Alexander Fraser (c.1610-1681)

Family background

The exact origin of the surname 'Fraser' is not known with certainty, although there seems little doubt that it originates from France. The first reliable record is that of 'Frysel' recorded on the Battle Abbey roll on the site of William the Conqueror's victory over Harold.[171] However, the authenticity of this manuscript is in some doubt. The first definite record of 'Fraser' in Scotland occurs in the mid-12th century as 'de Fresel', 'de Friselle', and 'de Freseliere'. It appears to have a Norman origin.

Fraser first appears in the recorded history of Durris during the reign of Alexander III (1249-1286) when most of what is now the parish was possessed by the Crown. During the Wars of Independence Durris Castle was in the hands of the Comyns but subsequent victories by Robert the Bruce (1306-1329) brought changes and by 1308 Durris was once again crown property. William Fraser, a son of Sir Alexander Fraser, held the lands of Durris in the reign of David II. His father, Sir Alexander, had married Lady Mary, a sister of Robert the Bruce, and through her the family obtained many grants of lands. William married Mary, a daughter of Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell. William Fraser was actively engaged in the national struggle against the English during the minority of David II; while his father Sir Alexander was slain at the battle of Dupplin in 1332.

[171] A list of William the Conqueror's companions at the Battle of Hastings in 1066

It seems that he received the honour of knighthood from David II, who, after his return from France, frequently visited Aberdeen and the surrounding country. Sir William was in the army under the King which invaded England in 1346, and he fell in the battle of Durham. He left two young sons, and the lands of Durris were placed in ward under the Crown during the minority of the eldest son. Alexander Fraser, the eldest son, obtained full possession of the lands in 1363. In 1369, David II granted to him the whole lands of the thanage of Durris – transformed into the tenure of free barony, to be held, under the Crown, by him and his heirs on the condition that three annual attendances at the Head Court of the Sheriffdom of Kincardineshire and the service of one archer in the Royal army. He was present at the Coronation of Robert II at Scone on the 26th March 1371 and at the meeting of Parliament at Scone, on the 4th of April 1372, when the succession to the Kingdom of Scotland was limited to the male line.

Sir Alexander Fraser in 1375 married Johanna, younger daughter of William, sixth Earl of Ross. He obtained with his wife a number of estates in Buchan which were formed into the lordship of Philorth. Sir Alexander Fraser of Durris and Philorth died about 1410 and was succeeded by his son, William. The Frasers continued in the possession of Durris and their kinsmen in the lordship of Philorth. As the chief of the Frasers became a Covenanter in 1639, the lands and House of Durris were plundered by the Royalists. In 1645, Montrose, on his march through the district, set Durris House on fire, and destroyed the corn, horses, cattle, sheep and other goods. Shortly after, Durris passed into the hands of the Philorth branch of the family – Lord Fraser.

Alexander Fraser (c.1610-1681) acquired the Estate of the Barony of Durris which had been his great grandfathers and his ancestors for more than 300 years and at this time Charles II created him a Baronet of Scotland on the 2nd of August 1673. Alexander Fraser was married first to a lady surnamed Dowchly, a gentleman's daughter from near Bristol who bore him two sons and a daughter. His elder son, Alexander Fraser, was a Captain of a Troop of Horse in His Majesty's forces in Ireland. He married the only daughter of Sir Robert Weirs and acquired a large estate near Dublin but died without surviving issue. The second son was Charles Fraser, reputed to be a most learned gentleman who had translated some of Plutarch's Lives and was generally supposed the author of *The Turkish Spy*. He was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge. His M.D. from

Cambridge was obtained by royal mandate in 1678 and he joined the College of Physicians in 1684. He was a doctor to Charles II and James II from 1677. He stayed at his post until he fell ill in late 1697 and died early the following year. Charles Fraser died unmarried.

It is worth recording that Charles Fraser was the first physician-in-charge of The Royal Hospital at Chelsea.[172] King Charles II had founded the Royal Hospital in 1682 as a retreat for army veterans. The idea of providing a hostel rather than the payment of pensions was inspired by Les Invalides in Paris.[173] Charles II will have known of Les Invalides from his exile in Paris during the period of the Commonwealth. An intriguing aspect of Charles Fraser's appointment is that two years later on the 1st July 1689 a James Fraser was appointed Hospital Secretary and on the same date a Reverend Augustine Fraser was appointed Hospital Chaplain. An unsuccessful attempt has been made to see if there was any family linkage in these three appointments.

Les Invalides, Paris

Royal Hospital, Chelsea

[172] L. Matthew (1974) London's Immigrant Apothecaries 1600-1800, *Medical History*, 18(3), 262-274.

[173] In 1670, King Louis XIV decided to build the "Hôtel Royal des Invalides" for wounded homeless soldiers of its different wars. It was built between 1671 and 1676.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Alexander, married first a Mr Broomley who was killed in the Second Dutch War and left no issue. Elizabeth was a Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen of England at St Germaines, Paris. Her second husband was James Graham (Privy Purse to King James VII) brother of Richard, Lord Viscount of Preston and Knight of the Shire of Westmorland.

The second wife of Sir Alexander Fraser was a lady of noble extraction, namely, Mary fourth daughter of Sir Ferdinando Carey and his wife, Philippa Throckmorton. Their daughter, Carey Fraser, became the wife of Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Monmouth and Peterborough. The marriage between Sir Alexander and Mary Carey brought with it an important alliance as Lady Mary Fraser had a sister who had married Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Cleveland. Another sister, who had been Maid of Honour to Queen Catherine, the Royal Consort of Charles the Second, had married a Mr Shelton, Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of France from the time of King James VII. And another daughter of Sir Ferdinando Carey had married a Monsieur Querison, a burgomaster in the town of Middleburgh in Zealand.

Carey Fraser was a maid of honour to Catherine of Braganza from 1674 to 1680 and was regarded as one of the Hampton Court beauties and was painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller for Mary II. It is claimed that she had had high hopes of becoming a royal mistress. On one occasion she had appeared at a court celebration in such a rich dress of velvet, ermine and cloth of gold that one of her suitors backed off in alarm, protesting that his estate would *'scarce maintaine her in clothes'*. The assumption was that she must already have more than one lover to keep her. In fact she was about to be secretly married to Charles Mordaunt (an adventurer like herself)![174]

Carey Mordaunt (née Fraser) Countess of Peterborough: Painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller

[174] F. Harris (1993) *The Honourable Sisterhood: Queen Anne's Maids of Honour*, pp. 182-183. www.bl.uk/eblj

FRASER FAMILY TREE

Alexander Fraser of Durris (Dores) (d 1475?)
m. Cecily Arbuthnott (daughter of David Arbuthnott of that Ilk
1. William Fraser of Durris or Dores (c 1506)
m. Margaret Gordon (daughter of James Gordon of Haddo)
A. Alexander Fraser of Durris or Dores (c 1549)
m. Christian Arbuthnot (daughter of Sir Robert Arbuthnot of that Ilk)
i. Alexander Fraser (d. Pinkie 1547)
a. Thomas Fraser of Durris or Dores
m. Helen Gordon (daughter of James Gordon of Midmar & Abergeldie)
(1) Alexander Fraser
m. Helen Arbuthnott (daughter of Andrew Arbuthnot of that Ilk)
(A) Andrew Fraser
(2) Adam Fraser
m. ---Duff (daughter of ---Duff of Drummure)
(A) Sir Alexander Fraser, 1st Baronet of Durris (b. c1607, died 28.04.1681)
m.1 Elizabeth Dowchly (from near Bristol)
(i) Alexander Fraser
m. ---Weirs (daughter of Sir Robert Weirs)
(ii) Charles Fraser
(iii) Elizabeth Fraser
m.2 Mary Carey (d. 1695) (daughter of Sir Fernando Carey by Philippa Throckmorton), widow of Dudley Wylde of Canterbury
(iv) Sir Peter Fraser, 2nd Baronet of Durris (d 1729)
m. (c.1700) Anne Heron (1677-1769), daughter of Sir Edward Heron
(v) Carey Fraser (d. 1709)
m. (c.1678) Charles Mordaunt, 1st Earl of Monmouth, 3rd Earl of Peterborough (b. 1658, d. 1735)
(vi) Catharine Fraser
m. (after 1677) Charles Scarburgh (Clerk of the Green cloth) son of Sir Charles Scarburgh, Royal Physician
(B) Mary Fraser
m. (c 1677) Andrew Ramsay, son of Sir David Ramsay of Balmain
(3) George Fraser
(4) John Fraser of Ferryhill
m. Ann Lorymer
(5) Agnes Fraser
m. (1598) Alexander Buchan of Auchmacoy
(6) Jean Fraser
m. John Douglas of Barras

Sir Alexander Fraser was succeeded on his death in 1681 by his son, Peter, who had married Anne Heron, a daughter of Sir Edward Heron. Catharine Fraser, the youngest daughter of Sir Alexander, married Charles Scarburgh, son of Sir Charles Scarburgh, physician to Charles II.

Education and training of Sir Alexander Fraser

Sir Alexander Fraser received his education at the University of Aberdeen under the care and eye of his grandmother Helen Gordon of the House of Abergeldie. After he had taken his degree in Arts he travelled abroad. He settled first in Holland and studied Medicine at the University of Leyden before completing his medical training at the University of Montpellier on 1st October 1635. This qualification was subsequently recognised by the University of Cambridge on the 9th March 1637. Fraser was admitted a Candidate of the College of Physicians on the 30th March 1640 and a Fellow on the 23rd November 1641. A statute limiting election to the College to just Englishmen "qui natione sint Angli" was on this occasion waived.

It is worth noting that the Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier was the oldest in France, its statutes dating back to 1220 and, owing to its location in southern France, had been intellectually independent of Paris. Its more liberal political climate persuaded the Faculty of Medicine from 1550 to teach anatomy and surgery despite the corporate separation between physicians and surgeons in France comparable to that in England. Montpellier's example was influential, as after 1600 Paris and other French institutions adopted regular courses in anatomy and botany.

Obtaining a doctorate at the University of Montpellier was intended to be difficult, the severity of its medical examination reflecting the prestige of its faculty. Montpellier produced a number of royal doctors for England such as the physician Theodore Mayerne and serjeant-surgeon Gilbert Primrose, both on James I's royal court staff, and subsequently Alexander Fraser, first physician to Charles I and Charles II.

Sir Alexander at Court

It has been claimed that Dr Fraser was esteemed by all and known as a gentleman of lively wit and entertaining conversation. He also quickly came to be known as an eminent physician whose learning and knowledge were highly valued and as a result of which he gained many patients both about the Court and the City. With his reputation rapidly increasing he was promoted to be one of the ordinary physicians to Charles I in 1645. In that station he continued without any interruption until Charles I's execution on the 30th January 1648, whereupon Fraser moved to Holland and presented himself to Charles II who was then at The Hague. He was graciously received by the King and appointed to attend him as his physician.

The Earl of Clarendon observed in his *History of the Rebellion* that Dr Fraser was in constant attendance on His Majesty's person through the whole ten years of his exile. He was also heavily involved in clandestine discussions with his countrymen which were seeking possible ways for Charles to regain a footing in one of his kingdoms.

It was at the Hague that Dr Fraser became acquainted with most of the great and powerful men in Scotland, such as William Duke of Hamilton, the Earl of Lauderdale afterward the Duke of Lauderdale, the Earl of Cassils, the Earl of Lothian. Dr Fraser had come over on the same ship as Charles II to Scotland in 1650 where he took the Covenant, as all were obliged to do that attended on the King's person. He attended constantly on his Majesty all the time he was in Scotland and waited on him in his capacity as physician when Charles marched at the head of the Scots army to England in 1651. And he was at the Battle of Worcester. After all was lost and the King escaped, Dr Fraser found the means to get himself conveyed over to Paris where he continued to wait upon his Majesty. Indeed he attended on the King and his small Court until the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

After Dr Fraser had come over to England with Charles II, he could have obtained anything for himself if he had so wished for he was held in very high regard not only by the King but also by the Earl of Clarendon, the Prime Minister. However he decided to use his good offices with the King and Prime Minister to speak up for some of his countrymen whose allegiance to the Crown during the Commonwealth period might have appeared suspect and he saw it as his task to divert a storm from breaking on them. It is indicated that he stood in high favour with his Master's Court and was never seen as being under a cloud or causing a frown.

Physicians to the King

1660	June	Fraizer, Sir A.
1660	June	Quatremaine, W.
1660	June	Baber, J.
1660	15 June	Hinton, Sir J.
1660	20 June	Bate, G.
1667	21 August	Clarke, T.
1672	14 February	Scarburgh, Sir C.
1675	21 March	Shirley, T.
1675	12 October	Witherley, T.
1677	25 August	Fraizer, C.
1678	29 October	Talbor, Sir R.
1682	7 March	Chamberlen, H.
1682	8 November	Brady, R.

However the fact that the King placed such confidence in him meant that he was in turn courted and abused by the violent rival factions which had grown up among the English exiles on the continent. The conclusion drawn by some contemporary writers was that Dr Fraser was as unprincipled as his royal patient. In her biography of Charles II Antonia Fraser is somewhat dismissive of Dr Fraser:

> *"Fraser had the advantage of having known the King in both Jersey and France, other advantages he possessed he could deploy skilfully after the Restoration for he could deliver the Court's lady's child and cure his father of an amatory disease with equal deftness. In these rugged days, however, it was of more consequence that Fraser had 'an unquiet and over-active spirit'; he was a natural intriguer rather than a successful one."*[175]

According to some of his contemporaries the character of Dr Fraser was never of the highest as is evidenced from a letter of Sir Edward Hyde to Sir Richard Browne (6th August 1652) and from a volume of tracts in the British Museum, quoted by Mr Bray in his edition of "Evelyn's Diary." Clarendon writes:

> *"I am glad you have so good a correspondent as Dr Fraser who is grown, God knows why, an absolute stranger to me; he is great with Lord Gerard and Mr Attorney, but he will speedily leave us and go for England, which truly I am sorry for, for the King's sake; for no doubt he is good at his business. Thus, Pepys writes, "Dr Pierce tells me, when I was wondering that Fraizer should order things with the prince in that confident manner, in helping them to slip their calves when there is occasion, and with the great men in curing them, that he can do what he pleases with the King in spite of any man; and upon the same score with the prince – they all having more or less occasion to make use of him."*

A more favourable assessment of Dr Fraser's character comes from Spottiswoode who had this to say:

> *"…to use the words of a contemporary, "since I have named some physicians, educated in Aberdene, I must not pass over Sir Alexander Fraser, his Majesties Physician, whose great learning and happy practice of physic, as they have raised him to such esteem and dignity, so his constant loyalty and high generosity do answer that noble race of the Frasers from whom he is descended."*[176]

On the other hand the *Book of Bon-Accord* noted that tradition had not always given a favourable account of Dr. Fraser's learning. "The Earl of Rochester, says an old jest-book, "happened one day to wait upon the King, Charles II, when there were present the Duke of York, the Duke of Monmouth, the Duke of Lauderdale, and *Dr Fraser, who, though the greatest dunce in the whole College,* had yet the honour to be one of the King's physicians. His majesty in a merry humour says, 'Rochester, I am told you are very good at making verses extempore; is it so?' The Earl replied. 'An't please your Majesty, I have made verses extempore many times.' 'Prithee let us have some of them now,' said the King. 'On what subject,' said the earl? At which the King, looking about him, answered "On us that are here.' 'I beg your Majesty's pardon,' replied Rochester; 'I dare not do it.' 'Dare not?' said the King, 'why so?' 'For fear I should offend.' 'No, no; you shan't offend me,' said the king, 'say what you will; and therefore I command you to do

[175] A. Fraser (1979) *King Charles II,* London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, p. 124.

[176] J. Spottiswoode (1655) *History of the Church of Scotland*, Appendix, p. 29.

it,' 'Nay, if your Majesty commands me,' says Rochester, you must be obeyed; and, thereupon the Earl began thus:

Here's Monmouth the witty,
And Lauderdale the pretty
And Fraiser that learned physician;
And above all the rest
Here's the duke for a jest,
And the king for a grave politician.

'O my conscience,' said the King, 'he has satyrised us all; no wonder, indeed, that you begged my pardon beforehand, for you were resolved to stand in need of it.

In Payne's opinion the King was not, as might be commonly supposed, too concerned about the moral character of those whom he honoured with his patronage.[177]

His favourite physician, Sir Alexander Fraser, is mentioned in Pepys' Diary as notorious for practices which in our times might bring him within the grasp of criminal law. It is a striking testimony to the loyalty of the College of Physicians, that no word of complaint was ever heard of the scandalous manner in which official patronage was dispensed by the founder of the Royal Society and Patron of the Royal College. But it is easy to imagine the difficulty which an honest and upright physician must have had in steering his way among this crowd of quacks and sycophants.'

'During the reign of Charles I Dr Mayerne continued First Physician and held nominally the same appointment to Charles II, after the execution of his father. At length, "full of years, wealth and reputation," he died at Chelsea. ……Quite as marked, though not so honourable, was the position of Sir Alexander Fraser in the Court of the next reign. He was in attendance on the Royal party at St Germaines in 1651 and 1652, and was much trusted by the King in a political no less than in a professional capacity. At the Restoration he returned to England, and adapting himself without hesitation or scruple to all the wants and wishes of the Court, attached to a degree of influence with the King, unequalled, perhaps, in the history of the Profession. So much for what Royalty has done. If the favours were personal, they came, deserved or undeserved, through the Profession, and the grievance is that the Profession is neglected; not, of course, that the grumblers themselves do not get "life peerages".[178]

Sir Alexander Fraser of whom "the King hath a high opinion… …and says all ye physicians are fools to him.'[179]

[177] J. Payne (1900) Chapter IX: Medical practice in Sydenham's time. In Masters of Medicine: Thomas Sydenham. New York: Longmans. p.163.

[178]'The roll of the Royal College of Physicians', The Medical Times and Gazette: a *Journal of Medical Science*, Vol. I for 1861, June 22nd. London, Churchill.

[179] 'Medical Notes: The Rev. John Ward and medicine', *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, February 3, 1921, pp.131-2.

Some commentators have drawn attention to the fact Sir Alexander Fraser's royal patients did not always pull through after their treatment by him. He had attended the king's second brother, twenty-year-old Henry, Duke of Gloucester, fatally stricken with small pox in September 1660. In December the virus attacked Charles's sister Mary, aged twenty-nine, Princess Royal of Great Britain and Princess Dowager of the Netherlands, who perished just as quickly as Gloucester despite Fraser's best efforts, begging King Charles to act as a guardian to her son. The doctor also ministered to James's doomed infant sons, the Dukes of Cambridge and Kendal in 1667.[180]

The Royal Society

It has been asserted that Sir Alexander Fraser had a chief hand in forming the Royal Society and was one of those learned and ingenious men who were the first members of it. It is also claimed that he was in the greatest friendship with his countryman Sir Robert Murray a mathematician who was the Society's first President and Lord Brouckner and Dr Ward of Salisbury who were the principal promoters of it. In 1660, within a few months of the restoration of Charles II, this group of twelve men, including Robert Boyle and Christopher Wren, met in London to set up a society in order to study the mechanisms of nature.

The Royal Society was born and with it modern, experimental science. This situation seems unlikely enough, but the fact that the founding members came from both sides of the Civil War makes its origins all the more astonishing. The formation of the Royal Society has to be set against a background of political, economic, and religious turbulence; an era in which there was the war with the Dutch, the Great Plague, and the Great Fire of London. The key driving force behind the creation of the society was Sir Robert Murray. In the creation of the Royal Society he was able to build on his detailed experience of another organization and the principles upon which it was based. This other organization was the "Invisible College" as Boyle called it, known today as Freemasonry.

The very first meeting of this 'learned society' was on 28 November 1660 and it was followed by a lecture at Gresham College by Christopher Wren. Joined by other leading polymaths including Robert Boyle and John Wilkins, the group soon received royal approval, and from 1663 it would be known as 'The Royal Society of London for improving natural knowledge'.

It is known that Sir Alexander was admitted to the Royal Society as a Fellow on the 8th July 1663 along with a further 117 Fellows. It is instructive to look at the number of Fellows appointed in the initial eight years. It is important to note that Sir Alexander was not admitted until four years after the Royal Society had been founded. He was **not** therefore one of the founding members as has been claimed but rather one amongst a host of others. It is also noteworthy that after 1663 the year of Sir Alexander's admission, the number of Fellows created yearly dropped significantly.

[180] E. Furdell (2001) *The Royal Doctors 1485-1714: Medical Personnel at the Tudor and Stuart Courts*, New York, University of Rochester Press.

1660:	8
1661:	8
1662:	8
1663:	118
1664:	25
1665:	24
1666:	17
1667:	27

Number of admissions to the Royal Society: 1660-1667

As a result of his membership of the Royal Society, Sir Alexander Fraser was acquainted with Sir Christopher Wren, Samuel Pepys and Sir Isaac Newton.

A critical intervention on behalf of Isaac Newton by Sir Alexander Fraser

History points to the fact that in 1675 Sir Alexander made a critical intervention on behalf of a member of the Royal Society - Isaac Newton. 1675 was an important year for Isaac Newton for if he was to retain his fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge he had eventually to be ordained into the Anglican Church. Notwithstanding the general laxity of Trinity College with respect to regulations, the requirement for ordination was one rule that was enforced. Four times within the previous decade, to fulfil university obligations, Newton had been willing to assert his orthodoxy under oath. But to remain a fellow of the College, he would need to affirm his orthodoxy one last time and that was through ordination. But Newton could not accept ordination.[181]

But more than the fellowship was at stake here. Whilst Newton disliked some aspects of the society of Trinity College, the material support that the college provided, in a location which assured his access to the world of learning, provided the bedrock of his existence. He could have held his professorial chair without the fellowship and remain in Cambridge, although no other such case was known. The problem was secrecy. Questions were bound to be asked as to why he refused ordination. In itself, ordination did not entail any duties and did not involve an ecclesiastical appointment.

Why would anyone in Newton's position, someone who intended to stay on at Cambridge, celibate, surrender a fellowship worth £60 a year for no reason at all? Or rather, what was one to conclude about the true reason that led a man in such a position to refuse ordination? Questions were bound to be asked. Questions were exactly what Newton wanted to avoid. Heresy was grounds for ejection from his chair. As the deadline approached, his career faced a crisis.

[181] R. Westfall (1993) *The Life of Isaac Newton*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Sir Christopher Wren 1632–1723: Painter unknown

Samuel Pepys 1633-1703: Painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller

Sir Isaac Newton 1642-1727: Painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller

There was one possible means of escape. Any statute could be set aside by a royal dispensation. Late in 1674, a student at Trinity College had attempted to obtain a dispensation to free himself from the obligation of ordination. A letter from the master of Trinity to the Secretary of State, Joseph Williamson on the 3rd December 1674 presented the College's case against a dispensation. It was argued that it would destroy succession and subvert the principal end of the college, which was the creation of clerics. The master of Trinity was confident that senior fellows would refuse dispensation and so it proved.

The draft of a letter from Newton to 'Sir Alexander', which indicated that Newton had also been involved in this student's attempt to avoid ordination, survives. Sir Alexander is thought to be Sir Alexander Fraser, physician and confidant of Charles II, whose son, Charles Fraser, had been elected to a fellowship in Trinity in 1673. In the letter, Newton thanked Sir Alexander for including him in the proposal for a dispensation, which he said, had been successfully opposed by the college.

By early 1675, Newton had almost given up hope. He wrote to the Royal Society requesting that it excuse him from payments. But at the last moment the situation changed. On 2nd March Henry Coventry,[182] with the support of Charles II, indicated a willingness to give encouragement to all learned men who are and shall be elected to a Professorship and a draft for a dispensation was sent to the Attorney General for his opinion. On 27th April, the dispensation became official. As a dispensation was a Royal Act and as it is known that Sir Alexander had the ear of the King, it is possible that Sir Alexander's support for Newton had the desired effect. It should be noted that the dispensation was granted to the holder of the Lucasian professorship in perpetuity, not to Isaac Newton personally.

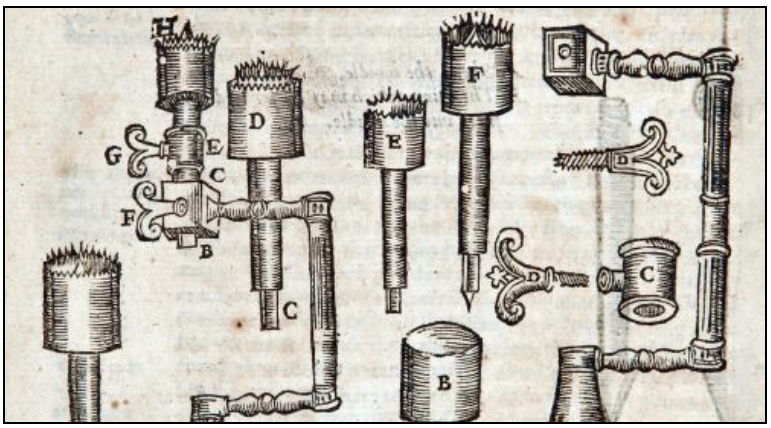
But why did Newton wish to avoid ordination? The reason was that around 1672 he had become an Arian. The Arian doctrine, first proposed in the 4th century by the Alexandrian Arius, stated the belief that Jesus was more than man but less than God. In other words Arians did not believe in the identification of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, so they did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. Newton believed that the Roman Catholic Church was misguided in its interpretation of Christianity and had returned to idolatry and whilst he partly approved of the Protestant Reformation, he felt it had not gone nearly far enough to return Christianity to its original state.

There is a certain irony in the fact that Newton rejected the concept of the Trinity yet remained a fellow of the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity! Had Sir Alexander Fraser not interceded on Newton's behalf and had Newton been forced to relinquish his professorial post at Cambridge, one is left to wonder what discoveries by Newton may have never seen the light of day.

[182]Henry Coventry was Secretary of State for the Southern Department which was responsible for Southern England, Wales, Ireland and the American Colonies. [There was also a Secretary for the Northern Department responsible for Northern England, Scotland and relations with the Protestant states of northern Europe.]

Sir Alexander Fraser and the trepanning of Prince Rupert's skull

It may be wise for the reader of a nervous disposition to quickly pass over the following section! Several years ago the Treasures Room of the Royal College of Physicians held a display of rare and gruesome surgical instruments dating from the 17th century, some of which are illustrated below.[183] This exhibition is of particular interest as reference is made to the fact that Royal College of Physicians fellow Sir Alexander Fraser was involved in the trepanning of the skull of Prince Rupert in the late-17th century. It is a claim that warrants closer inspection.



Trephine drills illustrated in Ambrose Parey, The workes of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Parey. Published, London, 1634.

First of all, some explanation needs to be given of the process of trepanning. Fortunately it is one procedure that has fallen out of use over the centuries. The practise involved scraping or drilling a 'burr hole' in the skull with a scalpel or circular trephine drill, to expose the *dura mater* and relieve pressure beneath the surface. The piece of skull was then lifted away with an elevator or terebellum, and a lenticular was used to depress the exposed brain and smooth the edges of the cut bone. Trepanning was believed to cure epilepsy, migraines, melancholia and mental disorders. It was also used as emergency surgery following a head wound, to remove fractured pieces of the skull or to release pooling fluids. The technique is thought to be the oldest surgical procedure for which we have archaeological evidence. It has been performed since the Neolithic era, when the trepanned bone is believed to be worn as a charm to guard against evil spirits. Hippocrates and Galen both describe the procedure.

It is now necessary to introduce Prince Rupert, nephew of Charles I, General of Horse and then commander in Chief in the first part of the Civil War, who left England in 1643 and became a mercenary for the King of France. That summer, in the wars on the borders of the Spanish Netherlands, Rupert was ambushed at La Basse, now in Northern France. He suffered a minor scalp

[183] Backhouse, S. (2015) A hole in the head, Library, Archive, Museum, Royal College of Physicians. https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news/hole-head

wound from a pistol ball – it was not severe enough to make him even pause in running out of an ambush, nor, a month later, to prevent him challenging an old enemy to a duel.[184] [185] It is certain that the wound would have been packed and dressed in the customary manner of the times, and that it would have healed in four to six weeks.

As far as it is known the wound gave no further trouble for seventeen years, until Rupert was back in England. During these years he had been a successful pirate, artist and mercenary general. After the restoration of Charles II, he was appointed admiral of a fleet being readied to intercept the Dutch Admiral, de Ruyter. The fleet was assembling in Portsmouth in October 1664, when a block from the rigging fell and hit Rupert on the crown of his head. This caused an infection in the bone of the skull to flare up, which had lain latent in the old wound for the last seventeen years. Nothing is known directly about the symptoms, but it is very likely they were painful, and that there was a swelling under the scalp.

Perhaps due to the pain, Rupert's notoriously short temper became even shorter. A lifelong servant and friend of Rupert's, Will Legge, notified James, Duke of York, (who was both Rupert's superior and Lord High Admiral, and his cousin) of what had taken place. James immediately sent his own person surgeon, Anthony de Choqueux, to attend Rupert.

Choqueux was an old family retainer; he originally came to London from France in 1634, sent by the mother-in-law of Charles I, Marie de Medici, to look after her daughter. He had served the Stuarts ever since, going into exile with them and returning with Charles II. In 1642 he was commanded to serve Prince Rupert also, and he may have played a part in the treatment of Rupert's original head wound, seventeen years earlier. During the period of the Commonwealth, Choqueux had spent most of his exile in and around the court of the Stuarts in France, and did not accompany Rupert on his travels. With the Restoration of Charles II he returned to London and was appointed Surgeon to the Duke of York, and later to the king.

Choqueux arrived in Portsmouth and scarified Rupert's scalp. This was a procedure of making a series of parallel shallow cuts just through the skin. Usually it is done as a counter irritant away from the site of disease, to relieve the pain of the primary site. There was later contemporary criticism that he had not been bold enough and gone deep enough, but Choqueux was said to have reassured Rupert that he would be well in a few days, although he refused to let him stir just then. In fact Choqueux's confidence was misplaced, and the infection continued to trouble Rupert, so that he returned to London later that month and then went to stay in the country at Titchfield for the rest of the winter, because he could not get a cure.[186]

What seems to have happened was that the blow on the head, which probably hit the site of the old wound on the crown, provided a focus of damaged tissue, where bacteria that had lain dormant since the original injury could now proliferate. Rupert presumably complained of a severe headache, and Choqueux probably saw a swelling and signs of inflammation. He had no way of knowing how deep

[184] Martin G (1990) 'Prince Rupert and the surgeons', *History Today*, 40(12).

[185] Martin G (2009) 'Successful drainage of an extradural abscess in 1667: Prince Rupert's trephination', *British Journal of Neurosurgery*, 3(2), 211-216.

[186] Titchfield is a small village in South Hampshire.

it was, without x-rays. If he assured Rupert that he would be well in a few days, he must have thought it was superficial. We can assume that Choqueux was as sensitive to being proved wrong as any modern surgeon.

Given the assumption that the infection was only superficial, then merely scarifying the skin over the surface made sense according to the practice of the times; it was clear that there was pus close to the surface that ought to be let out, but to make a full incision meant that the bone would have been exposed. Under the conditions of the period, exposing the surface of the bone would have meant that the outer layer of it died, and there would be a long wait of months until it was cast off – or sometimes the complications were much worse and included death.

Choqueux, therefore, chose the least radical and least damaging way of draining the abscess; the shallow cuts in the skin ensured that the pus would find an easy way of coming to the surface, but the bone would not be exposed.

In the spring of 1665 Rupert recovered and was well until October 1666 when again he fell ill. Again there is a contemporary record of the symptoms, but it may be supposed that he had the usual symptoms of an extradural abscess, that is an abscess between the bone of the skull and the membrane covering the brain. We know that this was the diagnosis because Pepys recorded his conversation with Sir Alexander Fraser, who may well have been present at the operation. Sir Alexander said:

> *Having cut the outward table as they call it, they find the inner all corrupted, so as it came out without any force, and their fear is that the whole inside of his head is corrupted like that – which doth yet make them afeared of him.*

There is no record that the previous surgeon, Choqueux, played any part in the treatment this time. Rupert had been ill from October and by January there were rumours that he had died, which Pepys denied, although he did record that people had despaired of Rupert's life. On January 31st, he wrote that Rupert was to be trepanned the following Saturday February 2nd and on that date wrote: "Prince Rupert to be trepanned today'. On Sunday February 3rd, not the expected Saturday, he wrote that he passed the door of Rupert's lodging in the Stone Gallery, Whitehall where the prince was being operated on. The apparent inconsistency in dates is best explained by assuming a two-stage procedure to the operation, as recorded by the surgeon's apprentice, with the incision made one day, and the hole bored in the skull the next day.

The surgeon was named Molins, probably James Molins, who at that time was thirty-six. He was a member of a family of surgeons, who were surgeons at St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's Hospitals. The patient's head was shaved around the wound and a circular incision about an inch in diameter made; circular in order to delay healing (an inch diameter hole will take six to eight weeks to close, and prolong the drainage through it). This would have been done with the patient sitting up and two assistants, one holding the patient's head and the other his limbs. Sitting up was the usual position for operations and in this case the best access to the crown of the head, where Pepys described the dressing later.

It is not known who was present at the operation, but Pepys's diary suggests that two of the king's physicians, Sir Alexander Fraser and Dr Clerke were present, along with the king's surgeon Mr Pierce. It is likely that none of these were the assistant who held the Prince; this job was probably beneath their dignity, and most likely the surgeon would prefer the help of those servants with whom he usually worked.

After the circular incision, the wound was packed with numerous little packs of linen and then there was a twenty-four hour wait. The packing was done to stop the bleeding, before the drill was used to open the skull. Modern surgical means of stopping the bleeding were not available without at least local anaesthetic, the techniques of clipping and tying the arteries would have been too tediously slow and painful in the scalp, which bleeds more than the skin anywhere else. Without waiting for the bleeding to be stopped, it would have been difficult but not impossible, to know how deeply the drill had penetrated the skull.

During the interlude of twenty-four hours the patient was bled and clystered[187], cupped and scarified[188]. This is the most difficult part of the procedure for the modern surgeon to understand for it seems totally irrational. Martin points out that not all modern treatment is rational: much treatment is given in the hope it will do some good and no harm; and that the patient should not be denied of some treatment that most experienced practitioner think offers some help.

On Sunday February 3rd Rupert's skull was trephined. Molins' apprentice records specifically that the recently-invented trephine was used. This was a hand held instrument whose teeth cut in both directions, so that it could cut with a 'to and fro' turn of the wrist, and could be controlled more precisely than the older trepan, or crown saw, mounted on a brace (like the carpenter's tool).[189] The trephine had been invented during the period 1620 to 1635 by John Woodall who had worked at St Bartholomew's, senior to the elder Molins. Woodall also made it, for the first time, slightly conical, so that it impacted in the hole, and could not fall through.

Boring through the bone is not painful, and it appears that the release of pus gave Rupert relief of his symptoms within a day or so. Indeed he made a rapid recovery; a fortnight after the operation he was well enough to amuse himself in his workshop by making forceps to be used in doing his dressings – even by modern standards a gratifying recovery. Four weeks after the operation Pepys saw Rupert in public, though still with a dressing under his wig. Six months later he seemed to be fully recovered, as Pepys reported that he was playing tennis well.

Rupert did not suffer again from his head wound. He died fifteen years later on 29th November 1682. at the age of sixty-two, from a chest infection. There was a post-mortem examination, at which it was demonstrated that there was a lot of new bone formed just inside the skull 'in the skin which covers the brain', which is exactly what would have been expected with his history.

[187]Clystered: a wound or body organ cleaned by flushing or washing out with water or a medicated solution.

[188] Scarified: were shallow incisions are made in the skin.

[189] See illustration on page 76.

What this case also reveals is not only the differing roles of physician and surgeon but their different status in the medical world. Physicians saw surgeons' 'physick practice' as treading dangerously into their own territory. They denounced surgeons as uneducated and their practice of internal medicine as illegitimate. Tensions steadily grew between London's Company of Barbers and Surgeons and the College of Physicians as both groups sought to create distinct occupational identities and spaces within the medical marketplace. Here, the College of Physicians was fighting an uphill battle. The high fees charged by university-trained physicians made them inaccessible to the average person so the surgeon was an able and more affordable alternative.

How did surgeons justify the broad scope of their practice? They argued that the ancient Greeks and Romans saw medicine as a single practice made up of three related parts: diet, surgery, and physick or pharmacy. John Knight, the Serjeant-Surgeon under Charles II claimed that the work of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries was so intertwined that they could not be separated." Despite pressure from the College of Physicians, the Company of Barbers and Surgeons turned a blind eye to those practicing internal medicine, and stepped up when necessary to defend them from legal prosecution.

It is necessary therefore to step away from the characterization of early modern surgeons as ill-educated manual artists and to recognize the fluidity of occupational boundaries during this period. There is a certain irony in contrasting the status of surgeons today with that in the 17th century. Further, we can confidently conclude that Sir Alexander Fraser, Physician to Charles II, took no active part in the trepanning of the skull of Prince Rupert.

8.2 LAIRDS OF DURRIS: EARL OF PETERBOROUGH AND MONMOUTH

Charles Mordaunt was born in 1658, the son of John, 1st Viscount Mordaunt (of Avalon and Baron Mordaunt of Reigate) and Elizabeth Carey (grand-daughter of 1st Earl of Monmouth). His father died on 5 June 1675 so he succeeded to the peerage as Viscount Mordaunt. He did not become Earl of Peterborough until 19 June 1697 when his uncle Henry, the 2nd Earl, died. Charles was educated at Tonbridge and Christ Church, Oxford. At the age of 16 he joined the Mediterranean Fleet and was in the expedition to Tangier. He then entered political life as an enthusiastic Whig, strongly opposed to the Catholic James, Duke of York. When James became King, Charles hurried away to Holland. There he worked hard to persuade William of Orange to invade England. Eventually William was persuaded and Charles accompanied him to Torbay.

Viscount Mordaunt was now in a very favourable position, being so close to the monarch. He was appointed to the Privy Council in 1689, and in the same year was made First Lord of the Treasury and Earl of Monmouth. However he made some bad decisions and fell foul of King William so that he spent a brief period in the Tower of London in 1697. For some years after his release he proved politically troublesome so he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of land forces in Spain during the War of the Spanish Succession. He commanded in person the siege of Barcelona and led the attack on the east side of Fort Montjuic. He was later criticised for lack of enthusiasm and lukewarm support for the Archduke Charles who the allies had placed on the Spanish throne. In his history of the Somerset Light Infantry, Sir Henry Everett had this to say of the Earl:

> *'Historians differ as to his abilities as a great military commander, though fame has given him a place among English soldiers of the period as second only to Marlborough. His previous military experience was chiefly at sea, but there was no exploit on this element to his credit which would lead one to suppose that he was fitted for supreme command of an important expedition. It is recorded that the siege of Barcelona was commenced against his advice, but when once decided on, he carried out the execution with commendable zeal. He was undoubtedly eccentric, vainglorious and quarrelsome. He appears to have hated foreigners, including his allies, and he despised Charles III whom he was commissioned to place on the throne of Spain. He was romantic, addicted to pleasure and the charms of the fair sex. Yet with all these drawbacks, he had undoubted military virtues, he was popular with his subordinates, and made the best use of the irregular Spaniards under his command, whom he thoroughly understood. He believed in and practiced mobility, he was a master in the minor stratagems of war, and appreciated the value of the elements of secrecy and surprise in his operations. To his credit it may be said that as long as he was in charge of the campaign in Eastern Spain the arms of the Allies were consistently victorious.'*

While in Spain he had as one of the English regiments under his command, the 13th (Barrymore's) Regiment of Foot. He had a high regard for the regiment because he chose them to be transformed from infantry into dragoons. His sense of the dramatic became apparent when, in January 1706, the regiment paraded, totally unaware of what was in store for them. They were led, 500 of them, around a hill to find, on the other side, 500 horses all saddled and prepared for them. So for the next seven years one part of the 13th Regiment operated as dragoons and was known as Pearce's Dragoons. The Earl of Peterborough, by this act made one more enemy; the Colonel of the 13th, The Earl of Barrymore, who complained bitterly to Queen Anne that his regiment had been ruined.

Earl of Peterborough (1658-1735): painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller

On his return to England there were angry debates in the House of Lords where his military exploits divided opinion, but the end result was that he was thanked by the House. However, he was still regarded as a problem and was sent off once more to Vienna. In August 1712 he was appointed Colonel of the Royal Horse Guards which lasted until June 1715. In 1713 he was appointed Knight of the Garter, but when George I ascended the throne of Britain on 1st August 1714 he lost any influence that he still had.

He was married in 1678 to Carey Fraser, a third cousin, and had three children, two of whom died in 1710, one of whom Lady Henrietta Mordaunt (c. 1688-1760) married Alexander Gordon, 2nd Duke of Gordon, (c. 13th February 1707) and had issue. Her grandson the 4th Duke eventually inherited the Mordaunt barony including the Durris estate. His wife Carey died in 1709, and in 1722 he secretly married Anastasia Robinson, an opera singer and Handel's favourite soprano. The Earl died in Lisbon on 25 October 1735 and his remains were buried at Turvey in Bedfordshire. The portrait above is one of at least two painted of Charles Mordaunt by Sir Godfrey Kneller. This one was painted around 1715 and is in the National Portrait Gallery.

Lady Henrietta Mordaunt, only daughter of Charles Earl of Peterborough & Monmouth, afterwards Duchess of Gordon: painted by Sir Peter Lely c.1760.

8.3 John Innes (1747-1830)[190]

The first of three great Durris improvers was John Innes, of Leuchars in Morayshire.[191] He acquired the management of the estate of Durris, in the county of Kincardineshire in August 1795. He commenced his improvements by making at his own expense a road, and building the necessary bridges equal to any turnpike from the one end of the estate to the other, leading to Aberdeen, and running along the River Dee for about seven miles. He likewise carried a road from the east end of this estate towards Stonehaven, as far as the property went; and with the assistance of some of his neighbours, he applied for and obtained an Act of Parliament, under which a turnpike road was carried for 16 miles, leading through the west end of the estate from the upper bridge upon the river Dee, to the harbour of Stonehaven, at a very great expense, being through a rugged and hilly country across the Grampian mountains. This road ran through the estate for about seven miles. He opened Durris to the outside world.

Further, he erected spacious farm steadings and houses of various descriptions for tenants; likewise milns and kilns, all at considerable expense, at the following places, Balbreadie, Durris, Balfour lower and higher, Castletown, Kirkton, Miln[192] and Kiln west Durris, Kincluny, wester Balbreadie, Denside; besides a variety of cottages on different parts of the estate. He improved uncultivated ground and muir, after clearing immense quantities of stones and tree roots from 451 Scots acres; all of which were enclosed, subdivided and most productive, being sett[193] to tenants on permanent leases. He enclosed with substantial stone fences a variety of farms and pasture grounds upon this estate, to the extent of more than 2500 acres; and he enclosed and planted 740 acres of muir ground. He built more than 55 thousand yards of dykes in the process of carrying out these improvements. Suitable places were chosen for the site of meal mills. In less than nine years the value of the estate had risen from less than £1000 per annum to over £2500.[194]

Law of entail: John Innes v Duke of Gordon

In 1795 the Earl of Peterborough or rather his trustees had let the Durris estate on a ninety-nine year lease to John Innes in consideration of a lump sum of £30,000 and a feu duty of a hundred pounds. However, the lease was never fully run. There was legal argument about its validity in view of the law of entail, and the Innes family were turned out after something like £95,000 had been spent on improvements.

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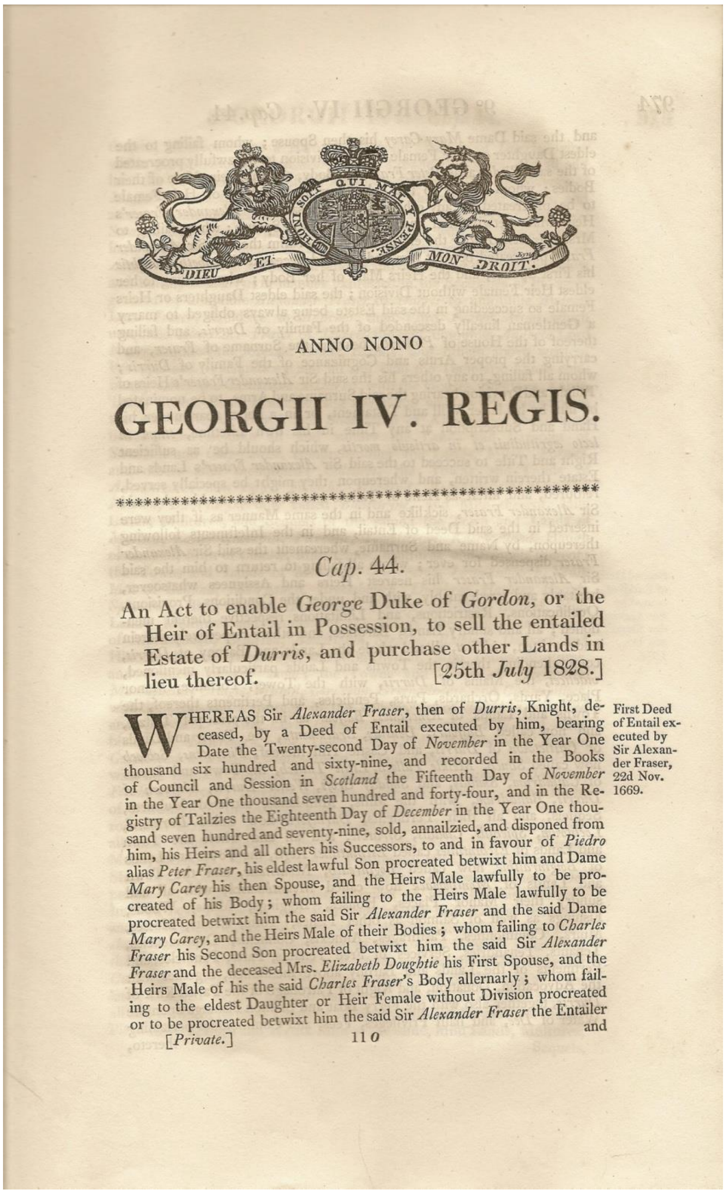
[190] G. Robertson (1810) *A General View of Kincardineshire; or the Mearns; drawn up and published by order of the Board of Agriculture*, London, Phillips, 74-77.

[191] Early land improvers of Durris, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 9 June 1936.

[192] *Miln* is a mill.

[193] *Sett* is a lease or contract.

[194] Early land improvers of Durris, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 9 June 1936



ANNO NONO

GEORGII IV. REGIS.

Cap. 44.

An Act to enable *George* Duke of *Gordon*, or the Heir of Entail in Possession, to sell the entailed Estate of *Durris*, and purchase other Lands in lieu thereof. [25th *July* 1828.]

WHEREAS Sir *Alexander Fraser*, then of *Durris*, Knight, deceased, by a Deed of Entail executed by him, bearing Date the Twenty-second Day of *November* in the Year One thousand six hundred and sixty-nine, and recorded in the Books of Council and Session in *Scotland* the Fifteenth Day of *November* in the Year One thousand seven hundred and forty-four, and in the Registry of Tailzies the Eighteenth Day of *December* in the Year One thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, sold, annailzied, and disponed from him, his Heirs and all others his Successors, to and in favour of *Piedro* alias *Peter Fraser*, his eldest lawful Son procreated betwixt him and Dame *Mary Carey* his then Spouse, and the Heirs Male lawfully to be procreated of his Body; whom failing to the Heirs Male lawfully to be procreated betwixt him the said Sir *Alexander Fraser* and the said Dame *Mary Carey*, and the Heirs Male of their Bodies; whom failing to *Charles Fraser* his Second Son procreated betwixt him the said Sir *Alexander Fraser* and the deceased Mrs. *Elizabeth Doughtie* his First Spouse, and the Heirs Male of his the said *Charles Fraser*'s Body allernarly; whom failing to the eldest Daughter or Heir Female without Division procreated or to be procreated betwixt him the said Sir *Alexander Fraser* the Entailer and

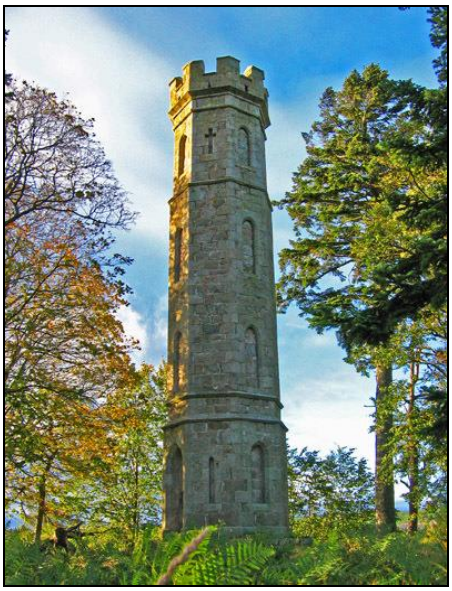
First Deed of Entail executed by Sir Alexander Fraser, 22d Nov. 1669.

[*Private.*] 11 *o*

Durris House has been of interest to lawyers because it gave rise to one of the leading cases on the law of entail, which settled points that had formerly been in doubt. The victim in this case was John Innes, who had sold his property in Moray in order to invest in the barony of Durris which he had taken on a long lease in 1795. As the new tenant he believed he was the proprietor, as a consequence of which he built a comfortable house under the walls of the old castle and carried out extensive improvements to the estate. However on the death of the daughter of the 2nd Duke of Gordon in 1824, heir to the Durris estate, the estate devolved upon the 4th Duke of Gordon as heir of entail. After a lengthy and expensive lawsuit, Innes was ejected. In 1837, the Gordons disposed of the Durris estate to Anthony Mactier, a wealthy East India merchant and Registrar of the High Court of Calcutta.

In order to celebrate his victory in the lawsuit the Duke of Gordon built a tower overlooking the River Dee which came to be called the Duke of Gordon's Tower. What has not been established is why and when the name of the tower changed. A tentative explanation is advanced. As the first proprietor of the Durris estate, as opposed to laird, Innes had been responsible for widespread improvements in

the parish which had impacted directly and positively on the quality of life of many of the residents. There may have been, therefore, a general feeling in the community that Innes had been unfairly treated and that the erection of a commemorative tower was both ill judged and unjustified. What better way of ignoring the Duke of Gordon's intent than ascribing to the tower a different reason for its creation. Today, it is widely known as 'Keith's Tower', commemorating a skirmish between the Keiths and the Irvines of Drum which is believed to have taken place near this spot in the 14th Century.



Duke of Gordon's Tower or Keith's Tower?

Cosmo Innes

Cosmo Nelson Innes (1798-1874), the son of John Innes and Euphemia Russell, was born in Durris House. His middle name, Nelson, is almost certainly to mark Horatio Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile in August 1798. Thirteen of his 14 siblings died, only he and his sister Elizabeth survived. His friends included Alexander Forbes Irvine (1818-1892) laird of Drum whose career closely paralleled his own. He was educated at Edinburgh High School then the University of Edinburgh and undertook further studies at the universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Balliol College, Oxford.

He was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates in 1822 and was appointed Professor of Constitutional Law and History at the University of Edinburgh in 1846. From 1840 to 1852 he was Sheriff of Moray and in 1852 he became Principal Clerk of Session in the Scottish Court of Session. In 1843 he became a member of the Edinburgh Calotype Club[195] one of the world's first photographic societies. He was also a member of the Spalding Club[196], Maitland Club[197] and Bannatyne Club.[198] In 1858 he was

[195] The club was formed after the introduction of calotype photography to Edinburgh by David Brewster, then Principal of St Andrews and also a close friend of the inventor of the calotype process, Henry Fox Talbot.

[196] *The Spalding Club* was the name of three successive antiquarian and text publication societies founded in Aberdeen, which published scholarly editions of texts and archaeological studies relevant to the history of Aberdeenshire and its region. The clubs were named after the 17th-century historian John Spalding.

elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Scotland and served as the Society's Vice-President from 1862 to 1869. In his later life Innes lived in Inverleith House in Northern Edinburgh. The house still exists and is in the grounds of the Royal Botanic Garden. The Garden was formed from Innes's former garden grounds.

Inverleith House

Cosmo Innes was accused of being a Catholic sympathiser at a time when it was illegal to have such a religious allegiance. He subsequently joined the newly created Scottish Episcopal Church, close in practice to the Catholic Church. Dean Ramsay, head of the Episcopal Church, was one of his friends.

It is clear that in his youth Cosmo Innes enjoyed living in the countryside at Durris as the following extract reveals:

> *"I do not feel myself severed by any disgusts from the country of my youth, where I spent my best years, or at least the years of most enjoyment. It was then a wild moor, with some natural beauty, a picturesque den leading from the house to the noble river, wooded with native birch and scrubby oak, with some tall larches and magnificent horse-chestnuts, and even a few immemorial Spanish chestnuts, planted by the old Peterboroughs, now all gone. Along that river-bank were some of the broadest haughs with which I am acquainted, and some of the best salmon streams, up to Caimmonearn and Kirloach, giving the best grouse-shooting in the country. It is, in truth, a charming water-side, even in the eyes of a critical old man, or of a tourist in search of the picturesque; but for a boy who lived there, shot and fished there, while all the houses round were the dwellings of cousins and friends, while game was not yet let for hire, it was a place to win that boy's heart, and I loved it very heartily."*[199]

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[197] *The Maitland Club* was a Scottish historical and literary club and text publication society, modelled on the Roxburghe Club and the Bannatyne Club. It took its name from Sir Richard Maitland, the Scottish poet. The club was founded in Glasgow in 1828, to edit and publish early Scottish texts.

[198] *The Bannatyne Club*, named in honour of George Bannatyne and his famous anthology of Scots literature the Bannatyne Manuscript, was a text publication society founded by Sir Walter Scott to print rare works of Scottish interest, whether in history, poetry, or general literature.

[199] *Memoir of Cosmo Innes* (1874) Edinburgh, Paterson.

8.4 Anthony Mactier (1773-1854)[200]

London Evening Standard, 25 December 1833

Estate of Durris in Kincardineshire to be sold by adjourned Public Auction within the Royal Exchange Coffee-House, on Wednesday, the 5th day of March 1834 at Two O'clock afternoon, under the authority of an Act of Parliament of the 9th of his late Majesty, cap. 44.

The Lands, Baronies and Estate of Durris, possessed by his Grace the Duke of Gordon and his tenants, as more particularly described in former advertisements. This estate is estimated to contain 20,000 Imperial Acres: it comprehends a handsome modern Mansion-house, many fine grain and grazing farms, extensive and valuable plantations, six miles of fishing on the River Dee, the patronage of the parish church of Durris and a great range of moor abounding with grouse and other game. The annual free rental of Durris is about £4000. The distance from Aberdeen is nearly 12 miles and 8 miles from the county town of Stonehaven and the roads to both are good. An estate so extensive, compact, and improvable seldom comes onto the market, being equally desirable either as a residence, or as an advantageous investment for a large capital.

When, in 1834, the lands of Durris eventually passed from possession of the ducal House of Gordon after the long but successful plea of entail, the purchaser was Anthony Mactier, the son of a small Wigtonshire farmer, whose successful career in India enabled him to offer the sum of £110,000 for the possession. As a youth he had entered the law office of Mr Alexander Walker, Edinburgh, by whom he was recommended as Private Secretary to Sir John Anstruther. He went out with Sir John to Calcutta, and rose from one position to another, eventually becoming Registrar of the High Court there. How he made so much money in that position was probably owing to the opportunities for good investments which it presented.

The precise character of the career of Mactier is unknown. Sometimes it was represented that he was a Calcutta merchant, that he was head of the police force, or that he was an Indian judge. For the parishioners of Durris and the Lower Deeside people reported him to have been a pirate, in confirmation of which they claimed that his skull had been cracked in some hand-to-hand encounter and mended by a silver clasp. His robust appearance and bluff manner and speech were seen as further confirmation. Proof as to his calling was affirmed by the presence of a great sea-chest with

[200] From: *The Deeside Field,* The Rosemount Press; Aberdeen 1922

enormous iron bands in Durris House which was believed to act as a strong room for his hoards of silver bullion brought home from the East!

The following is a description of a dinner organised by Durris tenants to welcome Mr Mactier.[201]

> *Mr Mactier, the purchaser of Durris having lately visited this property, the tenants, desirous of paying him some mark of respect on the occasion of his first coming among them, requested his company at dinner, which invitation he most readily accepted, and on Thursday the 17th inst. Mr Mactier, along with his friend Mr Silver of Netherley, and Mr Silver, jun., with upwards of seventy of the principal tenants on the estate sat down to an excellent dinner at the Mansion House of Durris, provided by Mr Machray of the Royal Hotel… …Mr Mactier, in an appropriate speech returned thanks expressing himself highly pleased at the cordial and gratifying manner in which so numerous a body of tenantry had received him. He stated that it was his resolution to take up his abode permanently among them, and endeavour to cultivate those kindly feelings which had been displayed toward him… ..Mr Mactier, on rising to depart, begged to drink to the health, happiness and prosperity to those present, his new friends. Prosperity was to be obtained only by industry and perseverance, and he assured them that whenever he saw these qualities displayed, they should always meet with encouragement from him… ….on various parts of the estate, the families of the tenantry assembled and testified their happiness by bonfires and other rejoicings. The benefit of a resident landlord on so large a property as Durris, possessed as Mr. Mactier is of ample means, and having the wish to improve his estate, and cultivate a good understanding with his tenantry and neighbours must be felt not only by those more immediately connected with him, but by the surrounding country.*

Those living in the closing years of the nineteenth century used to speak of the Durris of 1830 as a rather wild place, bare of trees, cultivated only here and there, embracing, even in its lower parts, great moors of whin and broom, with extensive marshes and wastes overgrown with blackthorn and bramble. When Lord Southesk was told of the purchase of Durris by Mactier, it is claimed that he advised putting a fence around the whole Parish and turning it into a deer forest! However, the new laird thought otherwise, and shortly after assuming ownership of the lands he began a long and thorough series of improvements, which converted the waste land into profitable agricultural holdings with steadings which it was claimed, had few equals for convenience, architectural appearance, or durability.

Whilst roads had been constructed and other improvements effected by Mr Innes these were insignificant when compared to the work subsequently undertaken by Mactier. It was claimed that no other district in the Dee valley could show such a record of progress. During the period of the "hungry forties" he employed a large force of workmen, mostly natives of Braemar, and carried out a systematic overhaul of the estate. Where agriculture seemed unlikely to succeed he planted large areas with larch, spruce, fir, and oak which were cited as evidence of his foresight and enterprise. He was one of the first proprietors to recognize the potential of the *Douglas nobilis Menzies*, and other pines which subsequently came to be widely used. It was owing to his initiative that the wind-swept ridge of Strathgyle, 600 feet above sea-level, was planted with Sitka spruce, providing a model and example to all arboriculturists. This particular tree had many advantages for poor soils on exposed

[201] Dinner to Mr Mactier of Durris, (1834) *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 2 April.

and high-lying positions, and it grew almost twice as fast as other varieties. Its wood was light and tough, and could be used for many common purposes, but its great virtue lay much later in its suitability for aircraft construction.

Besides adding a large section to Durris House, Mactier was responsible for laying out the policies, which extended to more than 200 acres included within which were many rare varieties of fir, pine, spruce, cedar, cypress, oak, beech, and larch, as well as ornamental shrubs and rare exotics. One distinctive feature of the policies of Durris House was a Japanese Avenue of about 500 yards long which contained a range of specimens; *Cryptomeria elegans, Cryptomeria japonica, Juniperus recurvea, Virginiana* (red cedar), *Retinispora pisifera, Retinispora plumosa, Thujopsis dolobrata, Thujopsis borealis.*

Durris Moor which formed part of the estate came to be regarded as one of the best gaming estates in the locality. The following table was offered to demonstrate its reputation and show the game killed on the estate over the following three years:

	1887	**1888**	**1889**
Grouse	810	1697	828
Partridge	709	177	385
Pheasant	202	212	401
Black game	5	5	4
Woodcock	37	57	59
Wild duck	5	-	10
Snipe	14	11	9
Hares	254	284	287
Rabbit	4424	5068	4824
Roe deer	10	17	8
Red deer	2	3	8

The salmon fishing linked to the Durris estate extended five or six miles and was regarded as one of the best reaches on the Dee. Since about 1874, through the operations of the Dee Fishery Improvement Association, all the nets had been taken off the Dee from Cults downwards leaving only about three miles of the mouth of the river subject to the sweep of the net. The result had been a great improvement in the rod fishing. The Durris part of the Dee extended to about five or six miles and included many first-class angling pools, among which were Birkenbands, Bridge Pool, Greenbanks, Kirk Pot, Castle Pool, Durris Long Stream, Hut Pool, Keith Pot and Boat Pool. The number of salmon killed during the three years 1887-1889 was:

1887 20 Spring salmon and 65 in Autumn

1888 34 Spring salmon and 67 in Autumn

1889 27 Spring salmon and 90 in Autumn

To anyone visiting Durris in the mid-19th century they would have seen the great improvements carried out by Mactier. However, many of his enterprises were not so obvious. His schemes had involved an extraordinary amount of trenching, blasting, and draining. The stone fences, with their heavy copes were to be witnessed everywhere along with long lines of "consumption dykes" and their enormous clearings which proved useful reserves for heavy road construction.[202]

As many as forty to fifty men had been employed during the whole period of the occupancy of Mactier (1834-1854) and in that time an almost new Parish had been created. Many of the smaller holdings had been absorbed into larger farms, but the proprietor made ample provision for crofters in suitable districts over the whole area. A very large number of fair sized farms had been built, and a much smaller number of tenancies with two to three hundred acres. Thus there were opportunities for every level of the farming class with a prospect of a regular and natural supply of labour. As a result of all these activities, the prosperity of farmers was greatly enhanced.

The originator of all these schemes, the chief adviser and superintendent in all the work, had been Mactier himself. He made regular visits to every place where improvements were going on, and with his great walking stick, on which all his standard measurements were notched, he tested the accuracy of every piece of work. If anyone was found scamping a job he received such a scolding as made a second neglect unlikely to occur.[203] Though he walked a great deal during the course of his supervision, his approach was often made in a great yellow coach which the navvies nicknamed "Old Brimstone"!

It is said that Mactier personally superintended all his improvements. On one occasion he encountered one of his workmen 'paving' a ditch bottom with stones because of his poor work.[204] When questioned by Mactier as to what he was doing, the workman commented: "But it'll last your time and mine onywye," remonstrated the workman. "Last my time and yours", was the indignant answer. "I want it to last to eternity."

Mactier had an eye to all the necessities and amenities of his estate and provided shops and facilities of many kinds. Roads, bridges, and wells were constructed or repaired. Gullies were spanned and everything put into first-rate order. In the upper district of the Parish the school, schoolhouse, and croft were provided by 1848, the year in which Queen Victoria drove to Balmoral from Aberdeen, when an ornamental arch was erected in her honour over the Slug Pass. The masonry of the viaduct over the deep Dhualt Glen is one of a number of examples of high engineering skill.

[202] A consumption dyke is a dyke built by "consuming" the stones from the surrounding fields, sometimes forming wide dykes.

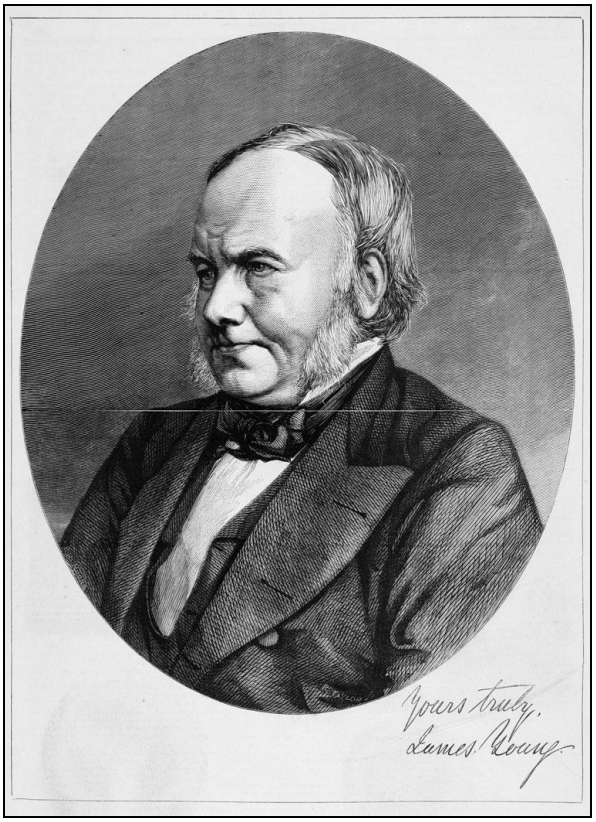
[203] Scamping: to work carelessly or inadequately.

[204] Early land improvement, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 9 June 1936.

He was generally helpful and considerate to every class of his tenants, and would sometimes invite them to visit or even dine with him; but where he noticed, and no one was keener to observe, inefficiency or sloth, he was unsparing. He had little interest in sport or amusement, and spent most of his twenty years of his retirement on the improvement of the estate. The Reverend R.H. Calder of Glenlivet, a native of Durris, made Anthony Mactier the subject of one of his poems.

For shootin' grouse upo' the moors
He didna care a single strae,
Nor, gentry-wise, lang precious 'oors
At cards or billiards would he play;
The welfare o' his braw estate
His heart's endeavour aye was near-
His wark an' pastime ear' and' late,
The chief concern o' auld Mactier.

8.5 James Young (1811-1890)



James Young became the possessor of Durris estate in 1871 when he acquired it from Mr Mactier for the sum of £300,000. He was also the proprietor of the estate of Kelly on the Firth of Clyde where he chiefly resided and only visited Durris for short periods during each summer. Despite his extended absence from Durris, he nevertheless took a great interest in the management of the estate and the planting and cultivation of the grounds.[205] Notwithstanding the fact that he left only a light footprint in the history of Durris, his biography merits examination.

Young was born in the Drygate, Glasgow, the son of John Young, a cabinetmaker and joiner. He became his father's apprentice at an early age and educated himself at night school, attending evening classes at the nearby Anderson's College (now Strathclyde University) from the age of 19. At Anderson's College he met Thomas Graham, who had just been appointed as a lecturer on chemistry. In 1831 Young was appointed as Graham's assistant and occasionally took some of his lectures. While at Anderson's College he also met and befriended the explorer David Livingstone; this friendship continued until Livingstone's death in Africa many years later. On 21 August 1838 he married Mary Young of Paisley and in 1839 they moved to Lancashire.

[205] Death of Dr Young of Durris (1883) *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 14th May.

About 1847 Dr Playfair told Young of a petroleum spring in a coal mine belonging to Mr Oakes in Derbyshire. Mr Young submitted the oil to long and careful examination and found modes of rendering it useful to society. With the aid of Mr Meldrum appointed as a manager at Alfreton, the spring was made to furnish lubricating oil for machinery and a lighter oil for burning in lamps. But the product was small, and the supply of raw material soon entirely ceased. What was to be done? The oil had evidently come from coal, and surely therefore it could be produced from it artificially. This idea led to the slow distillation process which he claimed as a patent, whilst the richness of the Bathgate coal decided that the works for carrying it out should be established there.[206] Mr Binney, FRS, of Manchester, was associated with him, Mr Meldrum being managing partner at the works.

In February 1865 Young took over the whole business from his partners. He built a second and larger works at Addiewell, near West Calder, and in January 1866 he sold the concern to 'Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company' for £400,000. Other companies worked under license from Young's firm, and the paraffin manufacture spread over the south of Scotland. The fame of Young's paraffin soon led to the exploitation of petroleum springs all over the world, and so gave rise to an immense industry.

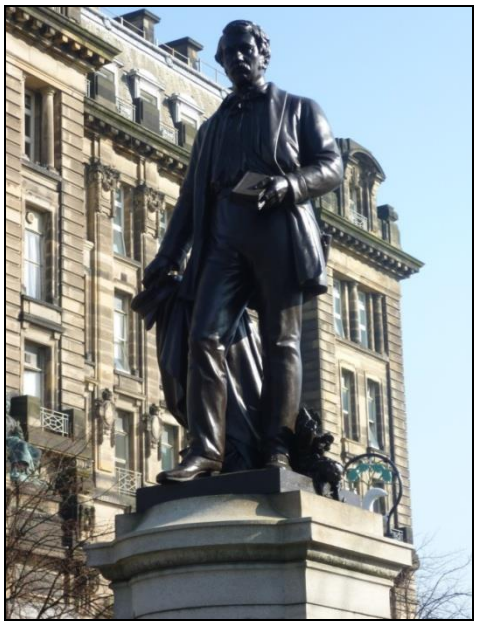
Young had reduced the price of light, and, as he says, where a shilling was spent on candles he gave an equal amount of light for one penny. He was able to show the value of petroleum and of coal oil which led to the development of the oil wells of America, as well as to the enormous distillation of coal and shale oil in this country and great parts of Europe, whilst the oil itself penetrated far into the East. Young's works were well known for producing a large amount of paraffin oil, but he was less known for the manufacturer of solid paraffin, which he was always pleased in considering as the veritable coal gas, solidified and made into a candle.

[206] Bathgate is a town between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

In 1845 he served on a committee of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society for the investigation of potato blight and suggested immersing the potatoes in dilute sulphuric acid as a means of combating the disease. This practice continued up until 2009 when permission to use it as a desiccant was revoked.

In 1872 Young took his friend, Robert Angus Smith, on a voyage to St Kilda and Iceland on his yacht the *Nyanza*. He noticed that the bilge-water in his yacht was acidic, and suggested the addition of caustic lime to the bilge-water to prevent the rusting of iron ships, a suggestion afterwards adopted in the Royal Navy. He is further said to have been the first to find that iron vessels could be used instead of silver vessels for boiling down caustic soda solutions – a discovery which, though simple, was of considerable practical importance.

He spent the greater part of his late years at Kelly. In 1878 he began at Pitlochry a series of experiments with Professor George Forbes on the velocity of light. Young and Forbes found the velocity of white light to be 301,382 kilometres per second, a value slightly higher than those previously obtained. They also found that blue light travelled at a rate 1.8% faster than red, a result not yet fully explained. During his later years Young also worked on the practical applications of the electric light, but published nothing on this subject.



David Livingstone Statue: George Square, Glasgow

Young, although outwardly somewhat 'cool' in temperament, was a man of enthusiastic and generous nature. While Livingstone was in Africa he gave him unlimited financial support. 'Any monetary promise of Livingstone's given to a Portuguese trader or Arab slave-dealer, written upon an old bit of leather or piece of bark, was duly honoured by Young.' He gave generously towards the general expenses of Livingstone's second and third expeditions, and contributed £1,000 towards the last Zambezi expedition, and £2,000 towards a search expedition under Lieutenant Grandy, which

proved too late to find Livingstone alive. He had Livingstone's servants brought to England, and he presented to Glasgow a statue to his memory, erected in George Square, Glasgow.

Young was elected to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1847 and from 1879 to 1881 he was Vice-President of the Chemical Society. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1861, a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1873 and awarded an Honorary LL.D of St. Andrew's University in 1879.

8.6 Henry Robert Baird (1861-1929)

The Baird family[207]

Henry Robert Baird who was born in 1861 was a member of the well-known family which founded the Gartsherrie Ironworks. He was the fifth son of William Baird of Elie who was MP for the Falkirk Burghs from 1841 to 1847.[208] The importance of the Baird family in the industrial development of Scotland is worthy of comment.

The Bairds are recorded as having owned land in Lanarkshire as far back as the 13th century. The Bairds for several generations belonged to the parish of Old Monkland; and their father, Alexander Baird, founder of the Baird industrial dynasty, died at an advanced age in the winter of 1833. He was an industrious farmer, being a tenant on both Drumpeller and Rosehall estates of the farms of Kirkwood, Newmains and High Cross. The family consisted of two daughters and eight sons. The elder sons aided their father in the work on the farms, and he lived to help them by offering counsel and financial assistance to establish the Gartsherrie Works. Seven of the brothers were ultimately partners in the works, John, the second son, being the only one that followed his father's occupation of farmer.

When the Messrs Baird commenced to build their first furnace at Gartsherrie they confronted difficulties that would have proved a serious obstacle to men of less determination. In 1830, the manufacture of iron in the district was in its infancy; the Bairds, shrewd businessmen, prepared for the future by securing leases for extensive supplies of both ironstone and coal. At that time there was little or no opposition and such leases could be and were secured on very reasonable terms. But the secret of their success could be attributed to their indomitable energy, attention, and strict personal surveillance over all the various departments connected with their business. The Bairds developed the first chain-driven coal cutting machine in Scotland, nicknamed the Gartsherrie, which became a prototype for mechanical coal cutters for more than a century in coal mines around the world.

In 1846 they started the Eglinton Iron Works, at which there were eight blast furnaces; in 1852, they acquired the Blair Iron Works, with five blast furnaces; and in 1856, both the Lugar and Muirkirk Iron Works. Thus, taking in Gartsherrie along with these other works; they had a total of thirty-six blast furnace, twenty-six of which were working. The produce of iron from these works could not have been less than 650 tons daily.

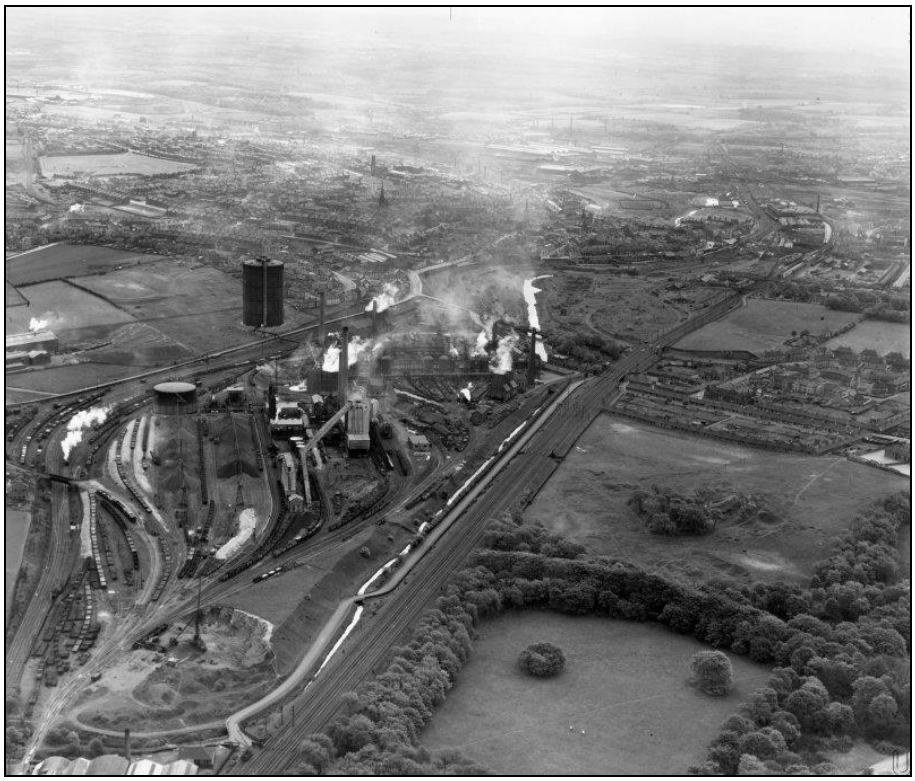
By the mid 1860s Bairds produced 25% of Scotland's output of pig iron, with the capacity to produce 300,000 tons of pig iron per year, and employed 10,000 men and boys. At that time Bairds was probably the largest single producer of pig iron in the world. The company operated blast furnaces at Gartsherrie, coke ovens at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire and Bedlay, Lanarkshire and collieries at Bothwell, Bedlay, Kilsyth and Bathgate. They also owned cement works at Gartsherrie and brickworks in Dunbartonshire. Whilst most of the records relate to Gartsherrie Works, the Bairds also operated

[207] http://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/2018/04/328-baird-of-lochwood-house-cambusdoon.html

[208] Death of Mearns Laird: member of well-known family of ironmakers, *Dundee Courier*, 14 February 1929.

ironworks at Muirkirk and Eglinton in Ayrshire. Their products were shipped from Glasgow, Ardrossan and Grangemouth. Later Bairds was to become part of the Scottish Iron & Steel Co and of Bairds and Scottish Steel Ltd. These iron-works were among the best organised manufacturers in Scotland, and had long acquired a high reputation for producing iron of superior quality.

By 1868 the Bairds owned four ironworks, plus many coal and ironstone mines. Gartsherrie was the largest ironworks in Scotland (and the second largest in Britain), followed by Summerlee Ironworks. By 1869 the waste bing or heap for the ironworks was said to be as large as the Great Pyramid in Egypt![209] Gartsherrie survived until 1967 and might have lasted longer but an opportunity was missed to link the ironworks with the adjacent Northburn steelworks and thus become one of the first integrated steelworks.



In 1837 it was decided to find out what would happen if the blast furnaces did not operate on a Sunday. It was found that not only was no damage done to the furnaces but a marked change was noted in the workers and their families – both morally and physically – more particularly in the children who had been growing up without observing any difference between Sundays and Mondays. This meant that Sunday became a genuine day of rest. The Bairds also built schools for the children, and churches, including those at Gartsherrie and Holytown.

[209] Bing is a Scottish word for a heap, especially of metallic ore or of waste from a mine.

Between 1946 and 1951, the whole of William Baird's coal, iron and steel interests were nationalised so the company began to diversify into other areas of business, including the textile industry. In 1981 the company acquired the raincoat manufacturing company, Dannimac Ltd and in 1988 the Windsmoor Group. From the 1960s the company was a major supplier to Marks and Spencers but this contract was terminated by M&S in 2000 partly due to a downward turn in their sales. Bairds sued M&S on the grounds that they should have given reasonable notice of their intention to terminate. The legal problem here was that there had never been a written contract. Bairds had assumed that a contract existed by virtue of their long history of dealings with M&S over three decades. The judge found that in the absence of a formal contract, Bairds had no grounds to sue M&S. The subsequent appeal by Bairds to the Court of Appeal also proved unsuccessful. On the 30th October 2018 William Baird, as a company, was dissolved.

Baird Trust

In 1873 James Baird established a charitable trust to counter 'the mitigations of spiritual destitution among the population of Scotland and secure the upbringing of the young'. The Trust was set up with £500,000 – a very large sum in those days. The Trust was re-established as a corporate body by an Act of Parliament in 1939. The Trust sought to update its aims and purposes and to that end promoted the Baird Trust Reorganisation Act 2005 in the Scottish Parliament. The Act transferred the property rights, interests and liabilities of the 1939 Trust to a new charitable company limited by guarantee, while at the same time updating the Trust's powers and objects. Its value stood at over £8 million in 2006, with over £250,000 paid out each year.

The Baird Trust is a Scottish Charity assisting the funds and schemes of the Church of Scotland, and in particular the work of home mission, church extension, religious education and the support of active and retired ministers and their families. The Trustees also have powers to disseminate information and opinions concerning the spread of the Gospel and the exploration of issues connected with theology and religion.[210]

Marriage of Mr Baird of Durris: 31st August 1893[211]

On Thursday in Holy Trinity Church, Ayr, the marriage was solemnized of Mr Henry Robert Baird of Durris and Miss Florence Katherine Villiers, daughter of Mr and Mrs Frederick Villiers of the Shieling, Ayr, and 18 Cadogan Square, Chelsea. It was reported that the service was choral, and there was a brilliant assemblage of guests. The officiating clergy were the Rev. H. Montague Villiers of St Pauls, Knightsbridge, London, uncle of the bride and the Rev. M. Brown, curate of Holy Trinity, Ayr. Captain Baird, late of the 10th Hussars, the youngest brother of the bridegroom, acted as best man. The bride was given away by her father, and after the ceremony Mr and Mrs Villiers received the guests at the Shieling. Later in the day the bride and bridegroom left amid the congratulations and good wishes of relatives and friends, for Durris House, where the honeymoon was to be spent.

[210] http://www.clydeserver.com/bairdtrust/

[211] Marriage of Mr Baird of Durris, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 6 September 1893.

The home-coming at Durris[212]

The description which follows is based on a report written by a reporter for the *Stonehaven Journal*.[213] The celebration of the marriage was made the occasion of a general rejoicing on the part of the residents on the Durris estate. Immediately upon the announcement of the proposed union all classes of the tenantry vied with each other in their desire to celebrate the marriage and home-coming of the young couple in a manner that would at least in some measure express the esteem and regard in which Mr Baird was held, and extend a warm welcome to his young wife. For a long time previously the tenants had been busy making preparations for the conspicuous occasion, and large bonfires had been erected on the hills on various parts of the estate, and throughout the length and breadth of the estate, which covered no fewer than 17,000 acres and embraced many of the most picturesque spots on Deeside. There was a feeling of great goodwill among the tenantry, and an ardent wish to show their desire for the future happiness of their laird and lady. It was indicated that a more suitable time for such an occasion could hardly have been chosen, and it was fitting that the young bride should see her future home and its surroundings for the first time clothed in all the splendour of autumnal foliage.

The tenantry were not content that just the natural glories of the estate should afford a welcome for from every house flags and bunting of some sort were displayed. In some of the 'ferm-touns' the decorations were quite elaborate. Even the children joined in the enthusiasm and at more than one point on their route the young couple might have noticed the unmistakeable signs of juvenile excitement. Here was a willow wand, made to stand upright by piling stones around it with a long ribbon that had once seen better days floating from it; and there was a miniature fishing rod with a handkerchief illustrating the legend of Jack and Jill waving proudly from the top, lashed with a great deal of twine to the highest point of a four-bar fence.

If a stranger walking the roads around the estate had cast his eyes as far as the summit of Kerloch and neighbouring hills for many miles around, he could see the evidence of adult enthusiasm, consisting of huge piles of brushwood, which were to be set fire to in the evening. About two miles to the south of Durris House at a point known as Brachmont March, which marked the southern boundary of the estate, an arch had been erected bearing the motto 'Welcome'. A mile and a half nearer the house at the Stonehaven entrance, there was an elaborate triumphal arch erected. The arch was about forty feet in height, and composed of a wealth of evergreens and heather skilfully picked out with innumerable little fairy lamps. At the top of the arch were a couple of stag's heads, while a magnificent head peeped out from amidst the foliage on the façade above. In the centre of this arrangement was the family crest flanked by Scottish flags. Facing the turnpike from Stonehaven the arch was inscribed 'Welcome' while on the reverse side, facing the policies was a huge shield with the horseshoe motto 'Good Luck'. The whole of the long avenue had been beautifully illuminated with lamps, and upon approaching the house fairy lamps had been suspended from the branches of the tree, and the garden plots along the sidewalks bordered with hundreds of these multi-coloured lights.

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[212]The home-coming at Durris, *Stonehaven Journal*, 7 September 1893.

[213] Unfortunately at the time this report was written, it was not customary for newspapers to reveal the identity of the reporter.

The house with its ample porch and abutting wings, lent itself admirably to the decorators' art, which was lavished upon it at all points. Long lines of streamers ran around the top of the mansion from tower to battlement and from battlement to tower. The great porch was very artistically treated with evergreens and flags, and from the top floated the house flag. In the garden plots in front of the house were a large number of fairy lamps, which as the evening fell gave a brilliant appearance to the scene. The whole of the decorations had been executed by Messrs Shirras & Sons, Schoolhill, Aberdeen.

The evening proceedings were characterised by the greatest enthusiasm. The young couple travelled by the North British train due at Stonehaven at 8.07pm, but in the course of the evening a telegram was received at Durris stating that the train was half an hour late, and before Stonehaven was reached another 15 minutes had been lost. The tenantry assembled at Brachmont March, the southern boundary of the estate to meet the happy pair. Nearby a large bonfire on Corse Hill had been set light. The arrival of Mr & Mrs Baird had been signalled by a rocket from Stonehaven, and upon the transmission of the signal to the various parts of the estate, the matches were applied to the bonfires which were soon blazing merrily. The scene from the eminence of Brachmont March was very striking. Rockets were fired as the carriage passed certain parts of the road in order that the tenantry who were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the newly-married at Brachmont March might be aware of their progress. When the carriage was at the distance of about half a mile the torch bearers, some sixty in number, lighted up, and the pipers struck up a merry tune.

On the arrival of the carriages the young bride was presented with a beautiful motto bouquet by the pretty little daughter of Mr John Rust of Nether Balfour. The bouquet consisted of thornless roses, with corn, oats, forget-me-nots, and white heather. Three ringing cheers were then given for the laird and his lady. The horses were unyoked and ropes were attached to the traces. A procession was formed headed by a band of pipers followed by a large company of clansmen in full Highland dress. The journey was at once resumed, the tenantry supplying the motive power, amid loud cheering and a shower of rice. There were still three miles to cover, and as the tenantry were very eager to get a good look of the young bride, there was a good deal of crushing and singed hair and whiskers were borne with the greatest good humour. The future lady of the estate displayed great interest in the distant bonfires. On reaching the Stonehaven entrance to the policies the decorations were further enhanced by a display of coloured fires.

On arrival at the front of the house the carriage was drawn up in front of the porch, where Mr John Rust, Nether Balfour, said that in the name of the tenants and employees of the estate of Durris, who had deputed him to the position, he had to offer them a warm and hearty welcome home and he asked them to accept their best and most cordial congratulations on the event that had taken place that day. In the name of the tenantry, he would express the hope that the union entered upon might be long-lived and full of days of prosperity and happiness to them both. He assured them that it had always been a pleasure to them to see the proprietor in their midst, and that the pleasure would henceforth be immensely increased by the accompanying presence of a handsome and gracious wife. Mr. Baird, who was greeted with renewed cheering, said that on behalf of his wife and himself, he begged to thank them very heartily for the kind demonstration of welcome on their return home, and to thank them for their good wishes that Mr Rust had expressed in his address. Their reception would never be forgotten and he now knew what a Highland welcome meant. He sincerely hoped

that the kindly relations between them, of which their welcome had given such striking proof, would always continue as pleasant. He trusted that he and Mrs Baird would have an early opportunity of meeting them again and spending a happy evening together. In the meantime he would, on behalf of his wife and himself again tender them their warmest thanks, and wish them a good-night. The torch-bearers and clansmen then assembled on a plateau at the north end of the building, where they danced a foursome reel by the light of the torches. It was reported that the scene as the dancers threaded out their spirited measures to the shrill music of the pipes was strangely wild and grotesque.[214] Mr and Mrs Baird came out to witness the dance. The entire company then adjourned to Dam Park where tea and coffee and other refreshments were served to all. A brilliant display of fireworks was given under the superintendence of Messrs Shirras & Sons. The whole arrangements were carried out under the personal supervision of Mr Braid, the genial factor of the estate. Dancing was kept up with past one o'clock in the morning, when the proceedings were terminated with three cheers for Mr Baird and his young wife.

Estate Ball at Durris[215]

A month later there was a report that the residents on the estate of Durris had been entertained to a ball by Mr and Mrs Baird. The company was the largest of this nature ever brought together in Durris, about 500 being present, for whose accommodation and entertainment preparations were made on a correspondingly extensive scale, nothing being omitted which could in any way contribute to the comfort or enjoyment of the many guests. The ball was held in a marquee erected on a lawn adjoining Durris House, where also were placed the supper and other tents. The pathway from the entrance gate to the first marquee was boarded over, and the entrance itself tactfully decorated with evergreens. On either side were ladies' and gentlemen's cloakrooms, passing from which the guests entered the principal ballroom, a spacious tent, measuring 90 feet by 30 feet, adjoining which at the further end was a smaller tent, measuring 50 feet by 25 feet, used as an ante-ballroom and also later in the evening as a card room. Both these rooms and the adjoining passages were beautifully decorated with evergreens, and were lit by numerous chandeliers suspended from the roof, while the substantial and well-polished floor, laid for the occasion, presented an excellent surface to "the light fantastic toe". From the large ballroom a passage led to the supper marquee, which measured no less than 113 feet long by 45 feet broad. This was also tastefully decorated, and, with its beautifully laid tables and ever-changing relays of guests, presented during the evening a very elegant and animated appearance. On the centre table were placed the presents lately presented to Mr and Mrs Baird by the tenantry and employees, which attracted a good deal of attention during the evening.

The guests were received at eight o'clock by Mr and Mrs Baird, who were accompanied by a large party from Durris House, and dancing was shortly thereafter commenced to the strains of excellent music supplied by Mrs Wiseman's band (who was relieved at intervals by an excellent piper), the duties of floormaster being efficiently discharged by Mr Cosmo Mitchell.

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[214] 'Grotesque' is not used in the negative sense it has today. It means here 'wild' and 'fantastic'.

[215] Estate ball at Durris, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 30 October 1893.

In course of the night a halt was called in the dancing and Mr S. Crockart, teacher, gave this address:

> *"Ladies and gentlemen – Mr and Mrs Baird are by and by to leave us for the night, and I know you want to thank them before they go for their kindness. Since coming here we have all been struck by the amount of preparation that has been made for us. Everything that could have been thought of has been done for our comfort and enjoyment. I am sure I speak your mind when I say that we appreciate very keenly the kindly feeling that the spending so much work and money for our entertainment here tonight. We may congratulate ourselves that when the lands of Durris came to the hammer they fell to Mr Baird, and now he has added another cause for congratulation; he has brought to his Deeside home a beautiful, amiable and sensible wife. (Prolonged cheers) The workmen as well as the tenants have been fortunate in Mr Baird's acquisition of the estate. I remember that before the sale the staff of workmen numbered three: now it takes three figures to tell their number. And that is not all. There is a beautiful relationship existing between Mr Baird and his workmen, especially those with whom he comes into close contact. Some of us have seen the following picture: A bright summer day, a gentleman in mid-water to the waist catching fish, his servant lying on the bank totally free from care calmly smoking his pipe. It reminds one of the golden age of the Greek and Roman poets. I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to give a cheer – I know it will be a hearty one for Mr and Mrs Baird, wishing them long life, health and happiness. (Loud and prolonged applause)*

Mr Baird, in reply, said:

> *"On behalf of Mrs Baird and myself, I beg to tender you our hearty thanks for the very cordial way in which you have received and responded to Mr Crockart's remarks. We would also take this opportunity of thanking you for the handsome epergnes lately presented to us by the tenantry, and for the beautiful bowl from the employees.*[216] *We prize these as tokens of the kindly relations existing between us, which I trust will long continue. We have to thank you all for your presence to-night. It gives us much pleasure to see you and I trust you will all spend a very happy night."*

Mr Baird's remarks were received with loud cheers, continued for several minutes, and ending in the time-honoured strains, "For he's a jolly good fellow" lustily rendered from hundreds of throats. Dancing was thereafter resumed, and continued till after four o'clock, the whole proceedings passing off with the utmost smoothness and enjoyment.

Impact of Mr Baird's arrival

Prior to Mr Baird's arrival many of the staff had been inadequately housed. But subsequent to his arrival there had been repairs to the farms and improvements to some of the employees' homes.[217] The laundry, kennels, home farm and stables had been modernised and new houses built for the butler, head gamekeeper and for two of the underkeepers. The forester's house had been remodelled and lined largely with native grown Douglas Fir panelling, and a large forest nursery built up.

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[216] An epergne is a type of table centrepiece that is usually made of silver but may be made of any metal or glass or porcelain.

[217] K. Braid, The last laird of Durris, *Deeside Field Club*, 1981.

Before Mr Baird left for his town house in Ayr for Christmas and the earlier part of the year, he would call upon each tenant (at least until 1907) and listen to any complaints, wants, etc and examine what he considered necessary. His factor accompanied him on all these visits, which, in the early days took several weeks. Lunch would be carried with them and eaten in the brougham, but after a few years various tenants insisted that they take their meal in one of their rooms with a cosy fire - a great comfort on a bleak November day. Soon the visits were looked forward to as friendly calls and few inspections were required. By the time the motor car had arrived it was possible to return to the 'big house' for lunch even although the top legal speed was only 20 m.p.h! The laird was a very shy man of abrupt speech but kind heart. The early visits were very much a 'duty', but latterly became a pleasure. As time passed and the laird got to know the people, he took an interest in assisting younger farm workers to tenancies in some of the smaller farms as these became vacant. Ready money was scarce as wages were very low so sometimes help was given and may have taken the form of a loan of a hundred or two pounds or a tenancy with a reduced rent for the initial years followed up by some kind of graded scheme.

The proprietor had many interests. As a result of the great gale of the winter of 1894/5, when hundreds of acres of timber were uprooted, necessitating years of clearing-up, he swung his attention to replanting and, later, to the planting of high-lying areas which had become unprofitable for cultivation. Along with neighbouring proprietors he was also much interested in improvements to the fish stock in the Dee, particularly with the hatchery near his kennels on the Warren Burn – a tributary of the Burn of Durris. But he eventually decided to transfer the hatchery to Dalmaik, Drum, for cannibal fish had lain in wait for the fry as they emerged at the mouth of the burn near Park Bridge. Another pressing interest was the provision of entertainment for his guests and their valets and lady's maids. A nine-hole golf course was laid out on the fields adjacent to the house; tennis courts were provided closer to the house and a cricket pitch was provided in another field. These facilities were not closed to the local community. By damming-up the streams in a low-lying hollow near the sawmill in Woodlands a curling pond was created. The chief beneficiaries of this facility were the 'locals'.

Mr Baird was also very interested in the 5th Volunteers Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders subsequently the 7th Gordon Highlanders T.F. and was generous in his donations for the purchase of instruments for the band, prizes, etc. When the lease expired for the old schoolhouse at the Kirkton he had the old school modified into a hall to act not only as a drill hall with an armoury but to serve as a public hall. The house was renovated for a sergeant-instructor who gave physical instruction at the schools for one hour a week. An annual flower show was held in the Hall in late August so that it did not come too close to the Durris Highland Games. Mr Baird was also instrumental in setting up a farmers' cooperative society which purchased and sold manures, feeding stuffs and other produce. This was started early in the century with the miller acting as secretary and treasurer.

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee 1896: Durris

The death of Henry Robert Baird

On the 15 February 1929 it was reported in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* that the tenantry of Durris estate had gathered to pay a last tribute to an honoured landlord and friend, while others from a wide area had joined the solemn assembly.[218] The service was conducted by the Reverend Robert Spark, minister of the Parish Church and the Reverend Dr Rankin of Durris United Free Church. The passing of Mr Henry Baird of Durris had cast a gloom over the district, in which he had been greatly esteemed, and the memorial service to the late proprietor, held in Durris Parish Church was described as most impressive. As the snow swirled to the ground, already heavily mantled in white, sorrowful groups of people, young and old, slowly made their way to the picturesque old world church just as the hour approached for the interment of the remnants of the laird at Symington Ayrshire, the burying ground of his family.

Those present at the memorial service included Baron Bentinck, Banchory Lodge; Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Ferguson, Norton House; Colonel Douglas Stewart and Mrs Stewart, Banchory House; Provost Burnett, Banchory; ex Provost Munro, Banchory; Dr Cran, Banchory; Major Reid and Mrs Reid, Balbridie; Mr Charles Michie, Upper Balfour; and Mr David Anderson, Wester Durris.

According to *The Press and Journal* the Reverend Dr Rankin paid tribute to the deceased in tones tinged with genuine emotion. The parishioners of Durris and the tenantry under Mr Baird, he said, had good reason to join in paying respectful and grateful tribute to his memory, and in recalling and acknowledging his kind and liberal character as landlord and his unostentatious services in past years for the welfare of the community. It was acknowledged that since he had acquired the ownership

[218] Mourning tenantry: Memorial service to Durris Laird, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 15 February 1929.

and management of the Durris estate in 1890, Mr Baird had acted as a trusted, intelligent and considerate landowner. Some could look back with pleasure on the appearance he made in the years of his prime and energy, when he took an active interest in visiting the farms, in observing and considering the improvements needed and engaging in frank and friendly talk with all classes of the tenantry. He had been a vigorous walker, a keen sportsman on the moors, acquainting himself with the special features of the parish and with its history and antiquities in which he took a real interest. As many knew, he did useful and valued service as chairman of the Parish Council, and laboured on quietly and unselfishly while his strength lasted.

Mr Baird had given evidence of his public spirit and kindly disposition by his exertions during the war, and in particular by his thoughtful and practical care for the good of the soldiers who came here during their period of convalescence. His generosity in erecting the hall at Kirkton conferred a great boon upon the district, and it remained a centre for social fellowship and for useful and recreative purposes that would long be prized and keep its founder's memory fresh and green.

Many hearts, Dr Rankin said in concluding his address, were touched with sorrow, and many gentle and grateful memories were stirred as Mr Baird's numerous acts of kindness were remembered and not least his marked considerateness towards the widows of those who were workers on the estate. Dr Rankin thanked God for the benefits conferred on the parish during Mr Baird's lifetime for his quiet fortitude in the days of failing health, and they united in warm and sincere sympathy with Mrs Baird and her sons in their great loss and bereavement.

Mr Baird, who died at St Leonard's, his Ayrshire seat, had been a Deputy-Lieutenant of the County of Kincardine and also a Justice of the Peace. He had also been a county councillor for many years. He was survived by Mrs Baird and three sons, Roy, Douglas and Kenneth, the latter two living in South Africa.

Up to 1929 when Mr Baird died, the estate of Durris covered the whole of the Parish of Durris except for the farm of Corsehill in the south-east corner and several acres in the Parish of Banchory east of the Slug Road. A look at the current valuation rolls showed that the Rt Hon. Viscount Cowdray was the chief proprietor of the farmlands, fishings and shootings.

8.7 Florence Katherine Baird

To this point discussion has focused on the particular contributions made by a succession of lairds and proprietors to the Durris estate and those living it. However there is one person – neither laird nor proprietor – who merits singling out for the unique and active role she played in the life of the estate and parish. That person was Florence Baird – wife of the Henry Baird.

Before her marriage to Mr Baird, Mrs Baird was Florence Katherine Villiers. She was born on the 6th March 1872, daughter of Frederick Ernest Villiers. Villiers is a well-known family name in English history. In August 1614, George Villiers became the favourite of King James I of England and remained in this position until the king's death in 1625. Under James I's patronage Villers advanced rapidly through the ranks of the nobility. He was made Earl of Buckingham in 1618, and eventually Duke of Buckingham in 1623. Buckingham was the king's constant companion and closest advisor. Even after James I's death, Buckingham remained at the height of royal favour under Charles I, until he was assassinated in 1628. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Florence Katherine Villiers

⇩

Daughter of Frederick Ernest Villiers

⇩

Granddaughter of Rt. Rev. Henry Montagu Villiers

⇩

Great granddaughter of Hon. George Villiers

⇩

Great great granddaughter of Thomas Villiers, 1st Earl of Clarendon[219]

[219] Thomas Villiers was an MP (Whig) for Tamworth from 1747 to 1750. He held the office of Lord of the Admiralty between 1748 and 1756 and the office of Joint Postmaster-General between 1763 and 1765. He was appointed a Privy Councillor on 9th September 1763. He held the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster between 1771 and 1782.

George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham
1592-1628
As Lord High Admiral
Portrait by Daniel Mytens the Elder, 1619

Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland
1640-1709
Mistress of King Charles II
Portrait by Sir Peter Lely, c.1666

Within a short time of her marriage to Henry Baird, she was seen as bringing fresh life into what had been a distinctly bachelor establishment. Soon she took a lively interest in the tenants, estate staff and developments. One of her first moves was to set about beautifying the surroundings of Durris house and policies by the introduction of beds of flowering shrubs outwith the rabbit-wired protection of the old garden.

Durris Auxiliary Hospital

One of the most significant achievements of Mrs Baird was seeing the establishment within the Durris estate of Durris Auxiliary Hospital at the outbreak of World War One. The question has been asked as to how Durris just happened to be chosen for the location of a Red Cross Hospital. The answer appears to lie in Mrs Baird's family connections! Sir Arthur Stanley – Chairman of the Red Cross – was the son of Lady Constance Villiers, daughter of George Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon who was brother of Henry Montagu Villiers, grandfather of Florence Baird!

It is known that at the outbreak of the First World War, the British Red Cross and the Order of St John of Jerusalem combined to form the Joint War Committee. They pooled their resources under the protection of the Red Cross emblem. As the Red Cross had secured buildings, equipment and staff, the organisation was able to set up temporary hospitals as soon as wounded men began to arrive from abroad. The buildings varied widely, ranging from town halls and schools to large and small private houses, both in the country and in cities. The most suitable ones were established as auxiliary hospitals. In many cases, women in the local neighbourhood volunteered on a part-time basis. The hospitals often needed to supplement voluntary work with paid roles, such as cooks. Local doctors also volunteered, despite the extra strain that the medical profession was already under at that time. The patients at these hospitals were generally less seriously wounded than at other hospitals and they

needed to convalesce. The servicemen preferred the auxiliary hospitals to military hospitals because they were not so strict, they were less crowded and the surroundings were more homely.

On the 17th December 1914 the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* made reference to a report for the Commissioner of the Central Eastern District of the British Red Cross Society, Scottish Branch, which set out the list of auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes in Kincardineshire:

Drumtochty Castle	30 beds
Durris	20 beds
Inchmarlo, Banchory	20 beds
Laurencekirk, U.F. Church Hall	10 beds
Stonehaven, Mill Inn	20 beds

The accommodation in Drumtochty Castle was subsequently increased to 62 beds

At the Durris Auxiliary Hospital it is known that there were 22 nurses in total who belonged to three ranks: the two-stripe holders, those with one stripe and probationers. In the first line, trained from 1910-14 were the matron, Mrs Baird, Mrs Norman, Miss Burnett of Crathes and Sister Ritchie (head nurse); and Mrs Lees and Miss Jamieson who were also granted two stripes for extra fortnightly and odd-day duty. In the second line were those granted one stripe – Mrs Spark, Misses Ramsay, Davidson, Duguid, Jack and Brown; and Mrs Finnie, Mrs McFarlane and Mrs Hart – all of who had won proficiency medals by examination and war work. The probationers included Misses Stewart, McDonald, Norman Munro, Mrs Gordon, Misses Marr, Ironside, Burnett and Durward.

The quality of the work undertaken by the nursing staff had been highly commended on the occasion of an inspection by General Culling, Deputy Director of Medical Services and Colonel Gordon Thomson, Red Cross Commissioner for the district in 1917. General Culling who undertook the inspection interviewed all the patients and carefully inspected the ward and the VADs.[220] It was reported that the patients were dressed in the red cardigans and white collars and that the ward itself was in spotless order and looked charming with its bright flowers, wicker chairs and red counter-

[220]VAD = Voluntary Aid Detachment: a British organization of first-aid workers and nurses.

paned beds. Real tulips, ferns and other plants further set off the place. The matron and the medical officer reported to General Culling on the attention and proficiency of the nurses and the examiner expressed himself as highly delighted with their work. He gave not a little praise to the matron, commandant and Dr Cran for their long and faithful work. Dr Cran had not only instructed and trained all the nurses but had visited the ward twice a week from October 1914, since which date the 16 beds had been occupied.

An appreciation of the high quality of care received at the Durris Red Cross Hospital by an injured serviceman was published in the *Evening Express* in 1915:[221]

Sir,

I shall be greatly obliged if you will be good enough to insert the undernoted public letter of thanks to the staff of the Durris Red Cross Hospital for their great kindness to me while a patient in that hospital.

By the time this letter appears in print I shall be a discharged patient but I shall not forget the kind consideration shown to me at Durris where I have been a patient for about four months, and where I have been treated exceedingly well by Mrs Baird, Sister Florence, Nurse Ritchie, and all the members of their staff. I was severely wounded at the battle of Aisne but am now on the right road to recovery, thanks to the kindly attention I have received. I shall always retain happy recollections of the Durris Hospital, where everything possible was done for the comfort and welfare of the patients, and I again express my sincere thanks to Mrs Baird, Sister Florence and their competent staff.

I am, etc.

Rifleman J. Synnott, No. 7863 2nd Royal Irish Rifles

In 1916 a report appeared in the *Stonehaven Journal* describing a concert held at the Durris Auxiliary Hospital:[222]

Concert for the Wounded

A concert of varied and attractive interest was given by a party from Aberdeen in the Durris Auxiliary Hospital on Friday evening when, besides the inmates, Sister Florence, and the nurses, there were many of the public in attendance. The following artists performed: Misses Middleton and Routledge, sopranos; Miss Ferguson, danseuse; and Grant Alexander, baritone. William Kemp proved an entertaining comedian, as formerly, and the accompaniments of Willie Stewart were played with taste and skill. The men in hospital at present are from various units, but the reception of Scots songs showed that there was more than a seasoning from the right side of the Tweed. All were highly pleased with the entertainment, and showed their appreciation in the heartiness of their applause.

[221] The People's Opinion, *Evening Express*, 14 April 1915.

[222] *Stonehaven Journal*, 27 July 1916.

WOUNDED SOLDIERS ON DEESIDE.

["Journal" photo.
Interior of the V.A.D. Hospital at Durris. Two men are enjoying a whiff of the churchwarden pipes presented to them the other day by an Aberdeen gentleman.

SISTER FLORENCE BAIRD AND HER STAFF AT DURRIS HOSPITAL.

["Journal" photo.
Left to right (sitting)—Nurse Ritchie, Sister Florence Baird; (standing) Quartermaster James Smith, Nurse Burnett, Crathes Castle; Mr H. R. Baird of Durris, Nurse Hutcheon, and Orderly Hart.

Aberdeen Weekly Journal: 9th April 1915

Fourth Anniversary of Durris Auxiliary Hospital[223]

In October 1918 an article appeared in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reporting the fact that it had been over four years since the Durris Auxiliary Hospital opened in October 1914. During that time it had been run entirely locally, the nursing staff being all members of the Durris VAD and working under their commandant, Mrs Norman. Several new members had joined the detachment since 1914, but among the original nurses who started when the hospital opened eight still continued to give their services, and great credit was due to them for their unfailing energy and regular attendance, in spite of distance and weather. Seven hundred wounded soldiers had passed through the hospital many of whom still corresponded from all parts of the world, expressing their remembrance of the happy days they had spent at Durris.

Voluntary contributions to the Hospital

Throughout the whole course of the war, the local press published details of voluntary contributions made to the hospital by individuals in the local community. The content of just three cuttings from the local press is presented: *Aberdeen Evening Express* 28 November 1914 and 23rd April 1915 and *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 18th October 1918. No apology is offered for presenting these extracts in full.

One suspects that Mrs Baird may have been behind the decision to give publicity to these donations as she may have been anxious to demonstrate the strength of local community support at a time of national emergency and in so doing so create and reinforce a sense of community spirit, endeavour and support. It is clear that not only had the community of Durris closely identified itself with the hospital but felt it had a responsibility to ensure that all the wounded soldiers were well provided for.

What is not known is the extent to which these gifts were essential to the running of the hospital. It would be interesting to know if the same level of support was given to Auxiliary Hospitals elsewhere at this time.

[223] Durris Auxiliary Hospital: 4th Anniversary, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 2 November 1918

Aberdeen Evening Express 28 November 1914

DURRIS RELIEF HOSPITAL

Mrs Baird regrets to find that in checking the list of donations and gifts to the hospital several names of donors have been omitted. She therefore wishes to publish a complete list of gifts up to date, for which Mr. & Mrs. Baird are most grateful. Donations: -

The Officers, No. 1 Company, North Scottish R.G.A. Torry Fort	£5
Sir David Stewart, Banchory House	£5
Mrs Atherley, Landguard Manor, Isle of Wight	£1
Mrs Dundas, Johnston House	£1
Mr Charles Michie, sen., Upper Balfour	£1
'Anonymous'	10s
Mr and Mrs Adam, The Bush, Banchory	5s
Mr Macdonald, Crossroads School	2s

Gifts in Kind

Mrs Archibald, West Mulloch: fowl, oatcakes and blackcurrant jelly
Mrs Anderson, Nether Balfour: vegetables
Mr Abernethy, Bakebare: chickens and eggs
"Anonymous", Aberdeen: apples
Mr Adam, West Funach: chickens
Captain Brooke, Fairley: 10 pairs of blankets
Mrs Brooke, Fairley: sandbags, shirts, socks and linen squares
Mrs Bouverie, London: 12 bedtables
Mrs Brodie, Standingstones: cake, milk, scones and butter
Mrs Baird of Elie, Fife: vests and pants
Mrs Carnie, Nether Balfour: scones and oatcakes
Mr Clyne, Knappach: two bags potatoes, one sack of oats, eggs, cigarettes and newspapers
Mrs Coutts, Westerton: butter, chicken and honey
Mrs Coutts, East Funach: chicken and eggs
Mr R Campbell, Currackstane: chickens
Mrs Cooper, Ley, Banchory: chicken and jam
Mr James Calder, Balladrum Cottage: cigarettes
Miss Cassel, Crathes Castle: cigarettes
Miss Christie, Barns: oatcakes and jelly
Mrs Dundas, Johnston House: mufflers and bed socks
Mrs Duguid, Darnford: fowls and teacakes
Mr Donald, Home Farm: round table
Mr Duncan, Craiglug Cottage: honey
Miss Davidson, Nether Balfour: crumpets
Mr Duncan, Meikledams: chicken
Miss E. Davidson, Nether Balfour: currant bun loaf
Mrs Scott-Elliot, Belhelvie: large hamper of groceries, apples and cigarettes
Mrs Fraser, Crathes Castle: cigarettes

Miss French, Crossroads School: teacakes and cigarettes
Mrs Finnie, Woodlands: cake
Miss Ferguson, Balfour House: loan of gramophone records
Mrs Guilford, Balfour House: playing cards, figs, apricots, jelly and marmalade
Mrs Gordon, U.F. Manse: one bed and bedding
Mr Greig, Kincluny: chickens
Mr Guilford, Balfour House: cigarettes
Mr Hunter, Upper Mills, Crathes: magazines and cards
Miss Hart, The Garage: scones and socks
Master B. Harrison, Rose Cottage: cigarettes
Mr Harrison, Rose Cottage: civilian suit and shoes
Miss Jamieson, Nether Balfour: oatcakes
Miss Jack, Drumoak: cake, cigarettes, handkerchiefs and raspberry syrup
Mrs Jamieson, Nether Balfour: tea, cakes
Mrs Lees, Durris Cottage: two beds and bedding and cigarettes
Mrs Lowdon, Clune Cottage: vegetables, scones, jam and oatcakes
Mr J.F. Lumsden, Johnston House: buns
Mrs Lumsden, Johnston House: easy chairs
Mr H.B. Lumsden, Johnston House: cigarettes and tobacco
Mr H.S. Lumsden, 95 Union Street, Aberdeen: pants, vests, stockings, belts, mufflers, pipes and tobacco
Mr Milne, Wester Durris: sack of potatoes
Mr Charles Michie, Upper Balfour: sack of potatoes
Mrs Michie, Upper Balfour: oatcakes, jam, tea, chicken and scones
The Masters Michie, Upper Balfour: matches, cocoa and cake
Mr Michie, sen., Upper Balfour: cigarettes
Mrs McRae, Kirkton Mills: blackcurrant jam, butter and crumpets
Mrs Macdonald, Crossroads: cake, eggs, girdle scones and butter
Misses Macfarlane, Kennel Cottage: cigarettes
Mrs McAra, Denside: cigarettes and chocolates
Mrs Milne, Wester Durris: butter, boxes of toffee and scones
Mrs McGregor, Wardend: honey, sugar, tea and jam
Mrs Munro, Station Cottage, Crathes: scones and honey
Miss Mackie, Balrownie: scones and cake
Mrs David Marr, Lochton: cocoa, sugar, scones and oatcakes
Miss Marr, Kirkton: jam
Mrs McFarlane, Kennels Cottage: vegetables
Mr William Malcolm, Westerton: 35lb of mutton
Mr Alexander Macrae, Kirkton: milling of oats free
Mr Donald Munro, Banchory: cigars, cigarettes and concerts
Miss Nicol, Roscobie: one pair of blankets
Mrs Norman, Ardoe: two screens and stock pot
Mrs Ogg, Maryfield: chicken
Mrs Ogston, Heathpark: cigarettes, tobacco and hamper of oranges
Mr Ogston, Ardoe: turkey and cake of soap
Miss Pickford, Drumoak: eggs, crumpets, honey, scones, jelly and cigarettes

Mrs Rust, Kirkton: jam
Mrs Reid, Balbridie: oatcakes, scones, jam and fowls
Mrs Robert Reid, Culpershaugh: carrots
Miss Reid, Cairnfauld: scones
Major Reid, Balbridie: loan of rifle, ammunition and targets
Miss Ramsay, Calladrum: milk, butter, chicken, and pail of milk
Miss Ross, Barns: drop scones and milk
Miss Ross, Sunnyside: scones and crumpets
Miss Rennie, Lochton: honey and scones
Miss P. Reid, Culpershaugh: scones and jelly
Mrs Spark, The Manse: scones, eggs, magazines, cream and oatcakes
Mr Ian Spark, The Manse: cigarettes
Schoolchildren, Crossroads: flowers
Miss G. Spark, The Manse: scones and oatcakes
Mr Stewart, Nursery Cottage: one bed and bedding and cigarettes
Mrs Stewart, Nursery Cottage: jam sandwiches, jam and scones
Mr David Stewart, Nursery Cottage: cigarettes
Miss Sinclair Spark, Banchory: chicken and soup
Mrs Stewart, Denside: socks
Mr William Smith, Crathes: cigarettes and pail of jam
Mr and Mrs Smith, Pinewood, Crathes: jar of syrup, large kettle, tin of biscuits and large box of cornflour
Miss Shewan, Upper Balfour: cabbages
Miss Summers, Crathes Castle: cigarettes
Miss Smith, Pinewood, Crathes: cake
Miss Turriff, Balladrum: eggs, milk and chickens
Mrs Thom, Quithel: chickens and several pails of milk
Mr and Mrs Thomson, Aberdeen: box of apples
Mr Turriff, Balladrum: sack of potatoes
Mr Taylor, Little Tulloch: turnips
Mrs Taylor, Little Tulloch: milk
Mrs Thomson, Balladrum Cottage: tin of biscuits and cigarettes
Mr Todd, Crathes: turnips
Mrs Uniacke, Corsee, Banchory: four beds and bedding, two pairs of blankets, cards and bed table
Mr Villiers, The Shieling, Ayr: pipes and tobacco
Miss Watson, Upperton: honey and butter
Dr Ogilvie will, Aberdeen: 12 large boxes of cigarettes

Aberdeen Evening Express 23rd April 1915

RELIEF HOSPITAL

Mr and Mrs Baird acknowledge, with many thanks, the following donations and gifts made during the week ending Friday April 23rd 1915.

Donations

Mrs Thom, Springfield, Crathes:	£1
Mr James Thomson, South Hirn:	£1
Miss J. McGregor, Wardend:	10s

Gifts

Miss Brown, 101 Fountainhall Road, Aberdeen: kodaks
Miss Davidson, Nether Balfour: large bag of buns
Mrs Davidson, Holburn Street, Aberdeen: meat pies
Private Dodds (ex-patient): book
Mrs Fyfe, Newton: scones
Mrs Fyfe, Blairydrine: scones and crumpets
Miss Hunter, Uppermills: 4 tins of cocoa and vim
Miss Eileen Hunter, Uppermills: 2 boxes of toffee
Mr Johnstone, Cross Roads: tin of biscuits
Miss Jack, Drumoak: bag of apricots and prunes
Mr Kinnaird, Cairnshee: cigarettes and sweets
Kennaways, Aberdeen: fruit and sweets
Master Donald Lamb, Banchory: cigarettes
Mrs Marr, Lochton: scones and cornflour
Mrs Milne, Wester Durris: milk and two dozen eggs
Mr A Morrison and party, concerts and acting: large box of cigarettes
Private May (ex-patient): mufflers and mittens
Miss Mackay, Balrownie: scones
Mr McDonald, Cross Roads School: copies of *Illustrated Wild Life Magazine*
Mrs McDonald, Cross Roads School: 1½ dozen eggs
Mrs McConnach, Hilton: scones
Mrs McRae, Kirkton Mills: scones
Miss Reid, Balbridie: fowl, 2 dozen eggs and butter
Miss Ross, Sunnyside: scones and crumpets
Nurse Ritchie, Durris Hospital: large tablecloth
Mr Sandison, Aberdeen: bags of fruit
Miss H. Taylor, Whitehall Road, Aberdeen: kodaks
Miss Watson, Central School, Banchory: cigarettes and chocolates

Many thanks are due to Miss Watson and all her pupils for the generous contribution to the wounded soldiers in Durris. Having heard a present was waiting for them, ten of the patients went in the motor car and brought it, and were received with much kindness and entertained by the children with dancing, recitations and spent a most enjoyable time among the pupils. The following were the gifts received: one and half dozen eggs, 2 chocolate eggs, 3 dozen oranges, 1 dozen apples, 28 packets of cigarettes, 1 super of honey, 1 tin of cocoa, 1 tin butterscotch, shortbread, bags of sweets, writing pads, pencils, postcards, writing paper and envelopes.

Aberdeen Press and Journal 5th October 1918

DURRIS AUXILIARY HOSPITAL

Mr and Mrs Baird acknowledge with many thanks the following donations and gifts to the hospital during the past fortnight.

Donations

Mrs Wyness, Kirkton Mill £0 5s

Gifts

His Majesty the King, Balmoral: two haunches of venison
Lady Burnett, Crathes Castle: weekly supply of buns
Mr J. Leith, 401 Union Street, Aberdeen: parcel of magazines
Mrs Milne, Wester Durris: two pails of milk and two baskets of crumpets
Mrs Ross, Sunnyside: scones and crumpets
Mrs Stewart, Lumsden: oatcakes
Mrs Tough, Lumsden: butter, cheese, milk and jam
Mrs Wyness, Kirkton: pair of fowls
National Egg Collection (C.E. District): 244 eggs
National Egg Collection (Stonehaven Red Cross Depot): 24 dozen eggs

Closure of Durris Auxiliary Hospital

On the 28th March 1919 the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* announced the closure of Durris Auxiliary Hospital.[224] It was recorded that an interesting ceremony took place on the closing of the hospital, which had rendered such conspicuous and valuable service to the wounded soldiers during the whole period of the war. The hospital had been opened in October 1914 and no fewer than 747 men had been nursed back to health. Mrs Baird of Durris took it upon herself the arduous duties of matron, and she had won the hearts of all, soldiers and staff alike, by her cheery presence, tactful management and encouraging word. She found an indefatigable assistant in Mrs. Norman, Ardoe, the commandant, and Sister Ritchie, the sister-in-charge, and staff, with the result that the work of the hospital went smoothly and without a hitch. Mr Baird of Durris also took a keen interest in the wounded men, and did everything to brighten their sojourn at his beautiful estate. Sixteen soldiers, who entered the hospital as 'stretcher cases' left that day.

[224] Wounded soldiers on Deeside. Close of Durris Hospital: gifts to Mr and Mrs Baird and staff, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 28th March 1919.

The proceedings took place in the spacious ward which was decorated with flags and other emblems. Tea was served to the soldiers, of whom there were 16, and to the company present, and after the speeches, a number of presentations were made, the evening closing with a concert and a dance.

Mr Baird of Durris, who presided, said they had now come to the parting of the ways. As they all knew, the hospital was opened on October 27th 1914, and since then had been closed for only one month for cleaning purposes. There had passed through it 747 men, who had been helped back to life; and their reward had been the numerous letters of thanks, besides the personal thanks of the men on their departure from Durris. It had been a real hospital not a convalescent home. As one clergyman, who had visited all the hospitals in the north, said, it was the only one where he found so many in their beds, and that with only 16 beds. They had been very fortunate in having the hospital full most of the time, and for that they had to thank their kind friends connected with the 1st Scottish General Hospital in Aberdeen. That referred to their good friends, Colonel Mitchell, the officer in command, and Colonel Smart, who succeeded him and the former they were delighted to welcome back that afternoon on resuming duty.

Lt-Colonel Mitchell said that he had often seen it asked in the papers 'Who won the war?' Some had put it down to 'Tommy' and others to the generals but he did not think that either the one or the other won the war. It was extraordinary, to look back, how the men that had been looked down upon led the pace which the whole country followed so well. From the very beginning of the hospital Mrs Baird had the great gift that the soldier looked upon as his own possession – namely, that of 'grousing'. She groused for better conditions for really ill soldiers, knowing well enough that she could look after them, and she groused for better clothing for them. Captain Smith knew how well the men were looked after, and he was sure every member of the staff worked splendidly for the sick men and they would have the memory of having done their bit.

Mrs Baird, addressing Lt-Colonel Mitchell said that he had opened the hospital, and as he had come to shut the door, she would invest him with the 'Order of the Boot'. Amid laughter and applause, Mrs Baird pinned on Lt-Colonel Mitchell's breast a miniature silver boot, and the Colonel returned thanks for the memento. Mrs Baird then presented Lt-Colonel Cran with a silver fruit dish and luncheon case, as a memento of his splendid services rendered to the hospital.

Dr Cran, in acknowledging the present said it had been one of the greatest pleasures of his life to visit Durris Hospital during the last four and half years. Everything had gone on most pleasantly. In his speech he congratulated the VADs and the nurses on their work but that they should keep in view that the hospital would not have been there at all if it had not been for the generosity and patriotism of Mr and Mrs Baird. Little did they think in the years before the war, when they were teaching bandaging and Red Cross work that that hospital would be opened and they would be realising the real thing. The success of the hospital had been very much due to Mrs Baird. She had been a splendid organiser, and everything had gone without a hitch. Not only that but she took in hand the nursing herself and he had often remarked – and he did not want to flatter her – that she was one of the best nurses that he had ever come across. She had always a cheery word and encouraged the wounded men, and he thought the great success of the hospital was due to Mrs Baird and Mr Baird.

Mrs Baird also presented Captain Smith with a cigar-holder as a memento of the hospital. Captain Smith thanked Mrs Baird for her kindness, and associated himself with what Dr Cran had said with regard to the hospital and nursing staff. It was within the last two years that he had become more intimately connected with Durris, and he very soon came to know that Durris was the place to send the patients. He thanked Mr and Mrs Baird on behalf of the patients and staff of the 1st Scottish General Hospital for the facilities that were given them in sending their ill patients to Durris to recover quickly.

Sister Ritchie then presented Mrs Baird on behalf of the nursing staff with a framed illuminated address, which was in the following terms.

> *To Sister Florence – The nurses of the Durris Auxiliary Hospital are desirous of conveying to you their cordial appreciation of your work as matron. The personal interest you have shown has rendered the working of the hospital entirely free of friction, and promoted feelings of comradeship, and this has been largely attained through your untiring energy and resourceful methods. We have much pleasure in offering you this sincere expression of our grateful thoughts, and best wishes for your future welfare and happiness.*

Mrs Baird said this handsome gift had come as a tremendous surprise to her. She was expecting nothing, and asked for nothing, and wanted nothing, and she felt as if she had received shell shock. There was no speech she could give to say how very much she appreciated the gift, which was beautiful in itself but also the kindly feelings and thoughts that prompted the idea. She would value it enormously, and hang it up in her own room, and it would always remind her of the four and half years they stood together doing what they could for the boys.

St Paul's Cathedral Altar Frontal[225]

During the First World War, many servicemen received serious injuries which required months of care. To aid recuperation from their injuries, they often undertook a range of craftwork which was encouraged to try to occupy wounded soldiers, to prevent them becoming bored and dispirited. Amongst other crafts, embroidery was often used as part of their rehabilitation.

It is likely that the men who were identified as the most skilful at embroidery were invited to take part in a project run by St Paul's Cathedral in London to create an Altar Frontal for the High Altar. Of the 138 men who participated in the project, at least 35 of them (by far the largest single contingent) were patients at the 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Southall, Middlesex. It is not known why such a large proportion of the men working on this project came from this particular hospital. It is, of course, possible that embroidery work was encouraged more than usual in this hospital. In contrast, the larger Bethnal Green Military Hospital, with over 700 beds, provided just three men. Other men

[225] I am indebted to Linda Robb for some of the information provided here.

volunteered for the project from hospitals as far afield as: Southampton (Netley Hospital); Brighton (The Lady George Nevill Hospital); and Scotland (Durris Auxiliary Hospital, Kincardineshire).

When the altar frontal was completed it was used in the Cathedral until the 1940s. However because the high altar was destroyed in the Second World War and a new altar built, the frontal no longer fitted and was no longer used and was put into store. The men who worked on the project recorded their names for posterity in a gold-leafed book.

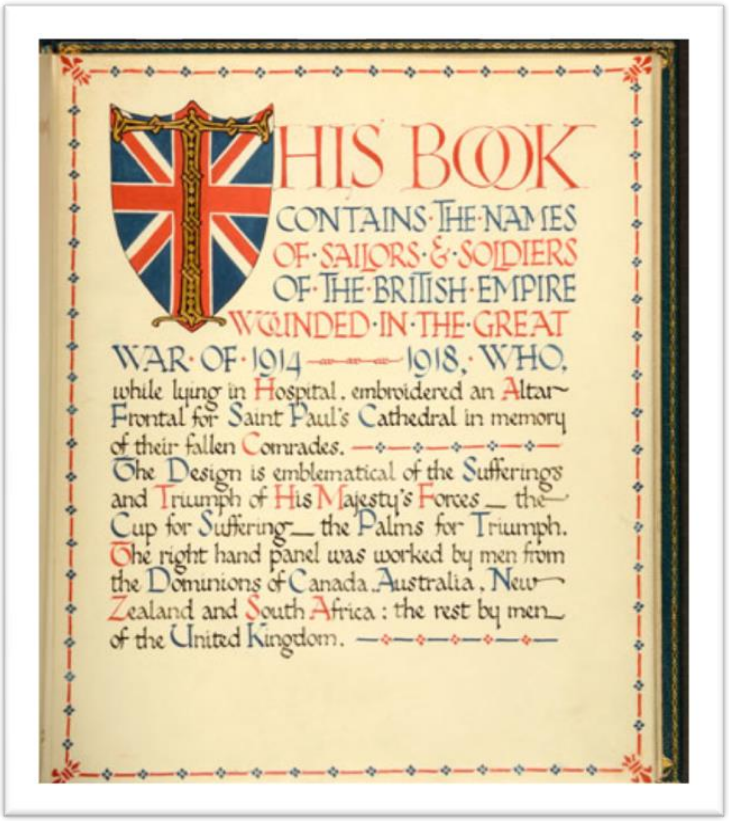
Example of a section of embroidery

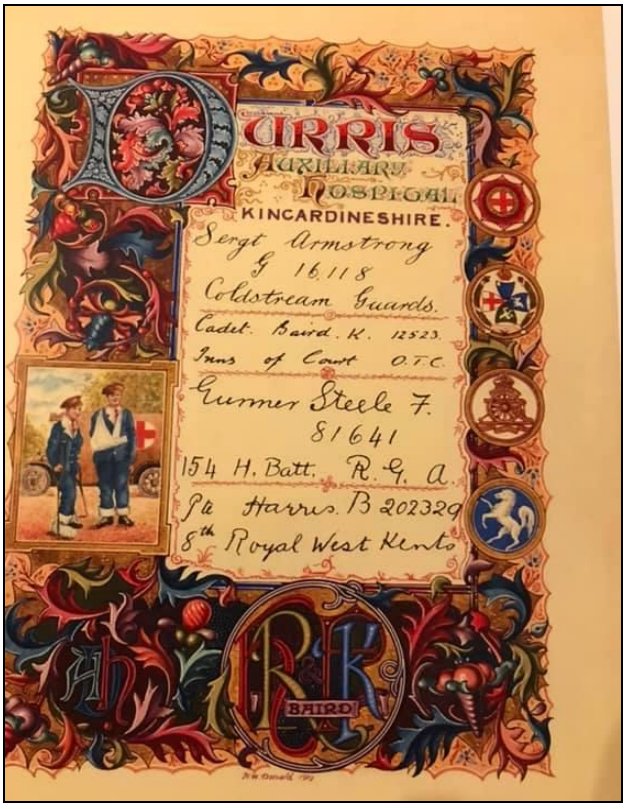
The beautiful and poignant altar frontal was displayed inside St Paul's Cathedral for the 1914-1918/2018 centenary period. It has since been removed to store but will be brought out each November for the remembrance commemorations.[226] The beauty of the altar frontal belies the tragic but often uplifting stories of the men who created it: the frontal shows intricate floral and bird designs with the chalice of the Eucharist and the palm branches of martyrdom.

In order to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, St Paul's Cathedral sought to trace as many of the men who worked on this project as possible, in order to find their descendants. Some of the names recorded in the book proved difficult to decipher, and even those which were clear were sometimes difficult to identify with certainty.

The person from Durris Auxiliary Hospital who participated in this project was Kenneth Baird, the son of Mr and Mrs Baird. Kenneth had been born in Scotland and was educated at Heatherdown Preparatory School and Eton. On leaving Eton, Kenneth relocated to London to train as a Barrister at the Inns of Court School of Law, where he joined the Officer Training Corps. Deployed to the front, Kenneth was wounded and brought to hospital in the UK, firstly to Aberdeen and then, for his recuperation to Durris Auxiliary Hospital.

[226] https://www.stpauls.co.uk/history-collections/history/ww1


THIS BOOK
CONTAINS THE NAMES
OF SAILORS & SOLDIERS
OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE
WOUNDED IN THE GREAT
WAR OF 1914 — 1918, WHO,
while lying in Hospital, embroidered an Altar-
Frontal for Saint Paul's Cathedral in memory
of their fallen Comrades.
The Design is emblematical of the Sufferings
and Triumph of His Majesty's Forces — the
Cup for Suffering — the Palms for Triumph.
The right hand panel was worked by men from
the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New-
Zealand and South Africa: the rest by men
of the United Kingdom.


DURRIS
AUXILIARY
HOSPITAL
KINCARDINESHIRE.
Sergt Armstrong
G 16,118
Coldstream Guards.
Cadet. Baird. K. 12523.
Inns of Court O.T.C.
Gunner Steele F.
81641
154 H. Batt. R.G.A.
Pte Harris. B 202329
8th Royal West Kents
R&K
BAIRD

Kenneth's father was Henry Robert Baird, the laird of Durris, who was married to Florence Katherine: 'H R' and 'F K'. This may explain why their initials, H R and F K were incorporated into the design of the Durris page in the book. The Bairds may have wished and were able to pay for the Durris page to be professionally designed and painted. There is a beautifully painted vignette of two injured soldiers, standing in a driveway. One could imagine that one of the injured men shown is Kenneth and that his companion is a relative or a friend. The unusual fact here is that Kenneth is the one man on the list who, when he was admitted to hospital, was actually 'going home'.

Gordon Highlanders War Memorial in Aberdeen

The work of Mrs Baird in helping raise funds for the erection of a war memorial to the Gordon Highlanders who lost their life in the First World War in Durris was highlighted in an article in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* in 1921.[227] It was reported that the parish of Durris, by subscribing £302.14s to the Gordon Highlanders' War Memorial Fund, had made a ten times larger contribution than any other parish in the regimental area. The generous response by the residents in the district was acknowledged by the senior officers of the regiment at a concert held in the Kirkton Hall, Durris.

At the concert Mrs Baird, who organised the collection of the subscriptions in the parish, handed over a cheque for that amount to Lieutenant-Colonel H. Pelham-Burn, CMG, DSO, commanding the depot, Gordon Highlanders, Aberdeen. Mrs Baird thanked the people of the parish for the great welcome they had given her when she went round their houses seeking subscriptions. When Colonel Burn had asked her to be responsible for the parish of Durris she had informed him that it might be possible to raise £50.00. She did not expect to obtain more because they had all contributed so handsomely to the local war memorial. She had a real welcome at every house, and the notes and silver poured into her bag. When she started she put a 'farthing' in the bag 'for luck' and in handing over a cheque for £302. 14s she thought it could be honestly said that the parish of Durris had gladly given its mite to the cause.

For his part Colonel Burn said it had been with much pleasure he had been there to accept such a magnificent sum from Durris. It was by far the largest collection yet made in any parish within the counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine, from which the regiment was recruited. It was noted that the parish of Durris contained only 14,000 acres and numbered only 872 inhabitants, so that the total represented an average of 7s per head of population. It was, therefore, extremely creditable for such a small area to give so lavishly.

[227] Gordon Highlanders War Memorial: A Union Street Site: Durris parish's tenfold lead, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 5 January 1921.

The *Press and Journal* reported that the Memorial Fund stood at £19,000. A total of £40,000 was aimed at, but there was a further £10,000 of subscriptions in sight, so that only a similar sum was required to complete the effort. It was proposed to set up in Aberdeen a club which would not only be a memorial to the 10,000 men who lost their lives in the war wearing the Gordon tartan, but something useful to those who had survived,. In the name of the committee in charge of the promotion of the fund, Colonel Burns thanked the people of Durris for their very fine present to it. As a member of the regiment he regarded their generosity as an appreciation of the services of the Gordon Highlanders in the war.

In his concluding remarks he desired to add a word of appreciation of the work of the collector of the money – their landlady at Durris. Her zeal and self-sacrifice were praiseworthy to a degree, for she had not spared herself in the cause. She had written hundreds of letters, and he had heard it whispered that she had also written a poem, which was responsible for a certain amount of the money. He conveyed to Mrs Baird the thanks of the committee for all that she had done – a sentiment greeted by general applause.

CHAPTER 9: THE MILNE FAMILY OF DURRIS

9.1 The Milne Family and Dr Barnardos

There is one family from Durris that Henry and Florence Baird would almost certainly have known and that was the Milne family. Members of that family made a significant and lasting contribution to our national life through their association with the national charity of Dr Barnardos. The key member of the family here was Dr Robert Milne who worked closely with Dr Barnardo.

It is possible to trace back the family roots of Dr Robert Milne (1849-1922). He was the fourth son of James Milne (b. 6 January 1809 d. 11 February 1875), farmer, of South Lasts, Peterculter and Midmar and his wife, Elspet Gordon (d. 3 April 1879). And James Milne was the fourth son of Robert Milne (b. 1770 d. 8 July 1838), farmer, of West Boat, Kirkton of Durris, who, in turn, was the second son of Robert Milne (b. 1733 d. 30 April 1823), farmer, of West Boat, Kirkton of Durris.

No other family had a closer, more enduring association with Barnardos (founded in 1867) than the Milnes, five members of which served the charity over a period of more than 90 years, from 1880 to 1972. The association started with:

Dr. Robert Milne (1849-1922) who was Chief Medical Officer at Barnardos from 1880 to 1919, a period of 39 years, and continued with three of his children:

Dr. James Milne (1878-1950), Medical Officer from 1904 to 1944, a period of 40 years;

Surgeon Rear-Admiral Robert Milne (1881-1949), Honorary Consultant Surgeon to Barnardos;

Nurse Mary Milne OBE (1892-1972), a Member of the Council from 1952 to 1969 and Vice-President from 1969,

and one of his grandchildren;

- **Dr. [Robert] Ian Milne** (1916-1969), son of the younger Robert, a Member of the Council from 1959, Deputy Chairman from 1962 and later Chairman of the Council.

The following biographical note on Dr. Robert Milne appeared in the columns of the *British Medical Journal*, on 25th November 1922.

Dr Robert Milne, whose death on November 8th we regret to announce, was born on a Deeside farm in Aberdeenshire [South Lasts, Peterculter] in 1849. He was educated at the Aberdeen Grammar School, and received his medical education at Marischal College, Aberdeen, where he graduated M.B., C.M. in 1874, and M.D. in 1886. For some months he was assistant to Dr. Burns Thomson of Edinburgh, with the idea of going out as a medical missionary to China, but while in Edinburgh he began to have symptoms which were diagnosed as tuberculosis of the hip-joint. He returned to Midmar, Aberdeenshire,

where he was confined to bed for a year, and in 1876, while still walking with crutches, he started practising in Midmar. In February 1880 he accepted an urgent invitation from the late Dr. T. J. Barnardo to come to London to assist in dealing with an outbreak of scarlet fever at the Girls' Village Home, Barkingside, and in the following May he became medical officer to Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Since that time - for nearly forty years - he remained their chief medical officer; he retired at the end of 1919. During those forty years the Barnardo Homes greatly increased, and now have over 7,000 children under their care. Dr. Milne was beloved by the children and most highly esteemed by every worker with whom he came in contact. His was a many sided post, especially in the early days, and many a child owes his life and limb to his surgical skill, while to many another death lost its terrors through his Christian and kindly ministry.

Dr. Robert Milne attending patients

Dr. Milne's name will perhaps be best remembered by the medical profession in connexion with his advocacy of the use of inunctions of eucalyptus oil (or carbolic oil 10 per cent.) in the treatment of scarlet fever.[228] *He considered that systematic, thorough inunctions, in conjunction with the application of 10 per cent. carbolic oil to the throat during the first few days of the fever modified the severity of the attack and rendered isolation unnecessary. He published articles on the subject in this Journal (October 31st, 1908, p. 1333) and elsewhere. Much success in the treatment of scarlet fever - and also of measles - is stated to have been achieved both in this country and abroad on the lines laid down by Dr. Milne, and his own results were undoubtedly excellent. The general opinion to-day is, however, that in the present state of our knowledge Dr. Milne's views regarding the absolute efficacy of inunction with antiseptic oils in certain infectious diseases must be received with caution.*

Given the significance of the contribution made by different members of the Milne family to Barnardos, it is important to provide some background about this unique and pioneering institution.

[228] Inuction: the act of anointing or applying an ointment by rubbing.

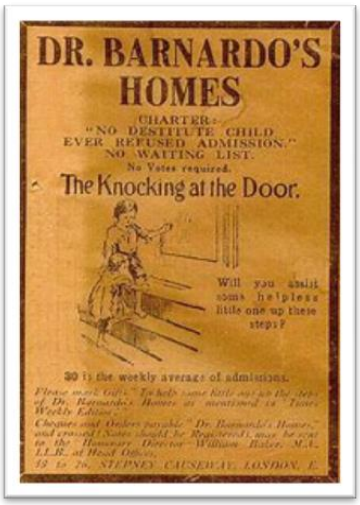
Thomas John Barnardo was born in Dublin in 1845. As a young man he moved to London to train as a doctor. When he arrived, he was shocked to find children living in terrible conditions, with no access to education. Poverty and disease were so widespread that one in five children died before their fifth birthday. When a cholera epidemic swept through the East End, leaving 3000 people dead and many orphaned children, the young Barnardo felt an urgent need to help.

His first step, in 1867, was to set up a 'ragged school' where children could get a free basic education. In 1870, Barnardo opened his first home for boys. As well as putting a roof over their heads, the home trained the boys in carpentry, metalwork and shoemaking, and found apprenticeships for them. To begin with, there was a limit to the number of boys who could stay there. But when an 11-year-old boy was found dead of malnutrition and exposure two days after being told the shelter was full, Barnardo vowed never to turn another child away.

Dr Barnardo

Barnardo's work was radical. The Victorians saw poverty as shameful and the result of laziness or vice. But Barnardo refused to discriminate between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. He accepted all children, including black and disabled children, and those born outside of marriage. It was Barnardo's belief that every child deserved the best possible start in life, whatever their background.

Barnardo went on to found many more children's homes. By the time he died in 1905, the charity had 96 homes caring for more than 8,500 vulnerable children. This included children with physical and learning difficulties. Barnardo's experience of caring for his daughter Marjorie, who had Down's syndrome, strongly influenced his approach to the care of children with disabilities.



At the end of 2017-18 Barnardo's was working with 301,000 children, young people, parents and carers, an eleven percent increase from the 272,300 it worked with in 2016-17. And it was running over 1,000 services in communities across the UK, had 701 shops, 8091 employees and over 22,000 volunteers helping support its work.

Dr Barnardos: A tenth part of our great family

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

In the course of writing about the parish of Durris, I have inevitably reflected upon the extent to which Durris can be regarded as a community. However, community is one of those words like 'culture', which are bandied around in ordinary everyday speech, readily recognisable to speaker and listener alike but which, when examined more closely, cause immense difficulty when seeking a meaningful definition.

There are some elements of community about which there is some measure of agreement. It is a place where residents know one another reasonably well; feel a sense of social obligation to one another through being part of networks for mutual support; and share a wide range of beliefs and values which are shared with other residents.

However a counter argument can be advanced that we are currently witnessing today a situation where individuals and households are becoming progressively detached from their immediate social environment with the result that they live increasingly in isolated social units which have relatively little in common with one another. One of the most obvious changes that is occurring at the present time is for many, but not all, social groups becoming less locality bound and less close knit given the increasing amount of social interaction that takes place through high speed communication (e.g., e-mail, Facebook, Twitter).

Although Durris is by its very nature a scattered community, there have been occasions in the past when a strong community spirit was in evidence. But this coming together sometimes resulted from a negative external influence. The land clearances in the 19th century prompted the farmers in Durris to come together and challenge proprietors of Durris estate and demand a revaluation of their properties and the setting of what they saw as fairer rents. At the same time there was significant move away from the land through movement to the growing industrial cities or through emigration.

But there were occasions when some proprietors consciously exercised a positive influence. For example, there were a number of stratagems employed by Henry and Florence Baird before, during and after WW1which sought to bring members of the community together and create a community spirit. And it is clear from the outpouring of grief on the occasion of the deaths of Mr and Mrs Baird that Durris residents had deeply appreciated all the efforts that had been made on their behalf.

What is particularly remarkable is just how rich the history of Durris is in view of the fact that the parish covers scarcely more than ten square miles. I hope that as a result of reading this book that there will be one or more readers who may be encouraged to explore more fully and deeply the rich history of Durris and share their findings.

Robin Jackson (PhD, FSA Scot) has long had an interest in history and has written on a wide range of historical subjects in the fields of education, medicine, health and social care.

Twenty years ago he wrote a short history of *The Parish of Drumoak* – a work commissioned by the Kirk Session to celebrate the millennium.

More recently he has written about the birth of the world-wide Camphill Movement in the north of Scotland and the role played by Dr Karl König – an Austrian émigré doctor forced to leave his homeland at the outbreak of World War 2.

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