

# Strathkinness

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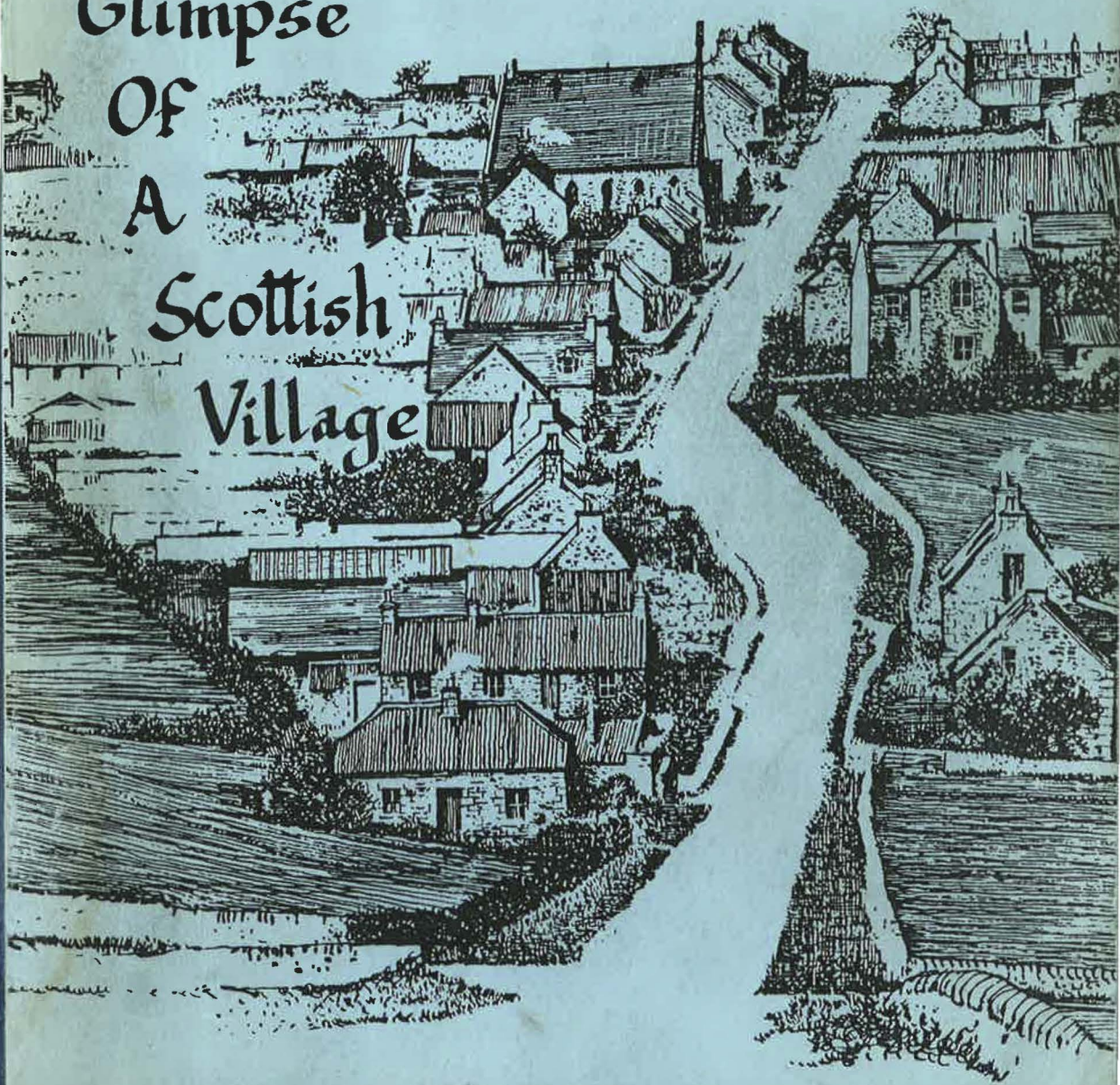
Glimpse

OF

A

Scottish

Village



*E. Ganger*  
*Deerbrae House*

# Strathkinness

A glimpse of a Scottish village

Nelda Seed

Cover design and illustrations

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For  
the people of  
Strathkinness



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## INTRODUCTION

My intention when I first thought of writing an account of Strathkinness was to produce a fairly short book consisting largely of the reminiscences of people living in the village, and with a short section on its history. But it soon became clear that unless a good deal of attention was given to the background of present-day Strathkinness much of the value of the book would be lost. Because a place is small does not mean that it cannot have a complex history. As Professor T.C. Smout said, "Local history is very difficult because it is such a vast subject, and is of little use unless there is an attempt to put it in context". In writing this book I have discovered just how right Professor Smout is. I could not, without spending many more years on research, do much more than scratch the surface of the history of the village. I discovered so much material of interest, often contained in records and documents that have never before been studied, that the volume which has finally emerged is very different from the one I originally envisaged.

However, the basic principle which I adopted from the start is still the same. It is not an academic book, but one written primarily for the people of Strathkinness, though the need to make it as accurate as possible is important.

It is quite impossible for anyone to present a complete and wholly accurate picture of the past. Distortion, whether the result of incomplete information or unconscious bias in the selection of material, is unavoidable. Records which survive can give only part of the story; but they are nevertheless the most important means of ascertaining what life might have been like in the past.

I have written at length about the churches and the school, although I have left out a lot of material I would have liked to have included. Other topics have not been covered to the same extent, partly because the time needed to study the papers would have been too long. What I am presenting, as the title states, is merely a "glimpse" of the story of the village and its people.

The book is in two separate parts, one based on recorded sources and dealing with the more distant past, and the other on oral sources, that is, on the recollections and reminiscences of people living in the village today, and what those who are involved in village activities today say about them.

Almost all the material given to me by present or past inhabitants of Strathkinness has been used in just the way it was written, as it soon became evident that to try to edit it would often destroy its flavour and even remove

what the contributor might most want to say. There is therefore some repetition, but to eliminate it would have been unfair to some, and in any event repetition itself is valuable in revealing what seemed most interesting or important to more than one person.

The part of the second section of the book which contains reports of what is going on in the village today will be, I hope, as well as of interest to present generations also a useful source of information for anyone in the future, perhaps many centuries hence, who may undertake a study of this community.

The whole project has been interesting from start to finish, and the temptation was often strong to follow a fascinating by-way. Dr. John Thompson, former Rector of Madras College, observed in this connection, "The lanes and by-ways of history are often more interesting than the main road", to which my husband replied, "Yes, but don't forget there is a main road." He is right, and yet local history is in a way an exploration of many side roads which come together to make the main road.

It has been an enjoyable task, but having finished it I feel as Mr. Mauchline, schoolmaster in Strathkinness, must have felt when he wrote in 1903 with just a few weeks left before the inspection and examination of the school. "History has been got over — at last — the remainder of the session will be occupied in revising the period 55 B.C. to 1903". My undertaking is even greater, in attempting to cover Strathkinness from the ice-age to the future.

**Strathkinness  
October, 1986.**



Mrs. B. Thomson, headteacher of Strathkinness School is thanked for having arranged for me to read the school log books in the school, where Miss Anquetil, Mrs. Coutts, Mrs. Farmer and the pupils are all thanked for making it such an enjoyable time.

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The Russell Trust, and in particular Miss C. Russell, are warmly thanked for their grant which made it possible to print a book which could be made available to anybody in the village who wished to have a copy.

Miss Mary Taylor is thanked for being willing to type material of any length at any time and always getting it done quickly and efficiently. Mrs. Sybil Davis is also thanked for giving me sanctuary in Kingsbarns to allow me to write without interruption. My husband is thanked for the many, many things he did to allow me to get the book finished on time.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. R. Verner for their kindness in selling the book in the Village Shop.



## DERIVATION OF 'STRATHKINNESS'

The commonly accepted meaning of the place-name Strathkinness has been 'the valley at the head of the waterfall'. But geologist Richard Batchelor has said, "There are no waterfalls between the source of the Kinness Burn, near Nydie, and the sea at St. Andrews. Nor could there have been a water-fall during recorded history, given the slow pace of river erosion'.

Ian Fraser of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, and the foremost expert on Scottish place-names, agrees that the explanation of 'head of the waterfall' is highly improbable. He considers that the view put forward by Richard Batchelor and David Dorward (who has made a study of Scottish place-names), that KINNES comes from the name of the 6th century saint CAINNECH, who had connections with St. Andrews, could be a valid one and that it is possible that Strathkinness means the strath, or valley, of KINETH (KENNETH).

However, Mr. Fraser goes on to say that as Strathkinness is never mentioned in connection with CAINNECH and that there is only one reference to 'fluvius (river or stream) KINETH', the others all being KINES, the view can only be a supposition. He adds that little is known about the meanings of river and stream place-names in Scotland and it is 'likely that the river name was at one time early or pre-Celtic, in the tradition of other Scottish river names'.

## STRATHKINNESS

Strathkinness is a small village in Fife with a population of around 600. It is situated 3 miles (5 km) west of St. Andrews, 7 miles (11 km) east of Cupar, 12 miles (19 km) south of Dundee, and 55 miles (88 km) north of Edinburgh.

The first detailed census in 1841 gave the population of the village as 574. When the Parish of Strathkinness was disjoined from the larger Parish of St. Andrews and St. Leonards in 1860 the population given for the whole parish was 1296 and it was stated that the census of 1861 showed that there were 'at least 1100' people who could send their children to school in Strathkinness. This area included many farms whose population was relatively high compared to that of the village itself.

Although the population of the village of Strathkinness has not varied a great deal, the population of the farms has considerably decreased. With the system of hiring farm labour every year there had been a large transient agricultural population and modern farming methods have further greatly reduced the number of workers needed on a farm.





Hand-loom weaving disappeared long ago and the village is no longer based on quarrying or even agriculture. A variety of people have come to live in Strathkinness. They have altered the nature of the village, but they have also helped to keep it alive. In spite of all its changes Strathkinness is still very much a village.

## STRATHKINNESS: THE LAST GLACIATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

*Alan Werritty has written about the last ice age and its effect on Strathkinness.*

Eighteen thousand years ago the site of Strathkinness was submerged beneath hundreds of metres of glacial ice. This was part of the last great icesheet which covered Scotland during the period known as the Ice Age. This final icesheet originated in the Highlands and moved eastwards over Strathkinness some 25,000 years ago. By 18,000 years ago it had reached its maximum extent which meant that the whole of Fife was beneath the icesheet with only the summit of West Lomond Hill possibly emerging as an isolated rocky summit. At this stage the icesheet terminated some 40 kilometres to the east of Fifeness. Over the next four thousand years the icesheet steadily decayed with the edge of the ice moving westwards across Fife once again exposing the landsurface to the atmosphere and to colonisation by plants and animals.

The movement and melting of this large volume of ice was to have a profound effect on the relief (contrast in surfaces) of the area immediately around Strathkinness. Glacial ice is a very powerful erosive agent which can scour away the less resistant rock leaving more resistant areas as relatively high ground. Thus the resistant dolerite dyke which outcrops in the sandstone beneath Strathkinness is largely responsible for the ridge upon which the village is located. Once the ice melted the underlying bedrock was mantled (covered) by deposits collectively known as drift. Two types of drift can be found in the vicinity of Strathkinness: till and outwash. Till comprises poorly sorted angular material enclosed in a finer clay and represents the direct result of an icesheet moving across the landsurface. Many of the low hills near the village are covered by till. Outwash on the other hand, is reworked material which has been transported by streams issuing from a decaying icesheet. As a result outwash tends to be rather sandy and gravelly in composition. Outwash deposits are more common to the north of the village in the vicinity of Kincapple.

The other important impact of the last icesheet was its effect on local sea-levels. During a period when icesheets are being built up sea-levels fall as water is removed from the ocean basins. Conversely, when icesheets melt sea-levels rise. The land surface also undergoes vertical movement since it is depressed when an icesheet develops and returns to its normal level when that icesheet melts. The combination of these changes on the relative positions of the land and sea means that sea-levels close to Strathkinness have changed dramatically. Thus 15,000 years ago sea-level stood at roughly 100 feet above the present level and a beach was cut into the bedrock near Strathtyrum. By

10,000 years ago the shoreline was 60 feet lower than it is at present and St. Andrews Bay took a very different form from what we see today. Then the sea-level rose quite rapidly so that 6,000 years ago the shore-line was 30 feet higher than it is today. The Eden Estuary extended up to Dairsie Bridge, Leuchars was an island and Tentsmuir Forest did not exist at all.

## THE GEOLOGY OF STRATHKINNESS

*The following item is contributed by Richard Batchelor:*

Most of the rocks in Fife are buried under soil and an assortment of clay and sand and gravel which were deposited by glaciers between 25,000 and 14,000 years ago. The scraping action of the ice carved out the river valleys and deposited large quantities of drift which now form the sub-soil of many parts of Fife.

### FOSSILS



The sandstone rocks underlying Strathkinness formed the basis of the quarrying that took place in the village. They are composed of sand grains cemented together from river sand deposited by deltas which drained off a large land mass to the north about 360 million years ago (the Carboniferous Period). A few bands of limestone and shales (compressed fine-grained mud) were left when the sea flooded the area. At this time the land mass was south of the equator and was covered by tropical forests and swamps. The decay of the vegetation and its rapid burial by silt and mud formed the coal deposits of Fife.

Evidence of these forests can be found at Knockhill 'mines' and at the cliffs at St. Andrews in the form of black slivers of fossilized plant material. Two fossil tree trunks now rest outside the house on Main Street, Strathkinness known as 'Fossil House'.

The tropical swamps which once covered this area were in a region of active volcanoes. If the molten lava erupted underwater there would be



explosive volcanic activity. If the lava failed to reach the surface it would gradually cool, solidifying into a sheet of solid rock or dolerite (commonly called whinstone). This is a hard black rock which develops a rusty coloured skin with weathering. These sheets can be horizontal, inclined or vertical depending on the movement of the lava along the fissures and faults of the earth's crust.

Drumcarrow Craig is composed of a near-horizontal sheet of dolerite, its eastern side visible from the village as a small steep shoulder. Less obvious and irregular expanses of dolerite occur at Upper Magus, Greenside and Blebo Mains Farm. A vertical sheet of dolerite, mostly hidden from view, runs in a westerly direction under the field in the centre of Strathkinness village, along the Pleasance and on to Knockhill.

Vents through which lava reached the surface and became plugged by falling ash and rock fragments are scattered around East Fife, but most are poorly exposed and only detected by sensitive magnetic instruments. However, west of the village, at Clatto Hill, the volcanic rock is well exposed in a small quarry to the northwest and there are other vents a half mile east of Nether Magask Farm and on the western side of Ladeddie Hill.

The steep slope, or scarp, beyond Blebo Craigs descending into Kemback and Dura Den was formed by a large fault in the crust which dislocated the rocks. The rocks on the western side belong to the Devonian Period. They are slightly older than the Carboniferous rocks on the eastern side and represent a drier climate with little vegetation, where life was sparse. Fossilized fish found at Dura Den are thought to have been trapped in a temporary lake which was formed by flash floods. (Some of these fossils can be seen in the museum at the University of St. Andrews Zoology and Geology Departments and in the British Museum in London.)

## PRE-HISTORY OF STRATHKINNESS

There is no known prehistoric settlement at Strathkinness, but archeologists and geographers agree that there is enough evidence from known prehistoric sites nearby and from the overall nature of the area, to indicate the possibility of Strathkinness having been settled in prehistoric times.

Excavations made at Morton Farm, Tentsmuir, near Tayport, have revealed that the early inhabitants there of the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age (more than 6,000 years ago) made tools for hunting and fishing. Remains found there, dating from around 4,000 BC, show that their diet consisted of hunted animals, fish and shellfish, sea birds, nuts and berries.

During the Neolithic or New Stone Age (around 4,000 years ago) people were more settled than the earlier bands of small family groups which had roamed the country in search of food. They grew primitive strains of crops, mainly barley.

Archeological finds from around Strathkinness include a polished stone axe from Denhead which is over 4,000 years old, an axe from Drumcarrow of about the same period and a very fine perforated stone axe found at St. Fort. A socketed bronze knife, dated about 900 BC, found at Nydie Farm in 1966 has a piece of rolled linen thrust into its socket. It is one of the earliest pieces of linen to be found in Britain. It cannot be said with any certainty where the linen came from, but it is of interest as cloth does not survive well and few examples remain.

The ridges of the High Road and the 'Bishop's Road' were good routes of communication, and the varied conditions of the nearby stream, the sea-shore, the estuary and the lowlands ensured a variety of food.

Whether or not there actually were prehistoric settlements in Strathkinness will not be known until archeologists and other interested professionals study the area.

## STRATHKINNESS LANDS

The **St. Andrews Register** (a register kept by the canons for recording gifts and donations and for transactions relating to their lands) first mentions Strathkinness in 1144 when Bishop Robert gave the 'Lands of Strathkinness' to the St. Andrews Priory. The next date of importance is 1160 when the **Register** states that the land was divided into Strathkinness and 'alia', or other, Strathkinness. Where the original Strathkinness was sited is not known, although it is thought to have been nearer to Nether Strathkinness than to the present centre of the village.

In 1797 a manuscript collection compiled by George Martine (secretary to Archbishop Sharp) was printed by the University of St. Andrews. This collection of manuscripts known as *Reliquiae Divi Andreae* states that at the time of the mortification, or disposition, of the Priory lands there is a place called 'Stirkinness' and a place called 'Poffle of Stirkinnes'. It has been assumed by many that The Poffle (a small farm or pendicle) was part of a larger farm. This assumption seems to be based on the ownership of The Poffle by the owner of Monksholm Farm earlier this century. Monksholm Farm and The Poffle were not adjacent; there was common land between them. Also, there are documents showing that The Poffle, or the 'Town and Lands of Poffle of Strathkinness' were of a considerable size, probably including all the land between Nether Strathkinness to the Turnpike Road (Main Street) and from the common land south of the present High Road down to the Burn. Before 1754 the Poffle Lands were divided among several owners. It seems more likely that The Poffle was a pendicle, or part, of the original settlement of Strathkinness and is the 'alia Strathkinness' of the **St. Andrews Register** of 1160.

A charter dated 1659 confirms that at the time of the Reformation, about one hundred years earlier, a large part of the Lands of Strathkinness, and the Lands of The Poffle, were given by James, Earl of Moray and Regent of Scotland, to Michael Balfour son of Sir James Balfour and Margaret Balfour, heiress of Burleigh. In 1607 Michael Balfour had been made the first Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

The fourth Lord Balfour of Burleigh settled the Burleigh estates in Fife upon his brother John Balfour of Ferny. They both took part in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 in support of James 'The old Pretender', and in consequence title and lands were forfeited to the Crown.

In 1723 the forfeited Burleigh lands were put up for public roup, or auction, and were bought by Margaret Balfour, the daughter of the fourth Lord Balfour, and neice of John Balfour of Ferny whose lands had been forfeited.

The next year she sold the lands to Dr. Andrew Melville and his wife, from Edinburgh. After Dr. Melville's death his widow 'transferred' the lands to Mr. Andrew Melville, the minister of Monimail, in Fife, who was her husband's nephew. The Reverend Andrew Melville's son Robert inherited the estates in 1739.

Robert Melville had a distinguished career in the army, rising to the rank of General, and he became Governor of Grenada, The Grenadines, Dominica, St. Vincent and Tobago in the West Indies. With his large fortune made from his sugar plantations in the West Indies he added more property to that which his father had left him. One of the properties he bought was another part of The Poffle which had also been forfeited to the Crown by James Malcolm who had supported James Stuart in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. Robert Melville had no legitimate children and as the property was entailed his illegitimate, but acknowledged, mulatto daughter Charlotte Melville would not have been able to inherit the property. It went by way of his mother's family to John Whyte of Bennochty who had been acting as Robert Melville's agent both in the West Indies and in Scotland since at least 1776. In 1798 he was given royal permission to add Melville to his name although he did not inherit the property until 1803.

There were other landowners in Strathkinness, including Meldrum of Kincaple, but the Melvilles were the largest of the landowners and were called 'Melville of Strathkinness'. When John Whyte Melville died in 1813 his son Robert who inherited the estates was a minor. He died soon after reaching his majority, and his brother John was also a minor at the time of his brother's death in 1818 when he inherited the estate.

It was this John Whyte Melville who became so important and influential in both Strathkinness and St. Andrews. Among other things he gave the land for the church and the manse for the newly created *quoad sacra* parish of Strathkinness in 1860. His son, George Whyte Melville, was a fairly distinguished Victorian novelist and a noted horseman. He spent most of his life in England and seemed to take no part in the life of the village. He was killed in a riding accident a few years before his father died in 1883.

John Whyte Melville's cousin James Mackintosh Balfour inherited the property and added Melville to his name as the first John Whyte had done eighty five years earlier. At the time of James Balfour Melville's succession to the property it consisted of: Estate of Strathkinness, Farms of Strathkinness and Rummond, Ballone, Lumbo, Clatto, Bonfield, Burnside, Clatto Muir, Bishopton and Tongues of Clatto. Although the Balfour Melvilles owned the property for eighteen years they do not appear in any of the records of the time as taking part in any activities in Strathkinness.



In 1900 the property was sold to Mr. James Younger of Alloa. Mr. and Mrs. Younger, and especially Mrs. Younger, took a personal interest in the village and Mrs. Younger's generosity is still remembered.

The Youngers built a large mansion house on the site where General Robert Melville earlier had a house (which he called Craigton). After Mr. Younger died the house, Mount Melville, and the grounds were sold, in 1947, to the Fife County Council. The house was at first a maternity hospital and is now an old people's hospital. The grounds were made into a recreation park called Craigtoun Country Park.

Much of the property was retained by the Younger family as the Mount Melville Estate. In 1982 the estate was divided into two parts. The part which includes property in Strathkinness was acquired by members of the Younger family who do not reside locally. Mr. Stephen Younger, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. James Younger, and his wife live at Denbrae House, Strathkinness. Mr. Younger is currently Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, and his wife Kay, is also a member of the Village Hall Committee.

## THE FARMING COMMUNITY BEFORE LAND ENCLOSURE

Strathkinness in the Middle Ages was simply a group of farmtouns (small hamlets). There was no centre, or 'nucleated village'. The two high ridges of what are now the High Road and the old Bishop's Road were the routes into St. Andrews. The present low road running along the bottom of the valley did not exist until 1810, when the marshy land there was drained, allowing a road to be made and causing the Bishop's Road to fall into disuse. There was from at least as early as the 1600s a road running from south to north across the marsh and the Kinnessburn (presumably by causeway) and along what is now Main Street to Guardbridge and beyond. The Clatto Road (now Church Road and Bonfield Road) was in existence at least as early as the time of the division of the Strathkinness commonty in 1777.

These roads were in fact little more than tracks, muddy and treacherous in wet weather. Ways between farms were not much more than paths. Even the Bishop's Road, the main road from Cupar to St. Andrews, was simply a series of tracks varying in width by several feet according to the conditions, with the different 'tracks' being used according to the state of the ground.

The farmtouns, isolated from one another, formed the pattern of the agricultural system and consisted of a group of dwellings, with sometimes a single tenant farmer or perhaps joint tenants working the land for the landowner, and with sub-tenants, some of whom were weavers, shoemakers, tailors, etc. providing for the day-to-day needs of their small community. Only the tenant-farmer had any land rights, and the sub-tenants were completely dependent upon him. Also working on the land were farm labourers, who during the period of their employment would live in the farmtoun in conditions which were the most primitive of all. In return for labour the sub-tenants were allowed a small piece of land to cultivate and the right to graze animals on the commonty.

A commonty was not common land for general use. It was land jointly owned by several heritors and could be used only by the tenants and sub-tenants of these heritors.

The early pattern of cultivation of arable land, much of which required better drainage, was based on the ridge and furrow system. Land was ploughed into a series of ridges over 35 feet wide and about three feet high from the base of the furrow to the top of the ridge. These furrows and ridges ran downhill, thus enabling water to drain away more easily from the ridge. This method of ploughing, which lasted for many hundreds of years, had the defects of being very slow, leading to waterlogging of the furrows in abnormally wet weather and to the drying-out of the ridges in unusually dry weather.

Farming was based on an open field system, with separate rigs cultivated by different people, though it was possible to have more than one rig. The size of the rigs could vary from one district to another, but was usually about a quarter acre. The rigs were divided by baulks (banks) of uncultivated land which provided a means of communication both for men and animals. The inefficiency of such a system is obvious, and frequently exchanges of rigs were negotiated in order to create larger holdings — though clearly one uncooperative person could block an arrangement beneficial to many others. But maximum efficiency depended in the end on enclosure of a field for the exclusive use of one farmer.

For many hundreds of years the main crops were oats and bere (a hardy form of four-row barley). When the balance of production and demand was upset by a run of bad harvests there was severe deprivation or even famine — which occurred a number of times during the 1600s, when a contributing factor seems to have been a more severe climate than in earlier or later centuries. When this happened people could be forced to become vagrant beggars or robbers in order to survive. The poor law of the time was hopelessly inadequate, and the responsibility for the care of the poor vested in the Kirk Sessions was restricted to the poor of their own parish. Beggars and vagrants were everywhere regarded without much sympathy, as they were a charge on the rest of the population.

Even the tenant farmer suffered severely in times of famine. He had to pay his rent mainly in grain, and in bad years he might be forced to eat some of the grain set aside as rent, or even in extreme conditions eat the seed grain for the following year.

Periods of food shortage sometimes came in cycles lasting several years, as in the late 1690s, and this affected very seriously the resistance of the population to disease.

The tenants on an estate were compelled to send their grain to a miller on that estate who, like the farmers, paid his rent for the mill to the landowner in grain. In arable farming areas like Fife landowners were dealers in grain, and depended on their tenants for their supplies. The landowner's income came, in large part, from selling his grain in other parts of Scotland including Edinburgh and the Highlands.

This practice which obliged tenants and sub-tenants on an estate to send their grain to a particular miller who was also a tenant of their landlord was known as 'thirlage'. Millers were a much maligned group, as the tenant-farmers had to give to the miller a fixed percentage (or 'multure') of the grain sent

for milling, and conflicts could arise over this. In fact, in general millers served the farmers well, and if they did not, then an appeal could be made to the landowner to allow the grain to be sent elsewhere for milling. 'Thirlage', as well as tying the tenants and sub-tenants to a particular mill, also required them to help to keep the mill, the dam and the lade in good repair, and when necessary to help to transport new millstones to the mill. Similarly, tenants on the farmtoun were obliged to use the blacksmith on the landowner's estate.

The dwellings on the farmtouns varied in size from a single room to several rooms for a more prosperous tenant. The earlier dwellings were primitive huts made of wood, turf, and stones and boulders found in clearing the land. In 1689 Thomas Kirke, quoted in *Early Travellers in Scotland*, wrote, 'The vulgar (common) houses ... are low and feeble. Their walls are made of a few stones jumbled together without mortar ... so ordered that there is neither sightliness nor strength, and it does not cost much more time to erect such a cottage than to pull it down ... the turf they renew as often as there is occasion, and that is very frequently done. It is rare to find chimneys in these places ... a small vent sufficing to carry the smoak away ... little comfort there is in sitting at one of their fires'. This is only one of many similar descriptions of the homes of the ordinary people.

Agriculture in Scotland before the enclosures has not yet been adequately studied, and in the past theories about it have been based largely on supposition. These theories are now increasingly being proved to have been mistaken.

For a long time it was believed that agriculture remained unchanged for centuries, until the 'improvements' of the mid-1700s altered the pattern dramatically as a result, for example, of land enclosures, better crop rotation, and selective breeding of animals. However, recent research into previously unexplored estate documents is beginning to show that such a sudden change did not take place, but that the development of agriculture, in the view of some modern scholars, was probably more an evolutionary than a revolutionary process. But the pattern of agriculture in Fife, as in other parts of Scotland, was of course very different in the early 1800s than it had been in the 1500s.

In order to know what Strathkinness and the surrounding area were really like before enclosures, it is essential to make a thorough study of the documents of the Estate Papers of the Melvilles of Strathkinness, of which there are over thirty boxes in the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh. Until that is done our knowledge can be only partial, and it is an important task awaiting some historian.



## THE INFLUENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

After the Reformation the church set about removing what it felt to have been the neglect and abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. Their goal was to establish a Godly Commonwealth, and they believed that only by living according to a strict code of conduct, based on the Bible, could anybody have any hope of attaining salvation.

The influence of the church extended over all aspects of people's lives; in the need to attend the Kirk to hear the word of God, to send their children to school to learn the word of God, not to work on the Sabbath to spoil the sanctity of the Lord's Day, and to adhere to a code of conduct and morality in all things.

There are instances recorded in the St. Andrews Kirk Session minutes which show the importance people put on hearing 'the word of God' from the pulpit. In 1775 there was trouble over the letting of seats in the Town Kirk when several people were moved from their accustomed seats. Amongst these were 'Robert Richard's wife from Strathkinness and Margaret Deas from the Poffie' who did not wish to 'be deprived of hearing the word of God'. They were given other seats until there were chairs vacant nearer the pulpit. St. Mary's Church on Market Street was built in 1849 because there was not room for everybody in the Town Kirk (which was not as large as it is now).

However, not everybody went to church regularly, even though they were under pressure to do so. After the establishment of the preaching station in Strathkinness in 1836 it was reported in the Kirk Session minutes of St. Andrews 'Not a few in both extremities (Strathkinness and Boarhills) rarely went to any place of worship at all. Now by regular services at these stations many have been reclaimed to church going habits'. The same minutes said that 'many attended the Dissenting Chapel at Strathkinness'.

Discipline was meted out to the inhabitants of Strathkinness, as well as other parts of the parish, by the St. Andrews Kirk Session prior to 1860, after which discipline of people in Strathkinness became the duty of the newly established *quoad sacra* Parish of Strathkinness. (Isabella Ogilvie had the dubious distinction of being the first person to be transferred from St. Andrews to Strathkinness for discipline.)

Working on the Sabbath was not allowed and could lead to discipline. In 1598 'Thomas Rodger in Strakynes and Barbara Wilsoun thair, being accusit, confest thair wriking (working) on Sondag last, and thairfir ar ordanit to mak humiliation Sondag next'.

There is a record in the St. Andrews Kirk Session minutes of 1595, a period of witchcraft persecutions, which states 'James Chaplaine to make public humiliation for the fetching of umquihill (late or deceased) Janet Lohoar, a condemnit wyche to cure John Richard's wife in Strathkinness'. There is no way of telling for certain what the actual fate of Janet Lohoar was. Some scholars believe she was probably released and others think she was probably executed. According to one writer on witchcraft in Scotland (G. B. Black) executions at that time were so frequent they were not always recorded as having taken place. Certainly the words 'umquihill' and 'condamnit' would lead one to think she would have been executed, but other scholars (R. G. Cant and R. Smart) believe that condemned witches were often released and made to leave the area. Unless further information comes to light it seems the case will have to remain 'non-proven'.

If a case was contested the Kirk Session acted as both prosecutor and judge, and witnesses could be called on both sides. If the Session felt they were incompetent to deal with a case it was referred to the Presbytery for further consideration. Punishment could be fines or appearing before the congregation in 'public humiliation' or a combination of both. Around the 1770s requests were made for permission to pay a larger fine instead of appearing before the congregation. One of the first cases was that of a man who said 'that as he lived a long way off it would be difficult for him to attend'. He was given permission to pay a larger fine and not to appear before the congregation. One man paid twenty shillings (a very large fine), sixteen shillings of which went to the poor and the other four shillings was divided between the clerk and the beadle (church officer) who depended on the fines for part of their wages, but the woman involved with him still had to appear. It appears the fines were assessed according to the means of the parties involved, for instance in 1779 one couple paid only twenty pence 'and this puts a stop to their making publick appearances', and in another case a woman was not fined 'as she is poor'.

Punishment was for all, not only the poor and less well-off; there were cases in which Kirk elders were censured and obliged to resign from the Kirk Session and their names were removed from the roll of elders.

In 1793 'Mr. William Haig who had lately been made Tacksman of the Distillery at Kincapple' (founded in about 1770 by his uncle) had been reported as 'being in the practice of running his stills on the Lord's Day'. Mr. Haig admitted that it was so, and in a letter, asked for by the Kirk Session to explain his action, he said that 'the other Distillers did so, and with the duty being so heavy' he was forced to as the distilleries in Edinburgh who worked on the Lord's Day could undersell him in St. Andrews, as they were allowed to run their stills on the Sabbath and thus have proportionately less tax to pay.



'I am burdened' he continued, 'with a distillery for which I pay a very large rent and also with very large farms which would not be worth the rent I pay for them, were it not for the Distillery. This absolutely obliges me to work or be ruined... I therefore hope that you will not take any harsh steps to prevent me alone'. He hoped that if any action was taken it would be to stop all distilleries from working on Sundays, which he did not approve of, but was forced to do 'so that they could all be on a footing'. The Kirk Session passed the case on to the Presbytery as 'it seemed Mr. Haig will continue his practice as he thinks the late Distillers Act authorises the practice'. They wished the Presbytery to 'consider what measures should be adopted for checking and spreading [of] a practice which seems so adverse to the sanctification of the Sabbath and so hurtful to the interests of religion and morality'. Mr. Haig was to be warned against the continuance 'of this practice which they are determined to discountenance by every means in their power'. When Mr. Haig realised that the Presbytery was considering the matter he wrote to them saying 'he had resolved from henceforth to stop the running of his stills on the Lord's Day'. The ministers of the Town Kirk were to consult the Procurator for the Church to see 'what measures .... could be pursued for checking the alledged(sic) general practice of the Distillers on the Lord's Day'. (Mr. Haig later became Provost of St. Andrews, a position he held for twelve years. His distillery remained at Kincaple until 1810 when it was moved to Seggie, in Guardbridge, and later, in 1824, to Cameron Bridge and eventually in about 1900 to Markinch.)

In 1840 the Kirk Session decided to discontinue imposing fines on those found guilty of misdemeanours and after this time discipline consisted of censure by the Kirk Session followed by absolution. There were a few people who rebelled against the discipline of the church. In 1845 one man who was told to appear before the Kirk Session said he was willing to appear but he added, 'I care not for you and all Kirk Sessions'. There was also a woman who had been refused baptism of her child and who said she would go to an Episcopal minister and 'be rid of the Kirk Session'. These people were exceptions, however, and if others thought the discipline harsh or unfair they complied with it without any sign of objecting. Most people were quite willing to accept the discipline as it was essential before absolution of their sins, which was necessary for their salvation.

The practice of appearing in public did not die out until 1800, when the payment of fines only became the accepted practice, although people were still compelled to appear before the Kirk Session. (Public appearances continued longer in the Dissenting Churches.) Although the salvation of souls was the first concern of the church, fines had a practical aspect in helping the church to carry out its social responsibilities. Looking after the poor of the

parish was the largest single item in the expenditure of the Kirk Session and fines made up a large part of its funds. Likewise, it was important to ascertain the paternity of a child, so that the father could be made to assume a responsibility for its support, thus relieving the charge on poor relief funds.

The money which the Kirk Session administered for the relief of the poor came from several sources; collections made at the church door, contributions by the heritors, occasional contributions from others, bequests specifically for the benefit of the poor, and before 1840, fines imposed upon those who broke the rules of the church. In addition to money, of various amounts, paid to 'paupers and to those not quite paupers' goods ranging from boots, clothing, coal, candles, tea, bread, rent-money, school-fees and medicines were given at times.

In the winter the heritors increased their aid to the poor, especially the amount of coal given. Some years when there were more than the usual number of poor people needing help, the heritors and the Kirk Session met to discuss how best to alleviate their condition, as in 1816 when 'the high Price of Necessaries and continued Stagnation of Trade' required 'a much more Liberal Supply to the Pensioners than the money now in the hands of the Kirk Session can afford'.

There were beggars who were given badges entitling them to beg within the bounds of the parish, but if they begged outside the parish they could have their badges taken away. In 1817 in order to prevent beggars constantly accosting people, the heritors devised a plan for 'two beggars to call upon the Wealthy Citizens on Saturday provided with a Tin Box with an opening in the lid. On the Sabbath they were to take the Tin to the Session where Mr. Toddie had the key, and the Tin was to be opened and distributed on Monday at 10.00 o'clock'. These poor box collections were still going on in 1833 as it is recorded in the minutes 'One Janet Pringle on account of Infirmities of Old age being unable to go round with the box to families on Saturday to receive their Weekly Allowance to the poor, the Session resolved to employ Widow Cochran in the meantime to that duty'.

A Parochial Board was set up in St. Andrews in 1845 following the introduction of a new Poor Law Act, and the responsibility for the poor was transferred from the Kirk Session to this new Board. The Kirk Session minutes of 1848 state 'Since Martinmas (11 November) 1845 the new poor law has been in operation here and of course the Church Collections have fallen off very considerably since then'.

Earlier, in 1843, the Session had complained about the number of people 'who repair to St. Andrews for a few years for the Education of their children



(both at the University and Madras which had a number of English pupils at that time) and who cannot be supposed to take the same interest in the Poor as natives and residents here all their lives', and 'besides a large proportion of these strangers happen at present to be Episcopalian, and of course their collections are lost to the poor'.

That may have been true in general, but it was not true of all Episcopalians. General Robert Melville and his heir the first John Whyte Melville had been members of the Town Kirk, but his son, the second John Whyte Melville and his wife Lady Catherine, were both Episcopalians who gave generously to the poor funds of the Town Kirk and to the poor in Strathkinness and district.

Even after the new Parochial Board was set up, with Mr. John Whyte Melville as its first chairman, the Kirk Session continued to make contributions to the poor, mainly to those who did not receive Parochial aid. Individual heritors also contributed, although they were already rated for poor relief by the Parochial Board. Funds at the disposal of the Board were limited and a poor rate imposed upon householders and tenants who had previously contributed solely through church collections was not popular.

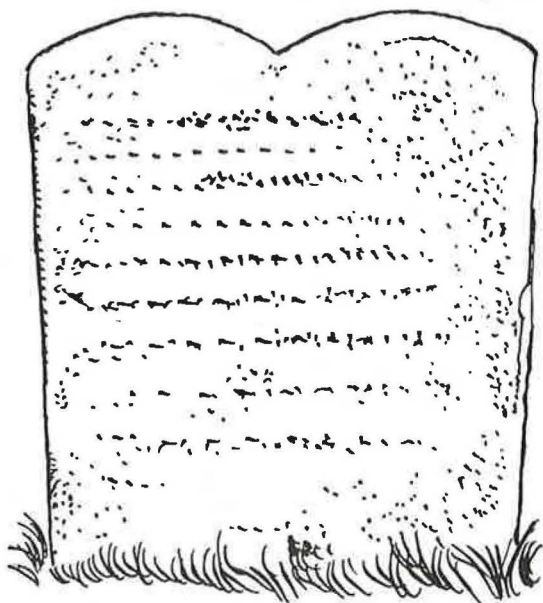
## THE MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP SHARP

At the present time the only claim Strathkinness has to any significance in the history of Scotland arises from the event which took place in 1679 on Magus Muir, at the edge of what is now the village.

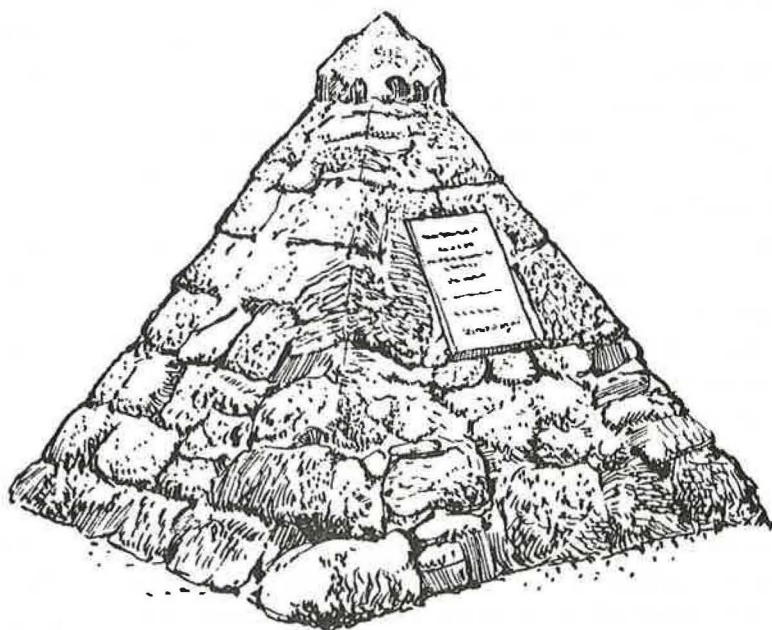
The sixteen hundreds was a time of great religious turbulence in both Scotland and England. The conflict then was not, as it had been at the time of the Reformation, between Roman Catholics and Protestants, but between rival groups within what in each country was the national church, almost everyone at that time believing that a single united church tolerating no rival was essential to the peace and well-being of the nation. In Scotland the situation was especially complex, but basically the conflict was between episcopalians, who were restored to power in the church in 1661, and presbyterians who, with the Restoration of Charles II, lost the control they had previously had. The form of service in the church was scarcely affected by the change. Archbishop James Sharp, once minister at Crail, was a moderate presbyterian who after the accession of Charles II, like many others at that time, became an episcopalian, and was made Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of All Scotland, and one of the leading members of the government in Scotland. As a former presbyterian, although he had always been sympathetic towards episcopalianism, he was despised by many as a turncoat, and hated for the part he played in the suppression of the covenanters. The murder of Archbishop Sharp at Magus Muir by a group of extremists was unpremeditated — his killers, who included the local laird Balfour of Burleigh, were hunting for the sheriff-substitute of Fife, a notorious persecutor of presbyterians, and came across Sharp, and one of his daughters, by accident. The murder was followed by retribution, and five covenanters, not those guilty of the crime, were executed, subsequently being buried by sympathizers near the spot where Sharp was killed. The importance of the assassination of Archbishop Sharp is that it helped to bring about the intensification of the conflict into a civil war far more bitter than the struggle between Protestants and Roman Catholics more than a hundred years earlier. Eventually, in 1691, the government of William and Mary, in order to assist the pacification of Scotland after the 1688 Revolution, decided that henceforth the Scottish church, unlike the English, should be based on a presbyterian and not on an episcopalian system.

A cairn put up near the spot where Archbishop Sharp was murdered and the nearby graves of the five covenanters so cruelly executed in revenge for an act they were not involved in, are reminders of what happened in 1679. A fitting memorial to those turbulent and intolerant times might be in the words of the Rev. John Hall when he was minister of Strathkinness Parish Church, 'It is surely a sign of change for the better when any Sunday in the Parish

Church you will find Presbyterians, Episcopalians and representatives of many denominations worshipping together within a thousand yards of those ancient memorials of a blood-stained past'.



*COVENANTERS' GRAVESTONE*



*ARCHBISHOP SHARP MONUMENT*



## THE CHURCHES IN STRATHKINNESS

It might seem that a history of the churches in Strathkinness would be of interest only to ecclesiastical historians, but that is far from being the case.

Because Strathkinness was part of the Parish of St. Andrews and St. Leonards until 1860 all parish references to Strathkinness are to be found in the St. Andrews Kirk Session and Presbytery records.

St. Andrews Presbytery records show that as early as 1597 a few people in the Strathkinness area wished to have a separate church, but as this was opposed by another group the Presbytery did not grant permission.

In 1799 a Relief Preaching Station ('Relief' meaning relief to 'Christians oppressed in their church privileges' by having ministers imposed upon them against their will) was established somewhere in Strathkinness. A Relief Church was built in 1801, at a cost of about £180, on the site at 52 Main Street (the building later used by Thom as a joiner's shop and later used by Danskins Transport) and which is now a part of Sir James and Lady McPetrie's garden.

The first minister in Strathkinness was the Rev. George Buchanan who left to go to Upper Canada (Ontario) because the congregation could not pay him his stipend. Nor could they afford to pay the next minister, the Rev. William Boag. The church was advised to increase the seat rents, but they did not do so. It is doubtful, in view of later churches' attempts to raise seat rents, that the congregation would have reacted favourably, and as 'door collections in those days....were of little account' there was not sufficient money to pay the minister.

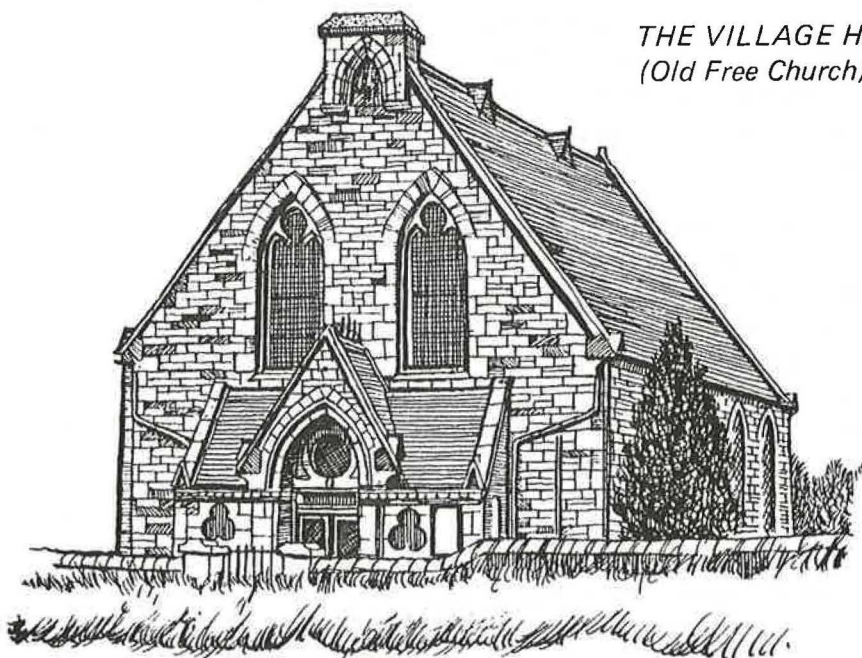
After the demise of the Relief Church in Strathkinness the building which they had built was taken over by a small group of Methodists in 1816. They paid £86 for the building which had one quarter acre of ground annexed to it. The 'chapel' was described as 'forty-seven feet by thirty-three tolerably well-seated'. The Methodists did not stay long in Strathkinness as they had little local support, the main support coming from St. Andrews where there were a few Methodists.

For several years, after the Methodists left, the building lay unused until it was again taken over by a group of Seceders in 1823 when they bought the building for £90. This group of Seceders (Original Burghers) was one of the factions of the group which had seceded from the Established Church as early as 1733. It was not until 1827 that the Rev. Ralph Robb was appointed minister of the Secession Church in Strathkinness. He was given a 'stipend

of £70 and a house and a garden as soon as they were able'. Land across from the church, part of a Strathkinness Commonty, was feued to the Secession Church and a subscription for a manse was opened. By the time Mr. Robb and his congregation rejoined the Established Church in 1839 there was a manse on Main Street.

During the short period between 1827 when the first entry in the Secession Minute Book is made until the last one in 1931 there are a few which show what discipline in the church in Strathkinness was like at that time. In 1828 Alex Paton was called before the Session 'regarding his character'. He was suspended from 'church privileges' (communion), and the following year it was stated that the reports of his character were unfounded. There was also a case of a man called James Drummond who had gone through the countryside collecting for poor widows and appropriating the funds to his own use. He was summoned three times to appear before the Session, but as he did not appear, the case was dealt with in his absence. He was declared 'a fugitive from discipline and his name was dropped from the roll'.

In 1843 came the greatest upheaval since the Reformation — the Disruption — when over four hundred ministers, under the leadership of Thomas Chalmers (born in Anstruther and whose first church had been Kilmany) left the church and set up the Free Church.



*THE VILLAGE HALL  
(Old Free Church)*



Mr. Robb, although he had joined the Established Church in St. Andrews in 1839 retained the manse in Strathkinness, as the census of 1841 records 'Ralph Robb, Minister'. He did not have a charge in St. Andrews, but he must have continued to be supported by his congregation which re-joined the church with him, as well as by fees he would have made when preaching in other places. He left the Established Church again to join the Free Church. He was one of four ministers in the St. Andrews area who signed the original list of adherents to the new Free Church. When the Free Church was established in Strathkinness in 1843 he did not become its first minister. He went to Canada where he became the first Free Church minister, eventually settling in Upper Canada (Ontario).

The first Free Church minister in Strathkinness was the Rev. Adam Thorburn who was inducted in 1843, the same year he was ordained.

In the Free Church Presbytery of St. Andrews minutes the reason given for setting up the new church was 'the decrease in vital Godliness in the parishes throughout the land'. Since the Disruption they found a 'greater regularity of attendance, more brotherly love, an increased interest in Christianity, and a growth in grace'. They declared 'the Sabbath had been openly violated, though usually by people over whom they have no control', and they accused the Established Church of enticing people by immediate entry to sealing ordinances (communion) without proper instruction. They had also discovered 'in some districts of the Presbytery small bands of professed infidels and Socialists who take occasion to scoff at all religion....boasting of their own superior moral character and honesty of conduct'.

When Mr. Thorburn died in 1855, after a short illness, there was a large gathering for his funeral at Martyr's Church in St. Andrews. He was still a young man when he died, and it is impossible to say what his future might have been, but he showed signs of being a man of considerable ability and he was highly regarded in the Free Church. As the first minute book of the Free Church in Strathkinness covering the period between 1845 and 1855 is missing the only information of this time is to be found in the St. Andrews Free Church Presbytery minutes.

The Rev. J.B. Irvine was inducted as the new minister in 1856. At this time the discipline of the Free Church was what would seem severe to us today. There was public rebuke before the whole congregation, often announced from the pulpit in advance. It is written in the minutes in May 1859 'Three young women are to be publicly rebuked on the afternoon of the next Lord's Day. Intimation of this [is] to be given from the pulpit'. In 1858 Robert Anderson, a member of the Free Church was refused baptism of his child for three months

because he 'had been neglectful of public ordinances'. In 1860 he was admonished for drunkenness, and as he had been found guilty of drunkenness before, he was suspended from communion, and in 1863 he was suspended indefinitely for drinking.

In 1858 'several people spoke of the scandal which was caused by reports regarding acts of intemperance on the part of John Clement'. Several weeks later Mr. Clement appeared before the Session and admitted the charge but demanded to know who had told the minister. He was refused their names, and when he asked for his certificate of membership that, too, was refused. 'He then absented himself from his own place of worship for nine Sabbaths in succession'. He again demanded his certificate, but rumours had reached the Session that Mr. Clement had been attending the Established Church. 'He was asked to appear at the next Session meeting and a citation was to be served on him by the Church Officer'. Mr. Clement did appear and admitted that he had been guilty of intemperance. He was admonished and the minister said a prayer for him. He was told that he must be suspended from communion 'for the present'. That was in January, 1859 and in the following April he sent a letter to the Session:—

'To the Moderator and remnant members of the Free Church Congregation at Strathkinness

Gentlemen,

After mature deliberation my wife and I think it proper to leave the Free Church. I have therefore respectfully to request that you remove my name from the Communion Roll.

etc.,

James Clement'.

In 1889 one young woman could not be admonished 'as she is residing out of this neighbourhood' and the Session 'found they could do nothing at the present'. Usually, a church would pass on to another church in the parish, where the 'offender' had gone, information about the 'offender', so that he or she could be dealt with by one or other of the churches. In this case, it may be that they did not know just where the young woman had gone.

Even as late as 1905 it was reported 'it is agreed to withhold Mr. John Robertson's communion card pending rumours of a breach of Church discipline'.

In almost all the cases of admonishment and punishment the person concerned expressed sorrow and a willingness and desire to behave better in the future, as for example, Isabella Johnson in 1884 'expressed deep sorrow and a resolve to walk henceforth through divine grace in newness of life', and after

admonishment she was absolved and restored to the privileges of the church. Even those who appeared time and time again submitted themselves to the inevitable discipline. If we remember that this discipline was accepted because most people believed that such discipline was the right of the church, and that membership with full privileges of communion was felt to be essential, and that discipline was administered for the spiritual benefit of those who had transgressed the standard of conduct demanded by the church, then their acceptance becomes more understandable to us today. Perhaps the hardest thing for us to understand is the readiness with which people reported the misdemeanours of others. But that too, was expected of people, as the discipline was for the good of the transgressor's soul.

By 1867 enough money had been raised to build a new church further up on Main Street (the present Village Hall). But membership had been dropping steadily for some time. The numbers were at their highest in 1859 when there were 225 communicants. By 1867 the number had fallen to 196. Some members might have joined the Established Church in Strathkinness when they built their new church in 1864, but membership continued to decline even after the new Free Church had been built.

Mr. Irvine who had been appointed minister of the Free Church in 1856 remained until long after he was no longer fit enough to carry out his duties adequately. Although 70 years old and ill, he was able to retire only because the Free Church General Assembly agreed to give him a grant to supplement his retiral pension. When he retired the congregation had declined considerably and there was internal dissension.

Unfortunately, matters did not improve after the Rev. William Henry was inducted as the new minister in 1898. Mr. Henry, the Kirk Session and the Deacons Court of the church were all in discord. In 1907 a Committee of the General Assembly visited Strathkinness to investigate the state of affairs in the church and they 'dissolved the pastoral tie' between Mr. Henry and Strathkinness. He was given £300. In 1913 the Presbytery of St. Andrews received letters asking for references for Mr. Henry. The clerk was instructed to reply saying 'He [Mr. Henry] had been minister of Strathkinness and his Pastoral ties had been dissolved under the Inefficiency Act'. In 1919 Mr. Henry became a preacher at Bridge of Cally Preaching Station where there had been a succession of temporary preachers. Mr. Henry may well have been suffering from some sort of mental illness which had not been recognised and which might have been understood today.

Even though torn with dissension, activities of the church went on. In March 1906 a social evening was held at the church which was also attended

by people from St. Andrews. Afterwards the 'balance of five shillings was divided between David Malcolm and Mrs Pearson, St. Andrews for extra trouble they had in cleaning the church and washing the cups'. In 1899 the Established church in Strathkinness bought a new organ for £25. In 1904 the Free Church also decided to buy an organ. They bought one from Martyr's Church in St. Andrews at a cost of £37.10.0. The platform which had to be built for it cost £37.15.0 and in addition they paid for organ lessons for Mr. Davidson, the precentor. These must not have been too successful as a few months later a deputation visited Mr. Davidson to explain to him that his salary would be stopped at the end of the year. (While waiting for Mr. Davidson to learn how to play the organ they had been paying for an organist.) They said they wished 'him to continue as Leader of Praise without a salary until he feels himself efficient to play the organ'. The organist was asked to accept a reduction in salary so Mr. Davidson's lessons might continue. Although agreeing at first she soon sent in her resignation.

While the church in Strathkinness was involved with internal problems an important change had taken place in the church nationally. In 1900 the Free Church had joined the United Presbyterian Church to form the United Free Church. In 1904 a judgement of the House of Lords, in a case brought by those who had not joined (the 'Wee Frees'), claiming they were the rightful Free Church, as they said those who had joined had given way on fundamental beliefs, seemed to give the 'Wee Frees' the right to all property and funds of the Free Church. At a congregational meeting held to discuss the position of Strathkinness a resolution was unanimously carried 'That this meeting of the Congregation at Strathkinness deplores the judgement of the House of Lords and declares its allegiance to the United Free Church'. The effect of this decision was a weakening of the Free Church generally, and it helped to pave the way for eventual re-union with the Established Church. In Strathkinness, as this decision coincided with internal difficulties, it accelerated the loss of members to the Established Church.

The state of the church in Strathkinness had caused it to be reduced to a Preaching Station and after Mr. Henry's departure the Kirk Session appealed to the Free Church General Assembly to become a fully sanctioned charge again. Their first request was refused but after the Rev. James Turner was appointed minister in 1908 another appeal with a plea 'to avoid the waning of the zeal of the people' was more successful and the church was restored to full status. One of the conditions for remaining a fully sanctioned church was a contribution of £80 a year to the Central Fund of the Free Church General Assembly.

There was an 'Induction Soirée' when Mr. Turner became minister and



attempts were made to overcome some of the problems of the church, but Mr. Turner was no more successful than Mr. Henry had been in ending internal dissension. It became difficult to get people to accept positions as Elders and Deacons, and there was a period during which people resigned, changed their minds, accepted positions and then resigned again. At one meeting 'there was a heated discussion after which three Elders present left the meeting saying they would never return'. And they did not. Mr. Andrew Thom Sr. and Mr. Andrew Thom Jr. left the Free Church and joined the Established Church in St. Andrews.

With this situation following so closely upon the previous troubles, the St. Andrews Free Church Presbytery, and at the request of Mr. Turner, appointed assessors to act as Kirk Session in Strathkinness. Although they did their best to heal the rift between Mr. Turner and some of the members of the church they did not succeed. They asked permission to resign but the Presbytery refused their resignations and sent them back to Strathkinness. The assessors were recalled in 1912 and the church struggled on. Women raised money from Bazaars, repairs were made to church and manse, children had Sunday School 'treats', and they tried hard to fulfil their obligation to pay £80 every year to the Central Fund, but membership was continuing to decline and in a letter to the Presbytery written in 1914 they gave their reasons for the decline, with a request to join with Guardbridge. They said:—

'Strathkinness Church is situated in an unprogressive district. With no industry in the Village the population is steadily decreasing and the church is inevitably suffering. Farmers whose leases have expired and who were the best supporters of the Church have left the district. Farm servants have removed at the terms and their places have not been taken up by United Free members. Young people growing up in the Church are having to go out of the District to find Employment. The people who are comming (sic) into the Village are a non Church going class from insanitary areas in St. Andrews. Membership is 71 in which are included three or four who have not yet asked for their Certificates.'

They go on to say that for the last two years they have been unable to raise the £80 needed and it is impossible for such a small congregation to do so.

Nothing came from the proposal as Guardbridge joined with Leuchars (which was not satisfactory and was later disjoined). There was also a proposal to join with Dairsie, which was not done. In 1915 the United Free Church in Strathkinness became involved in a long financial wrangle with the Presbytery in St. Andrews, they refused to accept some instructions given them by the Presbytery and obviously, much aggrieved by the Presbytery's criticism of the Strathkinness lack of numbers and the contributions raised by them for

the various schemes of the Church, they wrote back to the Presbytery 'What is needed is a sympathetic visitation of the Presbytery'.

The funds were in deficit and the church was indeed in a difficult position. Salaries for 'the organist and the Church Officer would be paid only if the income warranted it'. In 1917 the proposal was put to the congregation that Strathkinness should unite with Ceres United Free Church. As the congregation felt they could no longer go on by themselves the proposal was accepted. It was decided that the Ceres Manse would be used and the Strathkinness Manse either sold or let, and a new minister would be appointed for the new joint charge. Mr. Turner left Strathkinness and two years later he became minister at Grange in Aberdeenshire. The Rev. James Whyte became the minister for both Ceres and Strathkinness United Free Churches, living in Ceres and the manse in Strathkinness was let to a retired Free Church minister, the Rev. Sandeman.

The Kirk Session book in Strathkinness ends on the 17 June 1917 and the Session meetings after that date were recorded in a book in common with Ceres. Unfortunately, that book has been lost, and the only information comes from the Deacons Court of Strathkinness which had been constituted into a Congregational Board at the time of joining with Ceres.

During the first few years both Strathkinness and Ceres increased their membership slightly and Strathkinness even managed to keep a favourable bank balance. The contribution to the Central Fund had been divided between the two churches with Ceres paying £50 and Strathkinness £30. Some years both churches managed to pay more than the minimum required. The relationship between them was friendly and cordial and money raised from joint fund-raising activities was amicably shared. The Ladies Work Party, which so often in the past had helped the church meet expenses, continued to raise money for essential repairs including that caused by severe storm damage in 1920. After 1917 women were becoming more active in the running of the church being elected to the Deacons Court and frequently appointed auditors. Special collections for Home Missions, Overseas Missions and the Jewish Mission were made, and they made frequent appeals on behalf of the Red Cross. However, they did not feel they could allow the church to be used for a concert in aid of the Red Cross when Mr. Mauchline, the school-master, asked for it in 1921. They said they sympathised 'with the object of the concert [but] felt that it was not expedient to grant the use of the Church for a secular concert of that kind'.

The years between 1917 and 1924 were more financially secure for the United Free Church in Strathkinness, but membership was falling again. In 1923 it was 50 and although it went up to 59 the following year it was soon

dropping down to 50 again.

Early in 1924 the boiler in the Church which had been installed in 1899 needed replacing. The total cost was £42.12.6 and the church asked for six months credit to pay the bill. They had great difficulty in raising the money. Members of the congregation were asked to contribute as much as possible and they were told 'to ask any kind friends who may be willing to assist'. The Ladies were also asked to have another sale of work. In 1925 the Deacons Court officials wished to sell the manse but the congregation refused to give their approval.

In 1926 Mr. Whyte the first minister of the joint charge of Strathkinness and Ceres left to go to Falkirk and the Rev. Ian Simpson who came in his place, spoke to the congregation 'about the very serious situation in the Church', and he asked 'for the names of any people who might have Free Church sympathies' to see if they could give any help.

In 1929 the Quinquennial (five year) Visitation of the Presbytery to Strathkinness had observed 'there were difficulties in ministering two congregations five miles distant'. That same year when the majority of the United Free Churches were uniting with the Established Church the Ceres United Free Church decided to join with the Established Church in Ceres.

The United Free Church in Strathkinness elected not to unite with the Established Church in Strathkinness, although they were warned of 'the dire consequences of remaining a non-concurring church'. When a committee of the Presbytery visited Strathkinness and asked how many of the congregation were prepared to unite with the other congregation in Strathkinness 'a show of hands being taken it was found that the meeting was almost unanimously against the proposal'. When the proposal, 'Subject with (sic) the approval of the Presbytery, That the Congregation be regarded as a preaching station under the jurisdiction of the St. Andrews Presbytery on the definite understanding that whenever a vacancy occurs in the other Church at Strathkinness the two Congregations should unite and proceed jointly to call a Minister' was put, it was accepted unanimously by the congregation. The last communion service of the United Free Church in Strathkinness was held on 18 May 1930 when 21 members communicated.

The reasons for Strathkinness United Free Church not uniting with the Established Church in 1929, when other churches throughout the country were uniting, were probably more personal than doctrinal as they were willing to join when a new minister came. Mr. Alex Russell had left the Free Church in 1891 and joined the Established Church in Strathkinness where he became an Elder. After he had had a disagreement with the Rev. Walter McLeod in 1901



he eventually rejoined the Free Church and it would have been very difficult for him to have gone back to the Established Church again while Mr. McLeod was still minister there. There were several other members of the congregation who had also been members of the Free Church, had changed to the Established Church and then returned to the Free Church. As Mr. McLeod had already been in Strathkinness for thirty-two years in 1929 the assumption must have been that he would not stay much longer, but he did, in fact, stay until his death in 1935. In 1935 the remaining United Free Church members in Strathkinness joined the Established Church in Strathkinness and the Rev. John Patterson became the first minister of the combined churches.

Before the first Relief Church was built in Strathkinness in 1801 the inhabitants of the village either went to church in St. Andrews, or if they were dissenters, they joined others walking to either Ceres or Auchtermuchty where early dissenting meetings were held.

This Relief Church Building was the first building to be erected on Main Street, or the Turnpike Road, as it was then called. By 1836 there was enough demand from members of the Established Church in Strathkinness for the St. Andrews Kirk Session to grant permission for a preaching station in Strathkinness. People from the village would no longer have to go three miles into St. Andrews to attend church, although they would still have to go there for communion.

The preaching station used the same building which had recently been built for a new school. The preachers were a succession of young men not always ordained, but qualified to preach. In 1860 the parish was finally disjoined, or separated, from the Parish of St. Andrews and St. Leonards, and became the *quoad sacra* Parish of Strathkinness, which gave the church in Strathkinness the right to deal with all religious matters within the new parish.

The first minister elected to the new church in Strathkinness was the Rev. David Stewart 'presently acting as missionary among them'. Remembering the background to the Disruption of 1843, the Trustees were very careful to ensure that Mr. Stewart was the choice of the congregation.

The building the church was sharing with the school proved to be inadequate for its needs, and as the cost of adapting it would be nearly as great as building a new one, permission was given by the St. Andrews Presbytery to build a new church. In 1864 a new church was built on land given by Mr. John Whyte Melville.

One-tenth of the seats had been set aside as free sittings and the rent from the rest of the seats amounted to £14.17.4. This, added to the total of £4.12.7



taken at the door collections during the year, was the income for the year.

Shortly after the new church was built in 1864 Mr. Stewart left Strathkinness to become minister in Kennoway, and he was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Murray. Nine years after the church had been built a manse was completed, in 1873, on land also given by Mr. John Whyte Melville. He was thanked by the Trustees of the church (of whom Mr. Melville was one) as 'in addition to the free sites for the Church and Manse [he] was a large contributor'.

The Strathkinness Kirk Session minute book from 1860 until the 1890s is largely taken up with entries recording the censuring of people accused of 'acts of scandal'. After appearing before the Kirk Session and giving seemingly voluntary confessions and expressing penitence for their behaviour they would be 'absolved of the scandal of their sin' and restored to the privileges of the church. Although the church censured people found guilty of having conceived a child before marriage, the method of farm hiring encouraged men to make sure, before marriage, as his livelihood depended upon a source of cheap labour, that a wife would be capable of bearing children. The church's disapproval and censuring did not seem to affect the number of people who appeared and confessed their guilt. Absolution of their sin enabled them to become members of the community without feeling stigmatised.

In 1875 a proclamation giving new charges for the reading of Banns of Marriage was issued. This caused a good deal of concern within the congregation, and led to a statement a few months later saying 'this system of Banns of Marriage is more strictly legal than the hitherto prevailing mode of procedure'. In spite of this new system of a sliding scale of charges ranging from one guinea (one pound and one shilling) to five shillings being declared 'more strictly legal' it was changed two years later to a flat rate of two shillings and sixpence for each reading of the Banns.

Mr. Murray left Strathkinness in 1876 to go to Anstruther Easter as minister. One of the first changes decided upon when Rev. Andrew Tait became the next minister of the parish church in Strathkinness was to have only one service on the Sabbath during the winter months. There is no record of the congregation not agreeing to this decision of the Kirk Session, but in 1892 and 1893 the **Strathkinness Parish Magazine** (of which there seems to be only these two copies still in existence) said that 'as in former years a service would be held in the church at six o'clock on moonlight nights' — except when there was a Bible Class at four o'clock. The magazine went on to say that people would be 'neglecting their responsibility' by not attending the evening worship. It is not known how long these evening services continued, but in 1907 the Committee of the Free Church General Assembly investigating the

state of the Free Church in Strathkinness was told 'the numbers attending (the Free Church) were higher for the afternoon services, because the Established Church did not have afternoon services, so many went to the Free Church then'.

Another change was that concerning Fast Days, which had always been an important part of the religious observances of the reformed churches in Scotland. (The first Secessionist Church had kept Wednesday as the Fast Day). The Thursday before the Communion Sabbath had been set aside as a day for fasting and preparing for the coming communion, and there was no school on Fast Days. In 1881 it was decided to have only one service of worship on the Fast Day, and after ascertaining 'as far as they could the views of the congregation' in 1889 'after mature thought and deliberation' the Kirk Session decided that Fast Days be discontinued and that a preliminary service be held immediately preceding the half-yearly communion. The Free Church in Strathkinness had, two years earlier, in line with the other Free Churches in the Presbytery, discontinued their keeping of Fast Days, and had instead a preparatory service on the Friday evening preceding the Communion Sabbath.

In 1886 it was reported that the church was needing essential repairs and in 1887 a bazaar to raise funds for these repairs was held in the Town Hall in St. Andrews and the sum of £180.19.9, a considerable sum in 1887, was raised. The repairs and alterations carried out in 1888 are not recorded, although they must have been fairly substantial as the Trustees decided not to add to the insurance (£400 in 1864) 'not withstanding the improvements that had been effected'. One of the alterations made at this time was probably the replacement of the north and south windows in the church.

When Mr. Tait died in 1890 he had been minister for fourteen years. During the first two or three years of his successor, the Rev. J. Rolland McNab, more changes were made in church practices; communion tokens were replaced by communion cards, and the dates of communion Sundays were changed from the third Sunday of June and December to the first Sunday of May and November. The practice of the Free Church was to hold four communions during the year, although not always at the same time each year, with the winter communion being fixed for the Sunday nearest the full moon so that the Friday evening preparatory service could be held when the light was apt to be good.

The Trustees, finding that church funds were low, 'as the expenditure did exceed the annual income by several pounds, and also there being a debt of about eight pounds lying upon the Trustees', proposed that seat rents, which had originally been set at a rate to cover the ordinary expenses of the church,



should be raised by sixpence. This did not meet with the approval of the congregation, and several people refused to pay the increased rents. Accordingly, a congregational meeting decided to try to raise the money by means of four additional door collections the following year, but as the total sum raised by these collections was only £2.7.0., the seat rents were increased to one shilling and sixpence as the Trustees had at first proposed.

It was decided in 1893 that the church should be altered and extended, and as there were insufficient funds for them to pay for the alterations, they applied to the Baird Trust (a church Trust) and to the Home Mission, both of which gave the church money to enable them to carry out the changes. One of these alterations was the removal of two or three rows of front seats in the centre to enable choir seats to be put in. Two rows of choir seats on each side were installed facing inwards with a table between them and a rail separating the choir from the congregation. The gallery was extended by bringing it forward and a passage was put in to divide it into two sections. A new precentor's chair was to be bought 'at a price not exceeding one pound sterling'. Up until this time the precentor had sat in a small box-like structure raised up by several steps so he could see the congregation while he was leading the singing. The precentor, or leader of praise, played an important part in the church service and the congregation could be extremely critical of his performance and the way he led the singing which, according to John Duncan, 'was at a very slow pace...in those days'. It is not known when the practice of standing while singing was introduced in Strathkinness, although it is first mentioned in St. Andrews in 1866 when the choir at the Town Kirk first started 'standing while singing the several Psalms during Divine Service, and the Kirk Session considered it 'in every respect an improvement'. The importance of the precentor began to decline as choirs became more important, and with the introduction of instrumental music the need for a precentor became even less. In addition to these internal changes in the church a new gate and a water supply were provided for the manse. It had been hoped to cement the outside of the church, but as they found they did not have enough money, it was left for the meantime.

When Mr. McNab left Strathkinness in 1897 to go to Kirkintilloch there were two elections for the new minister, as the Rev. John Meikle, the first choice of the congregation, did not accept the call. At the second election, the Rev. Walter McLeod, who had not been a candidate in the first election, was chosen. This was the first election in the Established Church in Strathkinness in which women were allowed to vote for the minister, although women had always had that right in the Free Church, and it is probable that the women in Strathkinness had voted for their ministers in the Free Church.

In 1898 when the Kirk Session applied to the Trustees of the church for permission to 'introduce instrumental music into the church' the Trustees replied that they had no objections so long as the Kirk Session was responsible for all the expenses. It did not take long to raise enough money to buy an organ, and after paying £25 for one bought in Dundee, the organ committee had nearly three pounds left over which they put into an organ fund.

Instrumental music first appeared when St. Mary's Church (at St. Mary's Place, Market Street, St. Andrews, built in 1849-50, and which later became the Victory Memorial Hall and is now the Madras F.P. Hall) installed a harmonium in 1874. After prolonged discussion in the Town Kirk as to whether it was 'regular' the Town Kirk eventually decided to have a harmonium as well.

The church was needing repairs again in 1907. It had already been reported in 1900 that the belfry and the roof of both the church and the manse were in need of extensive repairs. The cost of over £300 was raised by a large contribution from the Bazaar Fund and by a bequest from the Orphat Fund (money left by a former church Trustee).

At this time the church did not worry about insurance for its workers as in 1909 when the clerk submitted a proposal from an insurance company to ensure the church officer against accident, for an annual premium of five shillings, the clerk 'was instructed to write to the agents of the insurance company declining the offer'.

Also in 1909 Mr. McLeod submitted a list of improvements he would like to have made in the church and manse. He thought a new Vestry was needed and he 'was desirous of having a bath fitted up in the Manse, as, in his opinion, the Manse was incomplete without one'. He suggested having a 'sale of work the proceeds from which added to the surplus of the last Bazaar would go far to cover the expense'. He also wished the congregation to subscribe to the fund for increasing the 'small livings' fund which aimed to increase the minister's stipend to at least £200 in small living parishes such as Strathkinness.

Plans were drawn up for a vestry and for a bathroom in the manse, but as the 'bathroom would cost £75 and the vestry £150... and the balance at the bank, after heating and cleaning arrangements had been carried out was £118 or thereby, the Trustees could not, in the meantime, proceed with the proposed improvements owing to the lack of funds'. The account for drawing up the plans for the proposed vestry and bathroom was just over £4.

The first minute book of the Established Church in Strathkinness ends in 1909 with the church in a reasonably sound financial position. Although there were some years when the income from seat rents did not cover the current



expenses there was always some money in the Bazaar Fund which could be used if necessary, to augment the income of the church. There were 365 names on the communion roll in 1901 which was only a slight decrease from the figure of 385 in 1894. By contrast, when the first Free Church minute book closed in 1911 there were 87 members, although the numbers had increased from a low of 71 in 1907. In 1863 there had been a membership of 222 in the Free Church.

The subject of small livings contributions was brought up again by the Presbytery in 1913 when they asked the congregation in Strathkinness to give £180 to the Fund. The decision as to whether they should give £100 left over from the bazaar held in 1907 was deferred, but they eventually decided to send the £100 'provided the Ladies' Work Party would use the proceeds of their sales of work towards gradually replacing it'. This the Ladies' Work Party did with an addition of £45 to the General Fund in 1921 and a further addition in 1923 of £20.

In 1915 Mr. McLeod's stipend, like that of other ministers in 'small livings' parishes, was raised to something just over £200 a year. However, in 1924 the Trustees of Strathkinness Church wrote to the Committee for the Augmentation of Smaller Livings 'protesting against the fact that the stipend had not been raised to £300 as had been promised, the parish having contributed its required quota'.

One of the problems in paying the stipend for the minister in Strathkinness was that property bought in Glasgow when the church was first established in 1860, and which was intended to bring in enough money from rents to help pay the minister's stipend, never brought in the amount expected. There were constant problems concerning the property and there were times when the minister in Strathkinness did not get his full stipend, because of difficulties arising from this property. In 1928 the 'property had got into dangerous conditions' and as the Trustees of Strathkinness Church did not have the money for the necessary repairs it was decided that the Corporation of Glasgow should repair the buildings and recover the cost of these repairs from the rents of the improved property.

Although for many years the Kirk Session minutes had been recording not much more than the numbers at communion, in 1913 the minutes list the church property. Included in the list are: two pulpit Bibles [one] wanting several leaves; three minute books, one in present use; Communion Cups and Flagon with wooden Bread Platter; Communion Cups and Platter (electro-plated) and one brass door collection plate with a pedestal; Communion Cloths for all seats on the ground floor; a Baptism Register, commencing 19 November, 1876; and a Proclamation Register commencing September 1875'.

From about 1910 the Kirk Session rarely met more than two or three times a year. Their minute book contains little more than a record of the number of communicants at the half-yearly communion services. From 1910 to 1929 the number on the communicants' roll varied from a minimum of 312 in 1917 to a maximum of 380 in 1925, and the number of communicants varied considerably from 191 in 1916 to 256 in 1923. The amounts collected for the various schemes are stated to have been divided amongst the schemes, but neither the amount of money nor any scheme is mentioned. The schemes of the church, although changed in name, were and are, involved with missions at home and abroad and with social needs.

Minor repairs were made to both the church and the manse, and in 1919 the Trustees 'decided to ask a man of skill' and received a builder's report saying that part of the north-west wall of the church 'should be cut out' and rebuilt. The cost would have been about £30 and, although the wall would last another seven or eight years, it would have to be rebuilt at some time; they could 'leave [it] till things become cheaper, or rather in the hope of things becoming cheaper'. They decided on a few repairs and a coat of cement on the faulty wall.

In 1929 Mr. McLeod explained to the Session 'the various features of the Basis of the Union of the Churches, after which the Kirk Session agreed to give their adhesion to the Proposed Plan'. As the Strathkinness Free Church had elected not to unite with the Parish Church until there was a new minister, the next few years were a holding operation. In 1932 Mr. McLeod resigned as Session Clerk and Treasurer, but he did not resign his ministry.

Soon after his death in 1935 'at the first meeting after the union of Strathkinness Parish Church and the congregation of the Preaching Station of Strathkinness, formerly the Strathkinness United Free Church' it was decided that the property and funds of both should be united. For three months, until after the induction of a new minister, services would be held in each church on alternate Sundays. After that time the united congregation would decide, subject to the approval of the General Assembly, which church should be the place of worship, with the other church being used for congregational purposes. The manse of the Parish Church was to be the manse of the united congregation and the elders of both churches were to continue as elders of the joint church.

The Rev. John Patterson was elected their first minister, and in 1936 the decision was taken to keep the Parish Church and to sell the former United Free Church building. When this was sold later in 1937, the Trustees of the Mitchell Trust, who bought the church for £75, claimed the bell and organ



were included in the sale, and although the church had not intended them to be included, they did not think the matter worth contesting.

While the Parish Church was undergoing extensive repairs and renovation the other church was used for church services. Included in the major improvements of 1936 were the installation of electricity and the renovating of the heating system. The old pulpit in the centre of the church was removed and a new pulpit was put in the northeast corner. The former pulpit was a large two-tier one which had been built into the wall. When it was removed the wall between the two east windows where the pulpit had stood was panelled. A platform was built and the choir seats and the organ, which had been in front of the pulpit, were put in the southeast corner across from the pulpit. A new communion table, as well as the new pulpit, were given to the church by the Ladies' Work Party, and these as well as the new panelling were all in a light wood, and it was decided to strip the dark stain from the pews to blend with the new wood. In an article in the **St. Andrews Citizen** in 1937 reporting on a sale of work held to raise funds for the completion of the scheme of redecoration of the Parish Church in Strathkinness, which had raised £42, it stated 'now the church had been beautified it would be the finest church of its size in the Presbytery'.

In addition to the alterations to the church there were as well some alterations to the manse, including the installation of a bathroom which Mr. McLeod had first asked for in 1909. The alterations and improvements were mainly financed by a loan from Mr. John Brown and a grant of £75 from the Orphat Fund.

At the time of the union of the two churches there were 419 names on the new register; the Sunday School, the Bible Class and the choir were all flourishing. By the outbreak of the war in 1939 the number on the register had dropped to 373. Also, in 1939, Mr. Patterson announced that he was going on active service as an army chaplain. A series of supply preachers visited Strathkinness until he returned on leave in 1941, and in 1942 he relinquished his duties as army chaplain, due to ill health. He remained in Strathkinness until he was called to the Scots Kirk in Bombay in 1946.

During the years of 1940 to 1945 the amount of money raised for the schemes of the church was greater than had ever been achieved before, and in 1945 the sum of £62, the greatest ever raised, was collected. These levels were not maintained, however, and in 1947 the amount raised for church schemes was down to £27.

It was hard, during the war years, to find anybody to do jobs which had earlier been done without too much difficulty. It was not easy to find

somebody willing and able to maintain the manse garden and the surrounds of the church. The problem of finding somebody to look after the boiler in the church was sufficiently great that the Kirk Session considered the possibility of installing electric heating in the church which they hoped would also eliminate the need for constant repairs to the boiler, and after having considered the possibility several times, they eventually abandoned the idea because of the cost.

The question of envelope collection was again brought up in 1945, but as in 1929 when the matter was deferred, no decision was taken, and it was not until 1959 that 'Free Will' envelopes were distributed along with the communion cards and a covering note from the minister.

In 1945 the Presbytery asked the Kirk Session to 'find out the mind of the congregation on the proposed admission of women to the Eldership on the same terms as men'. The Session expressed themselves not in favour of 'such far-reaching and revolutionary change in the order of the Church', but their opinion was to be 'without prejudice' to the congregational vote at a meeting to be held in December. At that meeting two opposing motions were put; one against the admission of women on equal terms as men, and one for the admission of women on equal terms as men. There was a decisive defeat for the admission of women as elders. The vote was twenty-two against the admission of women as elders and two for the admission of women as elders. There is no reason given why there were so few people present at a congregational meeting which was voting on something which must have been of some concern to at least some women at that time.

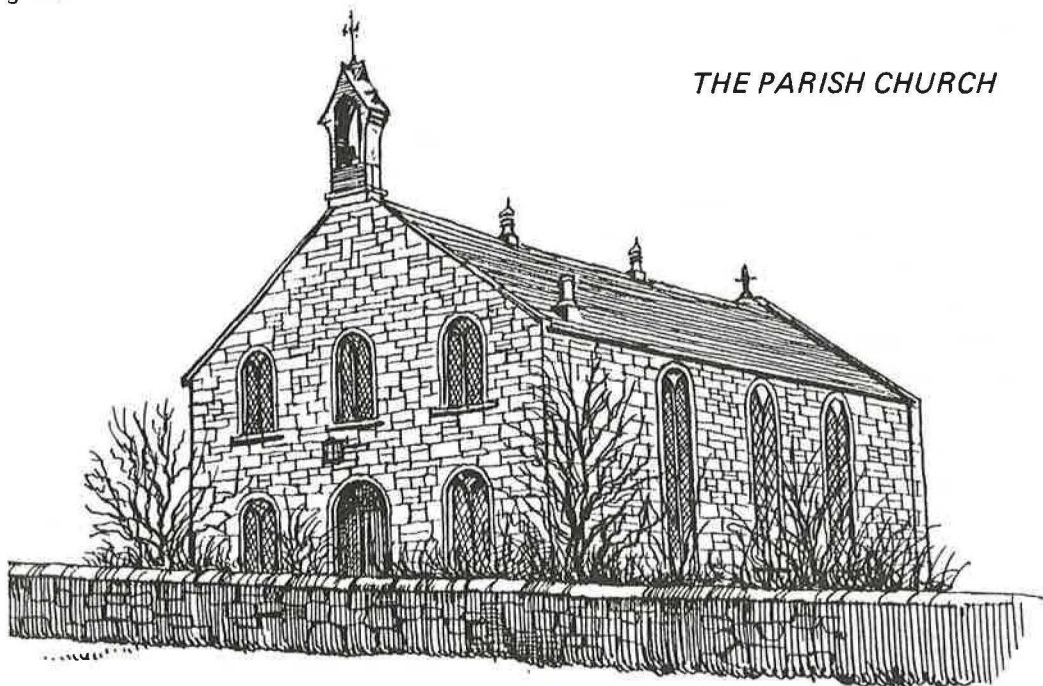
After Mr. Patterson's departure the Rev. William Edgar was elected minister in 1946. It was during Mr. Edgar's ministry that the financial state of the national church, as well as the local church, was brought to the congregation's attention. He stressed that there was a great need for people to increase their giving to the church as all expenses had become so much greater. The question of an increase in seat rents was brought up several times and no decision reached until 1951 when they were increased from one shilling and sixpence to two shillings and sixpence, which was the first increase since 1892 when they were increased from one shilling, the original amount set in 1864 when the church was built.

Mr. Edgar left Strathkinness for Dornoch in 1951 and the Rev. Charles Nicoll from St. Mary's in Dundee was elected the new minister. During Mr. Nicoll's ministry the time of the morning service was changed from 12 noon to 11.15 a.m., and in 1955 he instituted a family pew service once a month to encourage parents to bring their children to church. In 1952 it was decided that a Congregational Board of elected members of the congregation would be



responsible for the fabric of the church and the Kirk Session would have the responsibility for the fabric of the manse. In 1952 plans were submitted for redecorating the church, although records of the actual work carried out in 1953 are not available. It was recorded, however, that Mr. T. Wallace gave £100 for a new carpet at the east end of the church. Personal recollections are at variance as to where the new windows were made which were put in the two east windows. The plain, variously light coloured diamond shaped sections were replaced with small light green rectangular shaped panes with a stained-glass roundel in each window. One roundel has a Bible and sword symbolizing St. Paul who is the patron saint of preachers, and the other roundel has an eagle which symbolizes St. John the Evangelist, who in Christian art is likened to an eagle because, like an eagle, he looked upon 'the son of glory'.

*THE PARISH CHURCH*



In 1955 the Kirk Session was advised to send the early Secessionist and Free Church minute book to Edinburgh for safe keeping. The Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh is now in the process of sending all records of Strathkinness and St. Andrews, which are in their possession, to the University of St. Andrews Muniments Department.

Mr. Nicoll exchanged pulpits in 1954 with the Rev. Hillis McKenzie from the First Presbyterian Church in Bucyrus, Ohio (a small town in the Middle West of the United States). The exchange was most successful on both sides.

Mr. McKenzie, although a minister of the First Presbyterian Church in the United States, could not become a full and active member of the St. Andrews Presbytery as he was not an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland.

Shortly after coming back from the United States Mr. Nicoll returned to Dundee when he accepted a call from Downfield Church in 1960. The congregation in Strathkinness objected to the Presbytery asking for the appointment to the vacancy of a minister aged 55 or over. After a representative of the Presbytery gave the reasons for this instruction and explained the manpower situation of the church, the congregation still opposed the Presbytery's instructions, and in 1961 they appealed to the Synod of Fife. Their appeal was turned down, and as they wished to pursue their objection, they wrote to the Clerk of the General Assembly for advice and as they were told there was little hope of the Synod decision being reversed, they decided to appoint a vacancy committee, which they had earlier postponed doing. Later that year the Rev. John Hall was elected as minister. Although both the Kirk Session and the congregation had opposed the request of the Presbytery to appoint an older man as minister, Mr. Hall was warmly received and greatly liked by both Session and congregation. During his ministry the taking of offerings at a plate at the door was changed to handing round a bag during the service. It was during Mr. Hall's ministry that the Church Hall was built, and the first proposal for a Boys' Club was made. Ministers, by this time, were no longer obliged to remain in the ministry after a normal retirement age had been reached, and Mr. Hall retired in 1968. The Rev Alestair Bennett, the new minister, was instrumental in many changes that took place. It was he, who with Mr. Wallace Adam, who supplied the paper and had it printed, was the first producer of a church news sheet which eventually, under the Rev. Douglas Galbraith, became 'Kirk & Community'. He was also largely responsible for the setting up of the Youth Club in 1975, which at that time was associated with the church. He brought in the practice of members of the church reading the scripture lessons, and he supported the cause of women as elders. By 1973 the attitude towards the position of women in the church had changed and Mrs. V.J. Smart, Miss L. Haworth, and Mrs. M.R. Smith were elected elders. Mrs. Smart has been Session Clerk since 1985.

In 1975 a committee set up by the General Assembly, called 'The Committee of Forty', reported on the state of the church. The drop in the number of members was causing great concern and with this decline it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep up with inflation. The number of ministers was dropping and the recruitment to the ministry was small. The whole parish system was brought under question as being unrealistic. They suggested larger parishes with mobile ministers within the parish. The report was a frank assessment of what was happening in the church, and since then some of their suggested changes have been made.



Mr. Bennett retired in 1977 and the Rev. Douglas Galbraith was elected the new minister to succeed him. Mr. Galbraith developed the church news sheet into a church and village news sheet which became the focus of village news and information. After having declined an earlier invitation in 1974 to join the St. Andrews Council of Churches, Strathkinness joined in 1978 and is, to date, the only rural church in the Council, which is an informal group of churches of all denominations and which is active in the community both locally and further afield. Amongst other things it runs the Lunch Group for Senior Citizens, it sponsors the In-As-Much programme to give deprived children from Edinburgh or Glasgow a holiday in St. Andrews, and it sponsors a holiday for both Catholic and Protestant children together in St. Andrews every year.

When the ceiling of the church was in such a dangerous state that it was in danger of collapsing in 1980 church services were held in the Church Hall and there was a communion service held in the old United Free Church on May the 4th, the first communion service held there for fifty years, and the first united communion service ever to be held there.

Later that year a new minister, the Rev. James Hamilton from Edinburgh, was appointed to the new linked charge of Dairsie, Kemback and Strathkinness. Dairsie and Kemback had already been linked a short time earlier and Strathkinness being added to it made a parish of a more financially viable size, although the amount of work for a minister, without help, was vastly increased. It was decided that the manse of the new parish should be the one in Dairsie and so the manse in Strathkinness was sold and its name changed to 'Strathkinness House'. In the short time Mr. Hamilton was minister he made an effort to encourage members who had not been attending church to make a 'fresh start', and he stressed that although many people gave generously the average (including members who did not go regularly) was under twenty pence and the income was far short of the expenditure. Mr. Hamilton died very suddenly only a year after coming to the new linked charge.

The Rev. Alexander Strickland from Arran was inducted as minister in October, 1981. The Kirk Session expressed concern about the work-load put upon the minister and asked for elders to try to do more to lighten his load, and permission from the Presbytery was given to allow retired ministers to help in taking services. Retired ministers, visiting ministers and divinity students have taken services in Strathkinness as well as in Dairsie and Kemback.

The three Kirk Sessions decided to hold two joint services every year, and there has been a joint communion service. These joint services enable the members of all three churches to meet together and help to create a feeling of fellowship and unity.

**Mr. Alexander Strickland has contributed the following  
about the Parish Church today**

I am very happy indeed to be given the opportunity to contribute an article to this worthy project. It is now over five years since I became Minister of Strathkinness Church and I enjoy very much being in North East Fife. Strathkinness can be proud of its strong community spirit and I trust this is something which lasts as long as the village itself lasts. Time and time again I have been informed, particularly during a time of sorrow and trouble, that the people of the village go out of their way to be of help to one another.

The church in the village stands in a commanding position (too much so at times, for it gets the full blast of the westerly winds in the winter). One is aware of its existence and I and the office bearers, as well as regular attenders, only wish more would use it and come along to our services on a Sunday morning at 11 am. where a warm welcome awaits.

Strathkinness Church is, of course, linked with Dairsie and Kemback Churches and this has both advantages and drawbacks. By only paying a percentage of the Minister's stipend and other related costs to the Head Offices of the Church, it means that we don't have to receive financial help from Church Headquarters. Although, having said that, we are not yet in a position to pay the agreed proportion at the time of linking. We should be paying 48% of shared costs but up until now have only been able to pay 40%, the other two churches making up the shortfall. However, let me move on lest I am accused of asking for more money, which is certainly not the intention of this article.

Another benefit of a linkage is that an opportunity thus arises of meeting with members of other churches, allowing friendships to be forged, and such contact also acts as an encouragement to us for we come to realise in a very real sense that we are part of something much larger than a local unit. It helps in living out the faith and witnessing to it when we know that there are others doing the same. One of the enjoyable features about the linkage is the opportunity we have of holding joint services twice yearly, allowing us to meet our partners in the other churches and getting to know them over a 'cuppa' in the hall after the service.

Of course there are difficulties in the linkage and these must be recognised. I cannot possibly be in three places at once and I am conscious of the fact that visiting is not done as regularly as it should be. But if anyone wishes to see me for a particular purpose, then I would do that straight away if informed. The fact that there is no manse in Strathkinness is a cause of regret for many and I can fully understand such feelings, but I can get to Strathkinness much



quicker than many a Minister who lives in a city can get to his parish. When I stand in the garden at the Manse, I can actually look and see all three parishes and not many Ministers in a linkage can do that!

Having three Kirk Sessions, Congregational Boards, Sunday Schools and Women's Guilds also takes up time and one has to be careful to make sure that two entries do not appear in the Diary for the same night.

I am of the opinion that the overall advantages outweigh the difficulties and I am encouraged by the way in which the present membership is determined to make the linking work.

For Strathkinness Church to continue to flourish, it needs your support. I warmly welcome you to our services on a Sunday morning.

## SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN STRATHKINNESS

For a long time the church disapproved of the idea of Sunday, or Sabbath Schools, saying it was the duty of parents to teach their children themselves. In 1798 the St. Andrews Kirk Session had refused to sanction the setting up of a Sabbath School in Strathkinness. However, as ordinary schools put a great emphasis on the Bible, children would have learned a good deal about it, although not always in a way that we would today think appropriate, with fear and damnation more prominent in their teaching than love and compassion.

By 1827 the attitude of the St. Andrews Kirk Session had obviously changed as in that year a door collection for the Sabbath School was taken and there were many more in later years.

Free Church Schools and Free Church Sabbath Schools were set up soon after the establishment of the Free Church, and they spread quickly throughout the country. In 1861, about ten years after the first Free Church Sabbath School had started in Strathkinness, the Presbytery minutes record 'a great increase of scholars' at Strathkinness. In 1873 the Free Church Session complained about the 'irregular attendance' at the Sabbath School and took a diametrically opposed view from that of the Established Church earlier, saying 'it is the parents' duty to encourage the attendance at Sabbath Schools'.

By 1876 there were in the Presbytery twenty-five Free Church Sabbath Schools with 1406 scholars and 150 teachers. (The Free Church Presbytery covered a large area extending from Newport and Tayport to Anstruther and Elie).

One of the causes of complaint made against Mr. Henry in 1906 was that 'there is only one Sunday School class of nine people and that is taught by him and there is no Bible Class'.

With the decline of the Free Church generally there was a reduction in the number of Free Church Sunday Schools and in the number of children attending them, although even after 1917 when the Strathkinness United Free Church joined with that in Ceres and services were held alternately in each place, there was still a Sunday School in Strathkinness with several teachers and a fair number of children attending it.

It is also of interest to note that when the Youngers came to Mount Melville in 1901 Mrs. Younger, who was an Episcopalian, had children of some of the estate workers taken into St. Andrews to attend the Episcopalian Sunday School there, and later established an Episcopalian Sunday School in the Youth House which she founded in Strathkinness in 1909.

Mrs. Veronica Smart, who was for many years the Sunday School Superintendent of the parish Church, has written her recollections of the Sunday School:

'My first acquaintance with the Sunday School goes back to the early 1960s when it had just moved into the recently built Church Hall. Before that, in Mr. John Hall's time, it met in the Manse, but earlier than that it met in the Church itself before morning Service. There have been many shifts and changes to try to solve the problem of the different age groups in the one hall — now partly solved, unhappily, by a decrease in numbers.

'The "new houses" — Drumcarrow and Mount Melville — had brought a large number of young families to Strathkinness. At that time there was a creche in the Manse dining-room, supervised by a rota of young mums. The 3—8 year olds met in the Hall from 11 a.m. — 12 and the 8—12 year olds led by the late Mr. William Cockburn met from 10 — 11 a.m. There were at least six classes of "little ones", in little half-moon clusters of chairs down the sides of the hall, taken individually by teenage girls of the congregation; about 35 children, and perhaps a dozen or twenty more in the 8—12 class, meeting separately. Lillian Cooney who lived at 2 Mount Melville Crescent used to collect up a whole crocodile of younger children and bring them together.

'At that time we taught from "The Scottish Sunday School Quarterly" which came in a small magazine format with the stories to be told, and the children got a take-home magazine "Morning Rays" once a month. "Expression" was usually drawing or making friezes and I inherited a "Flannelgraph" from my predecessor, Mrs. Davidson, whereby a story could be illustrated by sticking up Bible figures on a cloth covered board to which they clung by means of lint glued to their back.

'I cannot quite remember the point at which we began to take the children as a Sunday School into church for the early part of the service, but I think it was at the Rev. George Hall's request (when he was taking pulpit supply in the Bennett/Galbraith interregnum, 1976-1977) that we began to occupy the front pews. I remember commenting when I was editing the Newsletter (1976-77) on the Assembly's enthusiasm for integrating children in congregational worship with a note on what we were doing. I think that earlier more parents came to church and that the children sat with them, any odd ones sitting with Sunday School teachers, but that back in the 1960s the whole Sunday School time was spent in the Church Hall.

'The "Sunday School Quarterly" gave up publication about the early 1970s and there was a great ferment about the New Programme — the Baird Fellowship had been founded in the Church of Scotland for the study of



Sunday School teaching and the production of a new syllabus, and advisers convened training sessions. We were encouraged to be more adventurous in expression, to teach by doing rather than saying — with drama, models, handcrafts, etc. It was not a great success though the new approach to activities was a good one. There was much criticism that there was too little biblical content in the syllabus, that the stories and activities were too secular and that Sunday School was no different from a lay playgroup. Our own difficulty was practical for the structure was not easily applicable to an all-age group such as ours. This syllabus was replaced by "Children of the Way", a series of booklets — three a year — for different age-groups, and now by the Church of Scotland/Collins series brought in last year, again in response to a General Assembly initiative to try to encourage children and young people in the Church, and make faith real in their experience. Sunday School syllabuses are not well meaning ladies deciding to tell the dear children about Moses in the bull-rushes this week: there is a responsible national programme which we all try, however inadequately, to follow. The programme is accompanied by a series of worksheets to try and make the children think of listening (or not listening?!)

'During the Rev. Douglas Galbraith's ministry we addressed two problems: the Sunday School teacher's, who was never able to attend a whole service, and the suitability of entrusting too much of the teaching to very young girls. The outcome was our present rota system which involves a good number of Sunday School mothers two or three Sundays each term. We also began a practice of making Communion Sunday a special day for the children, with a film or games, crisps and orange squash, so that they would not think of it as the day they were not wanted in Church. (I once took a group of the older ones up into the gallery to observe at a Communion. They were astonishingly good, although I was on tenterhooks!)

'Thanks to the generosity of the Nursing Association, the Sunday School enjoys several treats. Up until a few years ago we always had an outing with a double-decker bus and streamers; the cost of bus hire and cross-fertilisation of ideas within the linked charge has more recently given rise to our barbecue at Kemback, but the traditional races are still popular. In spite of annual agonising over the competitive associations of "prizegiving", we still give books at the last service before the long holiday in the summer; the children sing or perform, sometimes giving flowers or handwork, and it is a generally festive occasion. At Christmas we have a party, usually with an entertainment.

'Another feature has become a Sunday School institution: the performance of a nativity play by the children on the Sunday before Christmas, followed by serving mince pies with coffee to the congregation in the Church Hall, and sometimes (if time has allowed with all the preparations) also giving Christmas



cards made by the Sunday School. Along with family services at festivals such as Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving, such events have an all important part to play in integrating the children in the Christian community through the life of their own congregation.

'The great lack, which we feel very seriously, is the want of continuing Christian education (other than that in day school which at secondary level is patchy at the best). Some of the older children become helpers and as such they are very useful; their own knowledge increases in studying what they are to do with the children, but this practice is only a partial solution. Several attempts have been made, the most successful and long-lived perhaps being Mrs. Kay Ross's Sunday evening group. Classes for intending communicants are, of course, conducted by the minister, but all too few come forward for them, and the prevailing ignorance about the Christian faith amongst young adults cannot give room for complacency in spite of a vigorous and happy Sunday School.

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Mr. John Duncan's recollections of the Sunday School in the 1890s are of interest especially as a contrast to Mrs. Smart's more recent account. Mr. Duncan writes:

'The Sunday School was always held just after the morning service and many of the children came from a long distance. Of course they were used to that as they came to the day school during the week.

'Quite a number attended the church service with their parents, before the Sunday School.

'The minister was always in charge and when I was at Sunday School there were about eight or nine classes, the minister taking the only mixed class of senior boys and girls. Apart from him there was usually one other male teacher.

'Here again we always had home work as there was a catechism to learn, also a verse or two from a hymn and one or two verses from the Bible. These had to be repeated in class and when all the classes were collected at the end the minister again called on any scholar to stand up and repeat the verses. He then gave a short talk.

'We had summer holidays at the same time as the day school so that for seven weeks the Sunday School was entirely closed and we had two special events in the year — one at the close of the school and one at the New Year.

'The Sunday School closed each year with a trip on the Saturday and a flower service on the Sunday. The trip was the special event in the village for

the children — free for all scholars, but 6 pence for parents and outsiders. Donations had previously been asked for from the pulpit and there was always a liberal response. The minister also asked the farmers for a horse and cart each and usually we had six or seven all dressed up for the occasion. Some of the ploughmen made a special effort of this dressing and the minister gave a prize for the best-dressed horse and cart.

'We had flags for the occasion and there was a great amount of excitement. If the morning was dull we had a walk up to David Mitchell's at the back of the Pleasance Row as he had a barometer in his passage which we thought had some control over the weather.

'We all gathered at the church with our mugs and got into the carts along with urns, eatables and prizes, and set off cheering through the village with everyone out to see us off to some place about five or six miles away.... On arrival we had a cup of milk and a bun, the milk very often being provided by the farm near at hand. Then we had games and races with prizes followed by the tea, each class sitting in rows on the grass and there was plenty to eat. This was a great day and we usually arrived home tired but happy, all the village being out again to welcome us home..

'Following the trip each year was the flower service on the Sunday afternoon, when every scholar took a large bunch of flowers.

'These were arranged on the table inside the choir seats and made a grand show. The prize books were arranged along the top of the organ and there was a short service with a special address from the minister. Then we each marched out for our prizes and finally the minister announced that the Sunday School would commence again in seven weeks' time. The flowers were sent to St. Andrews and Dundee hospitals.

'On the first Sunday of the New Year we again had another service and we always had a special New Year Hymn. This was especially printed on a New Year Card, and we each got one to keep. There was another address by the minister. These two services were the only break in the Sunday School routine.'

Another account of the Sabbath School Excursion and Flower Service in the October, 1893 edition of the Strathkinness Parish Magazine which was a supplement to **Life and Work** is also worth recording as it is a description of a particular occasion:

## Sabbath School Excursion

This Annual Treat to the children attending the Sabbath School came off on Saturday 28th July under the most favourable weather. The children met in the church at 10 a.m., and in a very short time were embarked in the seven carts with gaily decked horses, kindly lent by 7 farmers of the congregation, under the leadership of Mr. Wallace, schoolmaster, Denhead, and Mr. William Reekie, who took charge of the excursion in the absence of the minister, the joyful company of children with their teachers, with floating banners and merry voices, passed through the village before the happy gaze of parents and friends. The destination fixed upon was St. Fort, Forgan. In front of St. Fort House a park had been granted for games and all sorts of amusements which were entered into heartily by the teachers and children. A special feature of this year's excursion was the singing and reciting competition. For singing Alexia Herd carried off the first prize, and Alexander Angus, Guardbridge, the second, while Jessie Brown, Knockhill, gained the prize for reciting. Ample provisions were supplied to the children at intervals, and they returned home through Leuchars, Guardbridge and Kincaple to Strathkinness in the most jubilant spirits.

The thanks of the congregation are due to the teachers who carried all the arrangements through with so great success and to Mr. Wallace for his able and kind leadership. The congregation are also entitled to very best thanks of the children and teachers for their kind contribution. This year more than ample to meet the outlays was subscribed and the surplus will be placed in the Savings Bank for the emergencies of the future.

## Flower Service

The Children's Annual Service was held in the Church immediately after the close of the forenoon service on Sabbath 22nd July. This service took the new form of a Flower Service. Each child was expected to bring a neat little bouquet. There were no fewer than 107 bouquets which were arranged by the teachers on a table in front of the pulpit. The sight was lovely — the aroma delightful. There was a large congregation of children with their parents and friends. The Rev. J. Rolland McNab, Minister of the Congregation, preached an appropriate sermon on "Flowers", and pointed out how much the flowers would be appreciated by those who were confined, some of them for months and even years, in the infirmaries. On the Monday morning two baskets of flowers were sent to St. Andrews Cottage Hospital, and five to Dundee Infirmary; from which institutions many thanks were sent for the admirable gifts.



## SCHOOLING IN STRATHKINNESS

Although there is not a great deal of information about the first schools in Scotland, it is known that there were some schools, in addition to the monasteries, and that there was a school in St. Andrews before 1216. There is some slight evidence that in a few places poor scholars were paid for.

The first important Act concerning education was in 1494 when James IV decreed that 'the sons and heirs of all barons and freeholds' were to be sent to school. This was an attempt to have those people responsible for the administration of the country better educated. It is also known from an Act of Parliament in 1543 that the Bible could be read, not solely in Latin but in either 'Inglis or Scottis' before the Reformation. The great impetus to education came after the Reformation in 1560 when schools became an important factor in establishing the Reformed Faith.

One of the aims of the early religious reformers in Scotland was that every person should receive at least a minimal education. If possible every parish was to have a school not more than three miles distant from any child in the parish, and all children should be compelled to attend.

This early commitment to education became the basis of an educational system which, although imperfectly carried out, did give more opportunities to more people than were available in other countries. How many people took advantage of this opportunity, and indeed how many were in a position to do so, is sometimes exaggerated, but there is no doubt that the framework was there.

The early reformers were interested in education mainly as a means of imparting the gospel. Their concern was that all people should be able to read the Bible in order to help them live more Godly lives.

That this idea was deeply ingrained can be seen as late as 1799 when a group of parents in Kincapple petitioned for a school to be established in their area, which had been without one for some time (the children being sent to Strathkinness School). They desired a school 'for training up our children to read and write and in other branches of useful education that they may be prepared for acquainting themselves with the Principles of our Religion in the fear of God'.

Before 1600 only three parishes in the area, Forgan, Leuchars and Ceres had schoolmasters. In 1646 the St. Andrews Kirk Session decreed that there should be schools set up in the landward area of St. Andrews; at Boarhills, Kincapple, and Strathkinness. It is not recorded when this was done, although it is likely that there was a school in Kincapple in 1647. Much later, in 1868,



the Kirk Session of St. Andrews said that it 'appears' that Strathkinness School was one of several schools established at that time, but there is no evidence that this was so.

The first mention of a school in Strathkinness was in 1650, and in 1651 the schoolmaster was named as David Hay, who was there for at least one year. In 1654 William Tough was appointed schoolmaster and in 1658 David Arbuthnott was referred to as a teacher in Strathkinness. It was not uncommon for there to be a long gap between the departure of one teacher and the appointment of another. Many were filling in time waiting for a place as a minister. At the time of vacancies in Strathkinness the children probably went to Kincaple where there was a more or less continuous record of schools between 1647 and 1710.

There is no direct evidence of what these early schools in Strathkinness were like, but from records of schools in other parishes in Fife of that time, it can be deduced that the buildings were very poor affairs. Schoolmasters of an even later period lived in a but and ben, and had a pretty meagre existence. The school would have been no more than one or possibly two rooms with children ranging in age from five to fifteen. There were times during the winter when the roads, often no more than tracks, were impassable. Even as late as the 1920s there were many, many days when children could not get to school. In addition, the long dark days and inadequate lighting in school meant that school was often cut short in the winter months.

In the above-mentioned petition from Kincaple one of the reasons given for wanting their own school was 'although there were forty children fit for school (i.e. of school age), very few of them are fit to go to Strathkinness in winter thro' the storm and only about one half in the summer season when we are obliged by our circumstances to employ them in herding'. The Kirk Session told the parents, while sympathising with their wishes, that they could not afford to give them a school as they did not have enough money 'to support the numerous poor'. They added that when there had been more than one school in the area the schoolmasters did not earn enough in fees for their subsistence and they were obliged to supplement their incomes with other work which the Session thought was detrimental to the pupils. However, if the residents of Kincaple could 'out of their own means' find a teacher who would be acceptable to the Kirk Session they would employ him for one year. Within a week they had found Mr. John Angus, who proved acceptable.

In 1659 Helen Hay and James Yule applied to teach in Strathkinness, and although the decision on these applications is not recorded, in 1664 'Helen Hay schoolmistress who lived in the parish is given a testimonial'. In the same year Isobel Hay who had taught in Kincaple School for about

five years petitioned to be appointed to the school in Strathkinness. It is not likely that she was successful, as the following year she was described as 'a schoolmistress in Kincaple old and infirm' and is given assistance to flit to Strathearn.

There is no mention of parish schools at that time having holidays, but at harvest time parents simply kept their children at home to work in the fields. The school day in the summer was a very long one. It could start as early as 6 a.m. and could last eight or nine hours, with some breaks during the day. In the Kirkcaldy area the children had shorter days on Tuesdays and Thursdays when they left school at 4 p.m. and on Saturdays the school day finished at 12 noon.

Although schooling was supposedly compulsory attendance was extremely poor, and most children attended school for only three or four years, or even less. Some parents, not poor enough to have their children accepted as poor scholars, had to be forced to send them to school, and they removed them at the earliest opportunity. As the main purpose in the 1600s was to study the Bible so as to know the word of God, a large number of children would leave school as soon as they could read. Writing was also taught, although a child could leave school able to read but not to write. The number of those who could write their names had undoubtedly increased, but there was not a dramatic increase in writing abilities. Arithmetic was not considered necessary until the 1700s when it began to appear in the parish schools.

The maintenance of the schools and the salaries of the schoolmasters and mistresses were the responsibility of the Kirk Session and the heritors (land-owners of the parish), supplemented by the fees paid by parents. Payment of fees was a real burden for some parents. For those deemed poor scholars the fees could be paid by the Kirk Session and in later years by the Parochial Board, though there is no instance of a payment for a poor scholar for more than five years and in most cases it would have been considerably less.

In 1675 the Strathkinness School was reported to be in need of repair as 'it had fallen donne', and although it was repaired it is probable that from then until 1710, when there is another reference to a schoolmaster in Strathkinness, the children from Strathkinness went to school in Kincaple. In 1712 Thomas Lyall became schoolmaster, and it appears that he stayed until 1755. In that same year it is recorded 'considering how many in the neighbourhood have their children accommodated at that school and considering also that there is neither schoolhouse nor dwelling house which belongs to the schoolmaster in Strathkinness, it is agreed to grant the schoolmaster an additional £1.12 Scots' (one pound Scots was one twelfth the value of one pound sterling). In 1757



the schoolmaster was David Peattie who remained in Strathkinness as schoolmaster until 1778.

By this time many changes had taken place in subjects taught and ways of teaching them. Reading, writing and arithmetic were still important, as was studying the Bible and learning the Catechism. In addition, geography, 'singing of common tunes', English grammar, spelling and sometimes Latin were being taught. As fees were paid for each subject, it is unlikely that poor scholars were taught much more than the three Rs, unless sponsored by someone who had spotted the child's ability. The Kirk Session might foster talent by appealing to 'persons of quality' to help with a gifted child's education. Not all heritors were anxious to help, however, and there were times when they hindered payment of schoolmasters' salaries, and appeals had to be made to exact payment from them. This never happened in Strathkinness, but there are reports of appeals on behalf of schools in Leuchars, Dunino, St. Monans and Kemback.

It is not known where any of these first schools in Strathkinness were situated. The first mention of a site for a school is in 1777 when four acres of ground, part of one of the Strathkinness commonties, was set apart by the St. Andrews Kirk Session as the School Glebe. A plan was adopted for a schoolhouse two stories high with a 'roof of thatch sewed on'. The estimated cost was thirty-nine pounds nine shillings and seven pence 'not including carriage of materials which was to be performed by the Gentlemen and Tenants in the Neighbourhood'. The Kirk Session decided to start the work immediately, even before the money had been fully subscribed. 'Tenants and other householders' asked the Session to appoint as schoolmaster Robert Richard, a young man they knew and thought 'to be well qualified for being there'. After an examination in reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic he was appointed and was allowed to charge fees of 'one shilling per quarter per child for English, and an additional sixpence for writing and arithmetic', and 'he shall not be entitled to demand more'. His salary, in addition to whatever he could earn in fees, was £3 per annum. He was given strict instructions as to how he was to enclose the school land and was ordered to plant, at his own expense, given numbers of various specified trees totalling not less than one hundred. He asked if 'in case it should be found after some years that Trees cannot be made to grow in that cold muir he would be relieved of the obligation'. The children from Denhead and Kincapple were to go to the new school in Strathkinness. Mr. Peattie, the former schoolmaster, was to receive half a guinea yearly for his twenty-one years as schoolmaster in Strathkinness. In 1781 Mr. Robert Richard went to be schoolmaster in Cameron; the salary was higher there, and he did not have to plant trees and look after them, as well as teach.

Parents complained that Mr. George Mair, who succeeded Mr. Richard, was not a 'proper public Teacher', and also they said he would no longer let them use the schoolhouse for a Sabbath school 'to read and learn religious questions by heart'. When Mr. Mair complained of breakages at the school they replied that the only damage they had done to the school was to break the foot of a stool, which they had had mended at their own expense, and they added that they had also 'put a sneck on the door which had never had one' and 'all Mr. Mair has to do is open and lock the door which is not three feet from his door'. However, the Kirk Session was opposed in principle to Sabbath Schools, saying it was the parents' business to teach their children in their own homes, and Sabbath Schools could even do harm. They added that they 'would always be ready to help those children within their bounds, who being destitute and neglected, appear to be likely to perish for want of knowledge'. The same day that the Kirk Session dismissed the Strathkinness petition they received another one signed by forty-two residents of St. Andrews asking for support in setting up a Sabbath School saying that it would help prevent 'the profanation of the Sabbath, swearing falsehoods and contempt of their superiors, so prevalent among the young'. The reply of the Session was much the same as that given to the Strathkinness parents.

Although the parents had complained about Mr. Mair, when he died in 1806 he had been schoolmaster in Strathkinness for twenty-five years. Mr. Peter Kerr, the next schoolmaster, resigned after five years. When Mr. John Kilgour was appointed in 1811 he was nineteen years old. While he was schoolmaster some of the school lands were first let out, at his request, in order to increase his earnings; as schoolmaster he had a right to the rent from the school lands. Also during Mr. Kilgour's term as schoolmaster it was reported that the school, which had been built about thirty-five years before, was in dire need of repair. Mr. John Whyte Melville informed the St. Andrews Kirk Session that he 'expected Contributions from some of the rest of the Heritors whose lands are situated in the West Division of the Parish'. After eight years as schoolmaster Mr. Kilgour left Strathkinness to become minister of Cameron Church.

Mr. Alexander McDonald, appointed in January of 1819, was a student at the University of St. Andrews at the time of his appointment, although he had been an assistant teacher previously in Perth. One of the terms of his appointment was 'to teach six poor scholars, without fee, if they shall so require him'. He resigned in September of the same year. Mr. John Nicolson who followed him was also a student, and had previously been an interim schoolmaster at Logie for four years. Mr. Nicolson stayed thirteen years in Strathkinness, and by the time he left to go to St. Monans as schoolmaster much of the school lands had been let according to plans he had drawn up.



Mr. David Peattie, the second schoolmaster of that name in Strathkinness, was appointed in 1832. Shortly after his arrival there was a petition from local inhabitants asking for a reduction in school fees because of 'the low state of the wages'. The Kirk Session agreed to reduce the fees for twelve months. Reading was to cost two shillings, reading and writing two shillings and sixpence, and arithmetic three shillings.

With the establishment of a preaching station in Strathkinness by the St. Andrews Kirk Session a new school was built, probably in 1836. This building used as both school and preaching station, was the cause of a disagreement in 1864, when the responsibility for its repair was not acknowledged either by the Kirk Session of St. Andrews, which had previously been responsible for school buildings within its parish, or by the newly created *quoad sacra* Church of Strathkinness. Money used to repair the school had been used to build a new church, and the St. Andrews Kirk Session said they could not afford to repair the school. A joint committee approached the Bell Trust (an educational trust set up in the 1830s) and a grant of £50, sufficient to repair the school, was given. One of the conditions of the grant was that the name 'Madras' should be added to the name of Strathkinness School. It is not known, but it is doubtful, whether this was ever carried out.

During the 1800s many changes in schooling took place. There were more aids to teaching, such as maps and blackboards as well as more books available. Sanitary arrangements, although primitive, were becoming compulsory, and it is reported that in Cameron in 1861 the 'school should be swept and dusted on Wednesdays and Saturdays after school hours, and washed at least twice a year'. It is not known exactly what subjects were taught in Strathkinness School until the 1870s when teachers were obliged to keep log books.

A parallel development in schooling in Strathkinness took place after the founding of the Free Church School. Soon after the Disruption in 1843, when the Free Church broke away from the Established Church, many churches and schools were set up throughout the country. In 1846, three years after the establishment of the Free Church in Strathkinness, the Reverend Adam Thorburn, the first free Church Minister there, told the St. Andrews Free Church Presbytery that the Free Church School was nearly completed. They were 'awaiting a certificate of attestation of £100 from the Free Church Education Committee'. This Free Church School (later the Mitchell Hall and now restored as a private house called 'The Old Hall'), was built near to the first Free Church, which was originally built in 1801. It was later used by Thom the Joiner as a workshop and then as a garage by Danskins Transport and since demolished.

Mr. Thorburn was appointed a member of the Education Committee of the

Free Church General Assembly which drew up a petition accepted by the Assembly and sent to both Houses of Parliament asking for recognition of the new situation existing in Scotland as a result of the great number of Free Churches and Free Church Schools now established. The petition declared 'the means of instruction for the present enjoyed in Scotland are altogether inadequate to the educational wants of the population'. It called for 'salaries of the teachers to be greatly increased, but first there should be a reform and a change of the whole system'. In 1864 a new scheme of education based on this petition was accepted by the General Assembly of the Free Church.

In 1858 Mr. John Findlay replaced Mr. Stewart as schoolmaster of the Free Church School. In 1860 it was reported that the schoolmaster's house (next to the school and now known as Hall House) was completed and that the school had been repaired and enlarged. By the next year there were 126 pupils on the Free Church School roll, and by 1867 the number had risen to 226. This large increase in the number of pupils attending the Free Church School was caused in part by what Mr. Haig of Kincapple, a heritor of the district, called the present state of Strathkinness School. The Reverend David Stewart, minister of the recently established Parish Church, writing in 1864, said that the last census (1861) of the Parish of Strathkinness showed a population of 1296 and the number of people who sent their children to Strathkinness School (which included people in the surrounding area except Denhead, which had its own school) 'must number at least 1100... and until some 14 or 15 years ago [Strathkinness School] was the only school in this Place. But from the growing infirmities of the Teacher, and the fact of a rival School having been erected, the attendance at Your school has greatly declined. The present number of pupils is about 60 while in the other school, I am informed about 170'. Mr. Peattie who had 'laboured assiduously and faithfully ... for upwards of 30 years' would be willing to retire if he could obtain a 'suitable allowance or annuity for his future maintenance'. The heritors agreed to pay Mr. Peattie an annual sum of £25 (for which he often had to ask) if he would retire, and a committee was set up to find a successor. The Free Church, and Mr. Findlay, were asked whether they would agree to the two schools joining, with Mr. Findlay becoming headmaster. Mr. Irvine, the Free Church minister, who had succeeded Mr. Thorburn after his untimely death, wrote to the St. Andrews Kirk Session saying 'Mr. Findlay was willing to submit himself to the requirements of the Established Church' in order to become schoolmaster of the combined school, and he thought it probable that the Deacons Court of the Strathkinness Free Church 'would hand over the Free Church School and Schoolhouse to the Kirk Session and Heritors for a female Teacher'. However, when the proposal to 'turn the Free Church School into a Female school ... met with such violent opposition ... by various parties in this locality [they] fear it cannot at present be harmoniously carried

out although it would be of great advantage to the Community’.

*OLD FREE CHURCH SCHOOL  
& SCHOOLMASTER'S HOUSE*



Accordingly, the two schools remained separate and Mr. David Walker was appointed schoolmaster of Strathkinness School in 1865, with Mr. Findlay remaining schoolmaster of the Free Church School. Mr. Walker's salary was to consist of the school fees and of rents derived from letting the school lands, which had amounted to between £24 and £26 during Mr. Peattie's time. Mr. Walker was warned that if 'legislative enactment should cause the two schools to be amalgamated' his services and salary would not be continued for more than one year.

There is no more information about the schools in Strathkinness until after the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 which made fundamental changes in Scottish education. The schools were no longer under the jurisdiction of the churches (with a few exceptions), and a locally elected School Board was given control of the schools. The Scotch (sic) Education Department supervised the School Board, with inspectors appointed to visit all schools. These inspectors reported to the School Board the requirements of the school, and through them the Education Department had the ultimate power to reduce or withhold grants.



Strathkinness came under the Landward Area of the St. Andrews School Board which included the two schools in Strathkinness and Boarhills School. The former Parish School became the North Public School and the former Free Church School became the South Public School. Four of the five members of the first School Board were heritors, with John Whyte Melville chairman. The fifth member was the Principal of the United College, St. Andrews. The Board appointed a School Officer, Mr. Andrew Thom, Joiner, Strathkinness, to 'report parents failing in their duty of providing for the children between the ages of five and thirteen years elementary education in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic'. A census required by the Education Department of all children of school age and the amount of schooling they had already had, showed that there were 195 children of school age and of these 20 had not been to school.

There is no evidence that in Strathkinness the laird's son sat alongside the ploughman's son. If any of the heritors sent their children to Strathkinness School it is not recorded. Some of them sent their children to Madras in St. Andrews and John Whyte Melville's son went to Eton. In the opinion of both Mr. Mauchline and Mr. Findlay the School Board did not understand either the children or the school they were responsible for.

However, the School Board did not have an easy task; the Education Department was constantly pushing for needed improvements which cost more money than the Board could easily find. If these improvements were not made and if teaching standards should fall, they could lose a percentage of their grant. This happened several times in Boarhills, and it was threatened more than once in Strathkinness when the School Board seemed to be ignoring or unnecessarily delaying action recommended or even insisted upon by the Department. The School Board depended on these grants from the Education Department, and on the ratepayers, to fund the schools. There was a deficit every year and the Poor Rate was increased regularly to meet expenses. The ratepayers often objected, as in 1884 when 'complaints were made by some householders in Strathkinness of the heaviness of the School Rate levied upon that village'. When there were large expenses such as extensions or major alterations demanded by the Education Department, the School Board was forced to borrow, with the cost to the ratepayers being spread over several years.

When requested to have all the school property assessed, the Board found that the former Free Church schoolmaster's house was in better condition than the Parish schoolmaster's house, which was in a poor state, and the former Parish School was in better condition than the former Free Church School, which was in a poor state. As both schools and both schoolmasters'

houses were to be used, they had to be repaired to meet the new standards of the Education Department. 'There was also', it was reported, 'an immense cesspool behind the (North) School which cannot be healthy ... Mr. Thom was to make arrangements for the regular and frequent removal of the filth and excrement collected behind Mr. Walker's School'.

The Board decided that the fees for each school should be: 'Per month, ten pence for the infant class, one shilling for Standard I, one shilling and twopence for Standards II and III, and one shilling and fourpence for Standards IV, V and VI'. A fourth child of a family was exempted from fees. The parents were responsible for the cost of the children's school books, although the Parochial Board could pay for books as well as fees for poor children. However, this was not always done. As late as 1908, a man was summoned to appear before the School Board for failure to provide books for his children. Mr. Mauchline had previously written to the Board to the effect that the family were in a state of abject poverty and that he did not see how it would be possible for the parents to do anything further for their children 'in the meantime'. The father was told that a promise from him to procure books as soon as possible for his children would mean that no proceedings would be taken against him. Although parents paid for books, the School Board now paid the cost of pens, ink, and fuel for heating the school, all of which had previously been paid by parents.

Unfortunately, Mr. Walker's log book is missing; but Mr. Findlay's log book shows, as no statistics can, the difficulties of a teacher in a rural area like Strathkinness. Fortunately, he did not adhere to the instructions given at the beginning of a log book that 'no entry or opinions of a general character are to be entered', and in consequence a picture of the village as seen through his eyes emerges. It is a bleak picture. His principal difficulty was indifference or positive opposition by many parents. A great number of them, compelled to send their children to school, did not care about their education. If a child was needed at home to help in the support of the family, if a child even though under school-leaving age found a job, or if a child was just going to work in the fields anyway what, they thought, was the point in an education which they felt was not needed and not wanted, and for which they had to pay?

The entries in the first year of the log book, which starts in 1873, are typical of the entries throughout Mr. Findlay's time as schoolmaster. Children came to school after the re-opening following the summer holiday in small numbers over a period of days and even weeks. This gradual filling of the roll was almost immediately followed by a mass exodus of both boys and girls for the potato lifting season which lasted for three, four or perhaps more weeks, depending on the weather. The children's parents counted on the

income from the children at this time, and it could not be stopped. The potato lifting was soon followed by the annual agricultural removal time when up to twenty pupils could leave for another area. Some of those leaving did not even come to school at all after the school re-opened after the summer recess. Mr. Findlay almost invariably found that those children who came into the area at this time were behind the other pupils and work was slowed down to accommodate them. Bad weather and bad road conditions also made attendance difficult for those children who did want to attend school. And every year there was a series of epidemics which further lowered the attendance.

There was nothing Mr. Findlay could do about the weather and the roads or illness, but he was constantly pressing the School Officer to do something about unnecessary absences, although without much success. Whether Mr. Thom more or less gave up because of the sheer size of the problem, or because the School Board did not back him up sufficiently, or a combination of both, it is impossible to tell. Mr. Findlay wrote in his log book, 'The School Officer owned that he had never reported them', and 'Officer owned he had not reported any absentees for more than three months while during that time the absentees have been from 80-90 per week'. On another occasion he recorded: 'The School Board Officer called and informed me that at their meeting on Monday night they had resolved not to interfere in the meantime with the absentees and irregular attenders'.

Mr. Walker, schoolmaster of the North School, also had his problems with attendance and in getting Mr. Thom to do anything about them. He devised a scheme whereby there was a 25% return of fees paid during the year 'made in the cases of pupils who have been perfectly regular in attendance throughout the year and whose fees had been punctually paid'. At the end of the year (1875) he applied to the School Board for the return of the 25% he had promised. The School Board told Mr. Walker that he was to refer absentees to the School Officer.

For a while, in 1876, the School Board was too occupied with the situation in Boarhills to pay any attention to what was happening in Strathkinness. Mr. Thom wrote to the Board: 'The teachers in Boarhills complain of children leaving school at 11 o'clock to go the messages, thus losing the main lesson of the day. They would like to know if anything can be done about it as it is a daily occurrence'. Some parents were having their children take turns at going to school, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. They said the mother was forced to go out to work and the children were needed to look after younger children and 'to mind the house'. The news soon got around and others started to do the same thing. The School Board decided that it was better for the children to get some education than none, and left it at that.



In 1878 the Education Department called the attention of the School Board to the 'inadequate attendance of the children' and impressed upon them the necessity of 'securing better results than have hitherto been obtained'.

When the School Officer did go to see parents he did not have much success. The reasons for non-attendance were many and varied, with some more plausible than others. 'The shoemaker did not make the shoes in time', said one parent, and the parents of one boy, eleven years old, took him from school as he was not well, saying that he was 'far enough advanced in education'. A widow 'says she cannot afford clothing so her son must stay home to look after the children so she can go to work'. The Inspector of the Poor was asked to look into this case. One child was said to be at the Fishers School in St. Andrews when he was actually working on the farm. Another, aged twelve, supposedly off ill was also working, herding cows. In 1881 Mr. Thom wrote to the School Board, 'I mentioned in my last report the case of Mrs. Barclay who had left the Parish. I am sorry to say that she is back again and living at Claremont, and still keeping her boy from school'.

It is no wonder that Mr. Thom wrote, 'I am at a loss to know what to do with them'. Mr. Findlay, Mr. Walker and Mr. Thom all felt that the School Board did not give them enough support in trying to curb absenteeism. Mr. Findlay wrote, 'Habitual absentees are allowed and others follow their example' and also, 'Pupils hearing that the School Board did not intend to do anything stayed away'. When the Board did take action attendance improved. Mr. Findlay reported on 20 March 1893: 'Attendance for the week very good consequent upon the action taken by the School Board'. But the Board did not continue to keep a check on the absentees and the attendance soon fell again. At times parents accused of persistent offences were summoned to appear before the Board. If the father appeared he almost invariably blamed his wife. A typical response to the charge of not sending his children to school was 'his wife had concealed from him... [the] irregularity of his children's attendance'. A promise to send his children in future and an admonishment would cause the order to be withdrawn. Rarely did attendance improve for more than a short time, and the old pattern would be repeated. The School Board was not anxious to prosecute and Mr. Findlay wrote in his log book, "Apparently the compulsory clause is to be allowed to remain in abeyance."

Attendance continued to be a problem for a long time. Mr. Findlay tried to diminish it by punishment, and in later years he tried exhortation. In September, 1895, he wrote in his log book: 'When a few truants turned up took the occasion to warn the school of the evils sure to result to character from truant playing'. He did not succeed with either method. Apart from

Mr. Walker's brief experiment of enticement, when attendance did seem to improve for a short while, it was not until after 1901, when Mrs. Younger began to offer prizes for regular attendance, that the situation improved significantly.

The school had been affected by many epidemics of diseases such as whooping-cough, chicken-pox, measles, and scarlet fever. Then in January, 1883, Mr. Findlay recorded in his log book, 'Typhoid closed school for eight weeks and three days'. What he did not reveal, but the School Board Minutes did, was that the typhoid was in Mr. Findlay's own family. The Medical Officer of Health closed the school to prevent an extension of the disease. It did not go beyond Mr. Findlay's family, but one daughter died early on from the disease and his other children and his wife all contracted it. One son died a few months later, possibly from complications of typhoid. The drains of both the school and the schoolmaster's house were thoroughly examined, as was the school well which had recently been put in, for the exclusive use of schoolchildren and teachers, as the one previously used was suspected of having been the source of outbreaks of diarrhea and enteric fever (typhoid). The water from the well was declared fit for consumption 'provided it retained its present composition' (one of the problems of the Strathkinness wells was that the purity of the water varied greatly from time to time). Shortly afterwards the drains at the school (i.e. the South School) were improved. There was great dissatisfaction expressed by some of the villagers at the school being closed for so long. It was re-opened with a temporary teacher who could stay no more than ten days, and Mr. Findlay was then obliged to take charge of the school, even though his wife and one daughter were still critically ill.

When the decision to amalgamate the schools in Strathkinness was finally taken it was done to save money. Mr. Findlay had already suggested in 1874 that the two senior schools should be amalgamated, dividing the work between the two masters, teaching in the same school. The proposal was turned down by the Education Department because of difficulties over the junior and infant sections. In 1884 the idea was put forward by a member of the School Board that if Mr. Scott, the schoolmaster in Boarhills (where there had been difficulties for several years and decreased grants because of inadequacies in teaching) was paid £50 life rent, Mr. Walker transferred to Boarhills School, and Mr. Findlay, schoolmaster of the South Public School, made the schoolmaster of the combined schools, with an 'adjustment' of the other teachers (mostly ex-pupil teachers at this time), a saving could be made. The idea was adopted, and Mr. Walker agreed to the transfer but insisted that he get equal facilities in Boarhills with regard to his house. Although his house in Strathkinness was in very bad condition, and had been so for many years,



the house in Boarhills was smaller, he was afraid it had been made from 'Boulders', and the only access to the garden was through the kitchen window. However, he agreed to accept it. Mr. Walker became seriously ill before he left Strathkinness. In Boarhills he was ill the whole time and an interim teacher had to be appointed, at £2 a week. Several times the School Board considered 'whether any or what part (of the interim teacher's salary) should be retained from Mr. Walker's salary', but in the event they did not withhold any of his salary. He died soon after, in 1886. His death was noted in the Board's minutes, but no mention was made of appreciation for his services or of condolences to Mrs. Walker, which were always done when a member of the School Board died. His post was advertised at '£100 per year for a certificated teacher whose wife shall be competent to undertake the charge of the Industrial Department'. The appointed teacher was told that 'his wife's remuneration was to be covered by her husband's salary'. In Strathkinness both Mrs. Findlay and Mrs. Walker had been paid £10 for teaching the Industrial (i.e. sewing) Department. The School Board did not give Mr. Scott £50 as originally proposed, but only £40 which he accepted reluctantly saying 'I think the Board might have added another five or ten pounds to it'. Dr. McKay, Medical Officer of Health who lived in Strathkinness, was the only member of the Board who wished to allow Mr. Scott a larger sum.

It was decided that the new combined school should be the North School as it was larger than the old Free Church School, being able to accommodate up to 205 pupils. It was to be called the Strathkinness Public School and the other school and the schoolmaster's house were to be sold together at the upset price of £250. They were bought by Mr. Robert Mitchell, quarry master, Strathkinness, at the upset price. While an extension was being added to the 'combined' school, the former school bought by Mr. Mitchell was rented from him. In January, 1886, Mr. Findlay wrote in his log book, 'On Wednesday morning the pupils removed slates and papers from the South Public School to what was formerly the North Public School ... and work is now to be carried on in it'.

Mr. Findlay continued to have trouble with the School Board. Many of the requirements, some of them needing only trivial expenditure and which the Education Department, on the advice of the inspectors who visited the school, thought to be essential, were either constantly deferred or ignored. One of Mr. Findlay's problems was over the installation of new toilet facilities which the Education Department considered urgently needed. These facilities had been improved in 1875 when the privies were whitewashed and the toilet seats made to lift 'so that the boxes might be taken out for cleaning'. A fence was erected at the back of the girls' privy, with a gate and a lock to prevent the privy being used except during school hours. The Education Department



more than once demanded further improvements and in the summer of 1889 the School Board was told: 'A lavatory accommodation was absolutely essential and it must receive the immediate attention of the Governors (the School Board) or the next year's grant could be reduced'. In December Mr. Findlay wrote: 'School lavatory is now completed but cannot be used as no one has been appointed for pumping the water'. In May he wrote in the log book: 'The Board is evidently not intending to get anyone to supply water'. Eventually he solved the difficulty himself. In July he wrote: 'By getting the elder boys to pump water use of the lavatory was got this week'. It was in Mr. Findlay's own interest, as well as that of his pupils, that the grant was not reduced as his salary depended on the size of the grant. That month, at the annual regular examination of the school by the inspectors of the Education Department 'the governors are thanked for providing a good lavatory'!

Afterwards, Mr. Findlay complained many times to the School Board about the filthy condition of the toilets or offices as they were called, and he even threatened to call in the Sanitary Inspector. When this was ignored and he wrote again deploring the state of the toilets, which he thought affected the children's health, he was told by the Clerk to the Board, 'They (the School Board) are of the opinion that you could easily insist upon the place being kept in a satisfactory condition and they hope there will be no further trouble in the matter'. The School Board had always appointed a cleaner for the offices, but nobody had ever been satisfactory for very long. Usually the cleaner asked for an increase in pay, the decision was deferred and the cleaner resigned. No matter whose responsibility it was, it showed, typically, that there was little co-operation between the teacher and the School Board.

There continued to be requests for equipment and improvements required by the school, and asked for by the Education Department, which the School Board did not regard as essential. The grant for Boarhills School had at one time been reduced owing to the failure of the School Board to undertake a request of the Department, and although it never happened in Strathkinness it was threatened several times. Slowly, and often reluctantly, most of the improvements asked for by the Education Department were made.

In 1873, according to Mr. Findlay's log book, the subjects taught in Strathkinness were the three essentials of reading, writing and arithmetic, plus history, which covered many topics including the British Constitution, geography, an occasional class in Latin, singing, and sewing for the girls, which was an essential subject if the school was to receive a grant.

Mr. Findlay had two pupil teachers for whom he was paid a small additional fee for giving them extra lessons. At one time David Thom (son of Andrew Thom, joiner and School Officer) and Cecilia Findlay, Mr. Findlay's daughter,

were both pupil teachers at the South Public School. Not all of the pupil teachers remained for the full training period of five years, several asking for 'relief of their engagement' including one boy who said he would rather be a mason. By the time of the amalgamation in 1885 most of the teachers were ex-pupil teachers who had completed their five years' training in a school but were not yet certificated.

Staffing was often difficult, and there were frequent changes, some who left saying the work was not what they had thought it would be. Many times when no appointment had been made, or during illness of one of the teachers, Mrs. Findlay filled in, as did Miss Findlay even after she had left the school, until a new appointment was made. The schoolmaster, as well as the other teachers, was obliged to ask for any increase in salary. Increases were sometimes granted and sometimes refused, but almost always after the decision had been deferred. In 1888 Mr. Findlay wrote to the School Board, after having had his earlier request deferred some time before, 'At the amalgamation I was led to believe that the money to come to me would not be less than formerly', and he went on to explain that his expenses in the 'new' schoolmaster's house were great, 'that he makes less than his neighbours under the Board' (i.e. those in St. Andrews), and that it was time to bring the subject up again. The Board agreed to some minor improvements in the schoolmaster's house, but they could not agree to increase his 'emoluments'.

It was not that the School Board was always unsympathetic to requests for increases in salaries, but Strathkinness was a relatively poor area, and the amount of money that could be raised from rates was limited. The teachers' salaries were composed partly of the government grant, assessed by what was known as 'payment by results', partly by the school rates raised locally, and partly by the fees which the schoolmaster had to collect himself. This was time-consuming and not always successful. In 1889, the same year that fees for attending a 'public' school were finally abolished, Mr. Findlay's arrears of fees amounted to £7-18-6, and the School Officer was employed to 'endeavour to collect them on the understanding that he should be allowed a commission'.

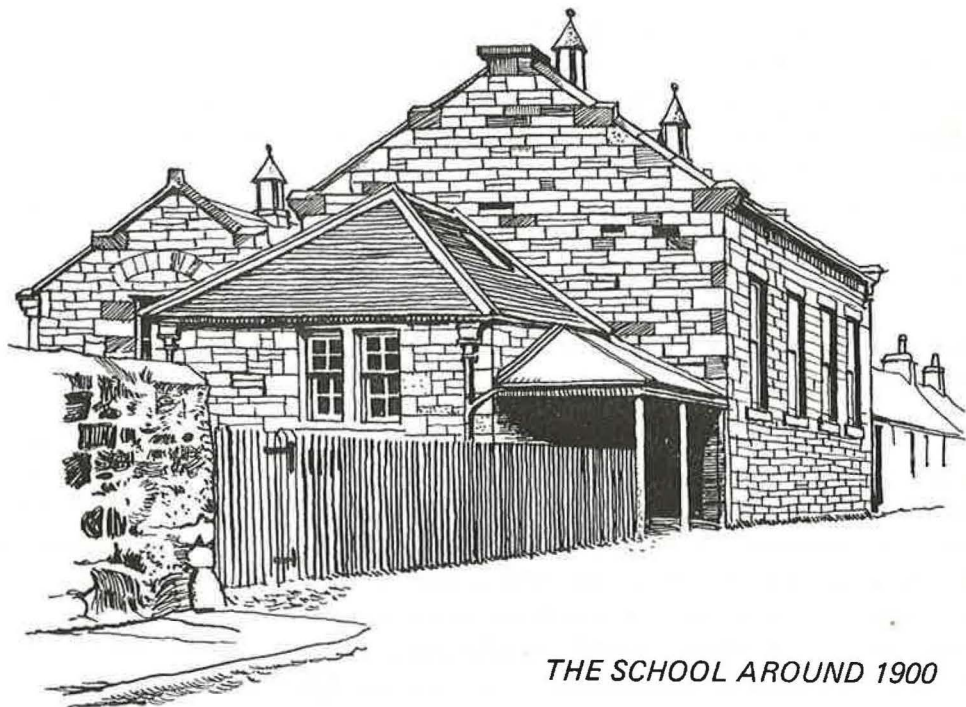
The annual reports on the schools made by the inspectors of the Scotch Education Department showed that they were of an acceptable but not excellent standard. The reports on the South Public School were usually rather better than those of the North Public School, although both were criticised for such things as 'lack of distinct speaking ... lack of "life" in answering questions and in reading .. and a general weakness in reading'. After the amalgamation of the schools the reports varied considerably, and one year the headmaster was especially praised, particularly as the school was understaffed. Other

reports spoke of a 'suggestion of intimidation' and another said the children 'needed sympathetic treatment'.

Considering the difficulties Mr. Findlay, and Mr. Walker, had to contend with — the very poor attendance, both wilful and unavoidable caused by frequent illness and bad weather and road conditions, and with the disruption caused regularly by the potato lifting period, and by the upheaval of the annual agricultural term removal — it is creditable that the reports were as good as they were. There is no doubt that Mr. Findlay was a conscientious and hard-working schoolmaster, and although he was a strict disciplinarian he occasionally showed another side, as when he advised a mother whom he thought too harsh on her young child 'to try petting rather than severity'.

When he died after a short illness early in 1899, the school was closed for two days, at the request of the School Board, until after his funeral. Mr. Findlay had been a schoolmaster in Strathkinness for over forty years.

When Mr. D.K. Mauchline, who had been schoolmaster in Boarhills for the previous three years, came as schoolmaster to Strathkinness at the start of the new session in August, he found the amount of absenteeism 'wretched', a 'state of affairs which should be checked by the school board'. After having been a little longer than two months in Strathkinness he wrote, in deploring



*THE SCHOOL AROUND 1900*



what he found to be low standards of work: 'Indeed, in the majority of cases the children have no attention paid to them at home and the result is that many won't work unless corporal punishment is resorted to, and instruction under such conditions is bound to be weak'.

The problem of deliberate absenteeism was decreased dramatically soon after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Younger at Mount Melville. Mrs. Younger took a personal interest in the school, something which had been sadly lacking in almost all members of the School Board, and with the institution of medals and prizes for regular attendance, and the success of these enticements, Mr. Mauchline could concentrate more on teaching than Mr. Findlay had been able to do — although Mr. Findlay had struggled valiantly to keep to his time-table of work. The policy was so successful that Mr. Mauchline wrote in December 1904, 'Many children are coughing in school, but they are attending regularly in the hope that they will receive a medal or prize at the end of the session'. Epidemics of illnesses such as measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough and influenza, which seemed to be almost endemic, continued to lower attendance considerably as did extreme weather conditions and bad roads. In spite of these things, however, every year there were several children, often as many as seventeen, who managed to have perfect attendance for the year, for which they received a medal from Mrs. Younger; there were several who had seven years perfect attendance for which they received a silver wristlet watch. One boy had perfect attendance for eight years and received a pair of gold cuff links. Those who lived near the school must have had an advantage because the children who lived long distances away were often unable to get to school because of the frequently blocked roads.

Mr. Mauchline, like Mr. Findlay, stressed the serious effect of the annual potato lifting on the work of the school. In 1902, on a suggestion made by Mr. Mauchline when he first came to Strathkinness, the Board decided to close the school for three weeks in the autumn to enable all pupils to have the same amount of schooling. The new system must have been reasonably successful as it became the practice in all schools in the area. However, as many children started potato lifting early, had exemptions after the official holiday ended, and some continued even longer, as in 1904 when Mr. Mauchline records in his log book, 'Several children still engaged lifting potatoes on the farm of Mr. Russell, member of the School Board', the school both before and after the official potato lifting period continued to be affected. The annual agricultural term removal at the end of November, which was a centuries-old practice, also continued to disrupt the work of the school until it finally disappeared at the beginning of the Second World War.

The school continued to have staffing problems. When a new teacher had

not been appointed Mrs. Mauchline, like Mrs. Findlay earlier, frequently took over until an appointment was made. Staff changes were frequent and were not in the best interests of the pupils, as was often pointed out by the inspectors. In the report of 1908 the inspectors wrote, 'the school has the good fortune having its present staff'. In 1909 after praising the school at Strathkinness the report went on to say, 'and in point of attendance, too, the school has few equals in the county'.

In 1908 the Education Department reminded the School Board that they were obliged to do certain things and informed them that 'The following articles for effective instruction may be provided at once: 1. Kinder garten apparatus:— Boxes of letters, etc. Modelling clay'.

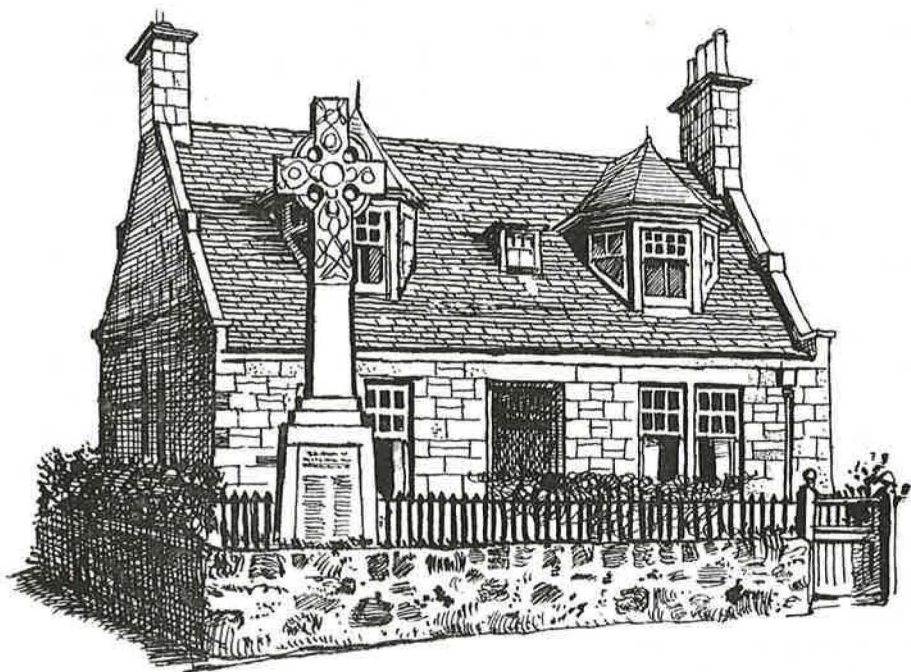
The School Board replied that they 'do not think extra kinder garten material is essential. They have enough already'. As he had asked the School Board to improve the heating, Mr. Mauchline may have exaggerated when he said that in winter the children could hardly hold their pens for cold, and one year he said that it would be cruel to have the children do modelling because of the chilblains on their hands. The School Board thought the temperature was adequate, disagreeing with Mr. Mauchline when he said the average temperature was around 48°. Mr. Mauchline did not get on with either of the two local School Board members, who were supposed to deal directly with him. There was a great deal of personal animosity between them and him, and this could well have been a cause of the lack of supply and the frequent delays in carrying out the Education Department's requests.

A new schoolmaster's house was eventually built, in 1905, after continued pressure from the Education Department and the Sanitary Inspector of the St Andrews District Council had reported the old one was a health hazard. One member of the Board felt that it could continue to be patched up — as it had been for years. Some ill-feeling was aroused, and a report in the **St. Andrews Citizen** criticising the decision to build a new house, on the grounds that it was not necessary and would be a burden on the ratepayers, was believed to have been written by a member of the School Board, though he denied it. While the new house was being built, Mr. and Mrs. Mauchline lived in a house rented from Mr. Thom.

When Mrs. Sarah Turner, wife of the Free Church minister, was elected to the School Board in 1911, there was for the first time, except perhaps for Dr. McKay who, several times at least expressed concern, somebody on the Board who was positively interested in the school and the school children. She often visited the school, and soon after her election she wrote in the log book (which members of the Board were supposed to sign) 'much gratified with what I have seen'. She continued to be a concerned member of the Board and set up a Care Committee to try to help children to find jobs, both in the



countryside and in St. Andrews. In 1917, when Strathkinness United Free Church was combined with Ceres United Free Church, she and her husband left Strathkinness.



*SCHOOLMASTER'S HOUSE (and WAR MEMORIAL)*

As further Education Acts were passed more changes were made; the infants room was enlarged in 1903, when the Mitchell Hall was again used by the infants while work was in progress; a new building built for vocational studies such as dressmaking, cookery and woodwork; and visiting teachers of music, art, and physical training came regularly to the school.

The period of the First World War was a difficult time for the school in Strathkinness, as it was for other schools. Plans to alleviate the overcrowding, particularly in the infants' room which had been condemned for years by the Education Department, were at last ready to be implemented, but the war put a stop to any building or alterations of any kind. Male teachers who taught woodwork, drill, music, and art were almost impossible to get and if appointed were apt to leave soon for the armed forces. Many farm labourers, joined the forces and their families moved into towns, affecting the school population. The practice of the agricultural removal term continued with its consequent annual disruption of school work. Exemptions for leaving school before the age of fourteen (raised from thirteen in 1883), which had always been allowed at the discretion of the School Board, increased greatly as there



was a pressing need for labour on the farms. The number of parents of boys and girls under the age of fourteen who asked for and received exemptions was so great that Mr. Mauchline wrote in his log book in 1917, 'Supplementary (post-primary) and qualifying classes have dwindled in numbers of late [so] many exemptions have been granted'. Many exemptions were also made for 'domestic reasons', which removed mainly girls from school to allow them to help their mothers, as many more married women than before the war were now going out to work.

In 1914 the Education Department asked the School Board whether they would consider providing meals for 'necessitous children'. The Board replied that they 'did not need to supply meals for necessitous children as there were no necessitous children in Strathkinness Parish'. What steps, if any, the Board took to ascertain whether this was so or not is not known, but it is difficult to suppose that there were in the school no children poor enough to have benefitted greatly by the scheme. As early as 1887, not long after the amalgamation of the schools, Mr. Findlay wrote, 'Warm dinners provided by a committee of Ladies at ½d. each commenced on Monday and most of the children from a distance have taken advantage of them'. How long this continued is unknown, but in 1914 there were still many children who could not go home for dinner. (A story was told by an old lady, who died only recently, that when she went to school in Strathkinness — probably around 1905 — there was a woman in the village who made 'treacle pieces' for the children, and in between each slice she cleaned the knife by giving it a good lick.) After school dinners did become available they were taken by many children, and in 1944 it was recorded that there were so many taking school meals that an extra server was needed.

In 1918 the School Board's authority over the Strathkinness School was transferred to an 'Education Authority' and in 1928 the Education Authorities were transferred to the County Councils. In 1918 the name 'Scotch Education Department' was changed to 'Scottish Education Department'. The financial constraints which the former School Boards had to contend with were no longer so severe, as the cost of education became more evenly spread, and not borne quite so heavily by small communities like Strathkinness. Fees were still charged for books until the 1930s, although some places had abolished them earlier. In 1913, for example, Mr. Mauchline had written in his log book, 'Two boys were present only for three days (part of the new intake at the agricultural removal term), and left the school to go to Dairsie School where books are supplied'. Many of the criticisms of the School Boards were that they were trying so hard to save, or not to spend, the ratepayers money that they actually undermined the effectiveness of the school they were responsible for.

In 1926 the long awaited improvements to the school, put off during the war, were completed and Mr. Mauchline recorded in his log book, 'The Infants greatly appreciate their new quarters; [the] new room is much lighter and [has] better ventilation. There should be fewer cases of sickness among the Infants now'.

The school reports for Strathkinness remained on the whole very good, despite Mr. Mauchline's many absences because of serious illness, which started in 1902. He managed to keep the standard of work high, although before he retired in 1928, after twenty nine years as schoolmaster at Strathkinness, his grasp was beginning to slip; but he retained his obvious care and concern for the children at his school.

When Mr. Stobie took over as schoolmaster at Strathkinness the school roll was 141. When Mr. Mauchline had come in 1899 it had been 147. The attendance was good, due in large part to Mrs. Younger who continued to give prizes for attendance and attainment up to her death in 1942. The school regularly received good reports from the H..M.I.s.

Mr. Stobie stuck rigidly to the instruction not to put general observations in the log book, though the need to do so was probably much less with the new school authorities. His log book is almost completely factual, and the last twelve years are not differentiated between one year and another, so that dates have to be worked out. He did not write reports every week and they are frequently very brief, sometimes no more than as in June of 1933 when he recorded simply, '133 — 125 — per 94.3'. There are periods covering several years when neither the roll nor the attendance figures are given, although he did state that in 1938 the roll was 112 and in 1945 it was 65. But the rate of the drop in numbers cannot be assessed from the log book. However, Mr. Stobie, like both Mr. Mauchline and Mr. Findlay before him, did regularly mention the disruption caused in the school every year by the potato lifting period. The decision to close the school during this period, first proposed by Mr. Mauchline and later adopted in other schools had been discontinued in 1920, with a policy of exemptions for children over twelve for potato-lifting replacing it. These exemptions still caused disruption, and school work at this time was limited almost entirely to revision. Again, in 1939 at the outbreak of the Second World War, a 'potato holiday' was re-introduced. The official period was between three and four weeks, but as happened many years earlier some children stayed away from school before the holiday started and continued to lift potatoes after it had ended. There can be no doubt that potato-lifting always affected the work of rural schools, and Strathkinness was fortunate in having had conscientious and extremely hard-working schoolmasters who struggled to keep up standards by making good the disruption



caused. It was not until the senior classes were no longer at Strathkinness that the problem was solved so far as Strathkinness School was concerned.

Another problem until it came to an end at the beginning of the Second World War was the annual agricultural removal term at the end of November and the beginning of December. As before, Mr. Stobie found that not only did as many as twenty-nine children leave the school when their fathers went to other places for work on the farms, but that the standard of other children coming into the school was almost always lower than that of the pupils already at Strathkinness. As this followed so soon after the potato-lifting period, the masters all felt that the real work of the session did not start until after the New Year's holiday was over.

Over the years and with the school-leaving age having been raised to fourteen, 'supplementary' including vocational classes, which the School Board earlier had not wanted to introduce, feeling there was no need for them, were introduced into the school to cater for the majority of children who were not going to go on to further education after a primary education. In 1939 arrangements had been discussed for the centralisation of advanced schooling in St. Andrews, but in the meantime the school was told to carry on as before. In 1942 when the school re-opened after the summer holidays, two pupils went to Madras in St. Andrews and five pupils in the second year of post-primary schooling were transferred to the Burgh School in St. Andrews. With a fall in the number of pupils the number of teachers was reduced from four to three. In 1944 all pupils over primary school age — eleven or twelve years old — were transferred to the Burgh School, and Strathkinness School then became a Primary School with no responsibility for vocational education.

As had the First World War, the Second World War had a profound effect on the school. In 1939 the school roll was temporarily enlarged by thirty-three children from Edinburgh who had been evacuated to Strathkinness. Many of these children had hardly ever visited the 'country' let alone lived in it. At least twice, on one occasion during a school inspection by an H.M.I., the school was closed briefly by an air-raid warning. And for almost the first time since the early 1900s, Mrs. Younger did not present the school prizes in person 'owing to war conditions'. One of the tasks undertaken by Mr. Stobie, and his daughter Katharine who was a teacher at Strathkinness School at this time, was a regular overhaul of the gas masks and the replacement of those outgrown by pupils. In 1946 it was reported that during that autumn the school children had collected 280 lbs. of rose hips for rose hip syrup, a major source during and just after the war of vitamin C; in the First World War *The Citizen* had reported that the school children of Strathkinness had collected 398 eggs to be sent to a depot in Leith for distribution to wounded soldiers.



Road conditions could still prevent both pupils and teachers from getting to school in extremely adverse conditions, as in March of 1947 when buses were not running and the school was closed. Although illnesses of epidemic proportions still could cause the attendance at school to be substantially affected, as in late 1946 when an epidemic of scarlet fever was severe enough for Mr. Stobie to ask the school medical officer if there might be a carrier at Strathkinness School (scarlet fever is not in fact spread by carriers), the health of most of the children had greatly improved over the years.

There are only a few reports of the school inspectors in Mr. Stobie's log book. That of 1933 is a reasonably favourable one, and it stated that offices (toilets) had been rebuilt and an adequate supply of water introduced. (This was before Strathkinness had a proper sewage system.) The report of 1936 was slightly more critical and said that 'clear speech should be fostered'. The school was reported to be lit by electricity by this time.

The third log book after they were introduced in 1873 ends when Mr. Stobie died, in 1949. The last thirty-seven years in the history of Strathkinness School is contained in the current log book, and in the memories of pupils. Apart from the report of the school inspectors in 1985, the only record to be made here is of the names of the head teachers who followed Mr. Stobie. They are all remembered by people still living in the village, and are: Miss A. Kaye (interim head, July – December, 1949); Mr. William Howie (January, 1950 – August, 1966); Mrs. M. McFarlane (interim head August, 1966 – February, 1967, then head until July, 1971 when she was appointed head of Newport School); Mr. George Currie (July, 1971 – March, 1976, when he became head of Wormit School); Mrs. B. Thomson (head since March, 1976, and teacher at Strathkinness 1966 – 1970, and 1970 – 1976 head of Radernie School).

Included in the inspectors' report of 1985 are the comments that 'Strathkinness School covers the full range of primary school subjects, ... learning activities are often linked together in ... centres of interest or class projects... The pupils worked in a friendly atmosphere and their social relations with one another and with the two teachers were excellent ... the youngest pupils were already participating fully ... their mature and confident attitudes were attributable to the influence of their older classmates and to the respect that all pupils received as individuals'. They reported the school to be very well equipped and 'the buildings though old were pleasant and comfortable' with recent alterations completed in 1984, having improved conditions both for staff and for pupils.

The inspectors reported also that, 'the foundation of competence and interest were ... being successfully laid in the children's early years of schooling

... all pupils were making satisfactory progress ... encouragement [was] given to pupils to think things out for themselves'. 'Pupils', they observed, 'conversed freely and confidently with one another and with adults and had no difficulty in explaining what they were doing'. Regarding the curriculum, the inspectors noted that the basic subjects taught by the two regular teachers were supplemented by visiting teachers in Art, Craft, Music and Physical Education and that the children used the swimming pool at Madras in St. Andrews.

Minor criticisms made by the inspectors were that some of the pupils could be helped to become more self-critical, and there was drawn to the school's attention, as also to that of other schools, a recent circular based on the Education Authority's guidelines on religious education.

Finally, the inspectors praised both teachers who, they said, 'showed a strong commitment to the particular needs and features of the small rural school'.

An aspect of education in Strathkinness which has not yet been considered is the opportunities available in the past for Strathkinness children to receive the kind of education which might enable them to improve their prospects. The traditional Scottish respect for learning was less evident in Strathkinness than it was in some other places. Until this century it seemed to be a poorer community than many others in the neighbourhood and for many people there was no time, or desire, for much more than work. The poverty prevalent in Strathkinness is indicated by an entry in the St. Andrews Kirk Session minutes of 1843 which recorded extra help 'to the poor in Strathkinness of which the list is very numerous in proportion to the population'. And later, when the church in Strathkinness had been set up after separation from St. Andrews, the minister, the Rev. David Stewart, begged the St. Andrews Kirk Session to continue to provide help for the Strathkinness poor, as the new Parish of Strathkinness was unable alone to provide for them.

Most of the people in the village were employed in farm work, quarries, and in weaving. According to the school log books many of them did not see any advantage to their children having more than a minimal education. Of the others who would have liked more education for their children, many could not afford to give them the opportunity. For each one of those who was able to take advantage of an opportunity for further education there would have been others who could not.

There are a few cases of children from Strathkinness being sponsored by either the minister or the schoolteacher, and there may be others not recorded. The list of 'gratis tickets' for the admission to Madras 'of children being the

most necessitous' (mostly from St. Andrews) includes orphans and deserted children, and children of washerwomen, publicans, coopers, fishcurers, bakers, servants, golf club makers, hotel keepers, labourers and many more occupations. The addresses for the recipients are not given for the years 1847-49, but in 1851 it was recorded that James Ewan from Strathkinness had been sponsored by the Rev. Adam Thorburn, the minister of the Free Church in Strathkinness. He went on to become a teacher in Strathkinness, probably in the Free Church School.

In 1855 John Collier, whose father was listed as a handloom weaver in Strathkinness in the census of 1851, was sponsored by Mr. David Peattie, the schoolmaster of the Established Church School in Strathkinness. He went on to university and to become minister of the Chalmers Church in Glasgow.

A boy from Monksholm was sponsored by the Rev. David Stewart, the minister of the Parish Church in Strathkinness in 1864 'as his parents cannot afford education for him to support himself having lost his left hand'. He was given free education until 1868.

In 1870 the Rev. Thomas Murray (Mr. Stewart's successor) sponsored William Munro, a boy of thirteen, from Strathkinness, saying 'The lad's parents are poor but industrious and he is desirous of presenting his education beyond what they are able to afford'. In 1873 the Madras minutes recorded that he was going on to university.

The first mention of a girl from Strathkinness receiving help to go to Madras was in 1876. It was stated that Mary Dun's mother was 'not able to defray the whole cost and the girl is capable of encouragement'.

In 1886 the School Board told the Trustees of Madras College that they did not think the power had been given to them to provide free scholarships to children from Strathkinness and Boarhills for higher education at Madras. It seems that up to this time the endowment of Dr. Andrew Bell, made in the 1830s for further education for any who could profit by it had been denied to children outwith St. Andrews, which was not Dr. Bell's intention.

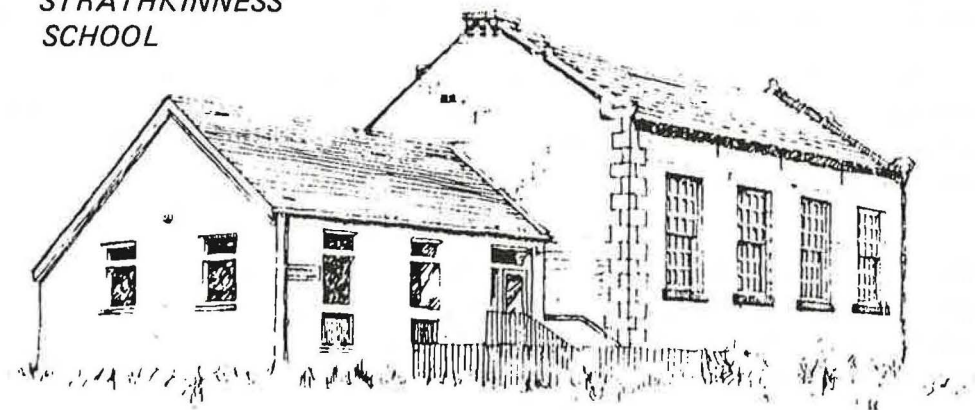
The Board was told that such children were in fact eligible and after this time there were varying numbers of applicants from both Strathkinness and Boarhills, some of them being successful. The standard of applicants for free places was not always satisfactory, not only from the rural schools but also from St. Andrews. In 1896 it was decided by the Madras Board of Trustees that free scholars must have received the Merit Certificate or else a pass in an examination, and in 1898 there was concern expressed by the Trustees of Madras College 'whether applicants should receive a certain percentage in future to qualify for Free Places'. There were some years when



awards were not made as the standard reached was not high enough. Yet, in 1891, the standard attained by bursary candidates was high enough for Mr. Dunn, school inspector, to say, 'It is a pity that there are only two bursaries available (from Strathkinness and Boarhills), as all four candidates would evidently have profited by Higher Education'. The successful candidates were Thomas Taylor and William Thom, both from Strathkinness.

Only a small minority of children from Strathkinness School went on to further education before 1942. After 1942 all pupils went for further education of some kind in St. Andrews.

### *STRATHKINNESS SCHOOL*



Whether Strathkinness School survives depends ultimately on government policy which at the moment is in favour of closing small schools. It does not seem that the school population of Strathkinness will change substantially in the foreseeable future from its present number of thirty-six.

The closing of a small school which prepares its pupils well for further education, as Strathkinness School does, should be weighed against the benefits to the children and the community. The existence of a school in a village is an important factor in keeping the community alive.

## WEAVING IN STRATHKINNESS

There is no mention of linen hand-loom weaving in Strathkinness in any literature about weaving, although it is known that, like most villages in Fife, there was a substantial amount done there.

Early farmtouns had their weavers and there would have been a number of them around Strathkinness. The first mention of weavers in Strathkinness comes from title deeds. (There are almost certainly title deeds mentioning weavers going back earlier than those uncovered so far). In 1764 Robert Melville feued a piece of ground at 'Meadow Bank of Strathkinness to Robert Robertson weaver'. There are other references dated from 1790 to 1800. In 1798 'David Dishart, weaver of Strathkinness, son of David Dishart, Tailor of Strathkinness' inherited the feu from his father. One of the few weavers left in the village in 1881 was another David Dishart, aged 78, who lived in what was at one time called 'Weavers Cottage' (now 39 Main Street).

It is not always possible to say where the weavers lived and worked in Strathkinness. Sometimes the weaving was done in a room in the house and sometimes it was done in a shed in the yard outside. The floor was made of earth in which the weaver embedded his/her feet. Several places in the village are known to have had weaving sheds which have been demolished. There was a shed which had three looms in the yard at what is now 'Lilac Cottage', 45 Sunnyside; there was a shed at what is now called 'Murella', 34 Main Street; and there is thought to have been a weaving shed at 'The Poffle', behind Sunnyside.

It is known that weaving was done in some of the houses along The Pleasance, but it is not possible to tell by title deeds just where the weavers lived. For example, William Peattie, a weaver in Strathkinness, already owned property in Strathkinness when he bought what is now known as 'The Cottage', 24 Church Road, in 1845. It is not possible to say which house he lived in and which house he let out.

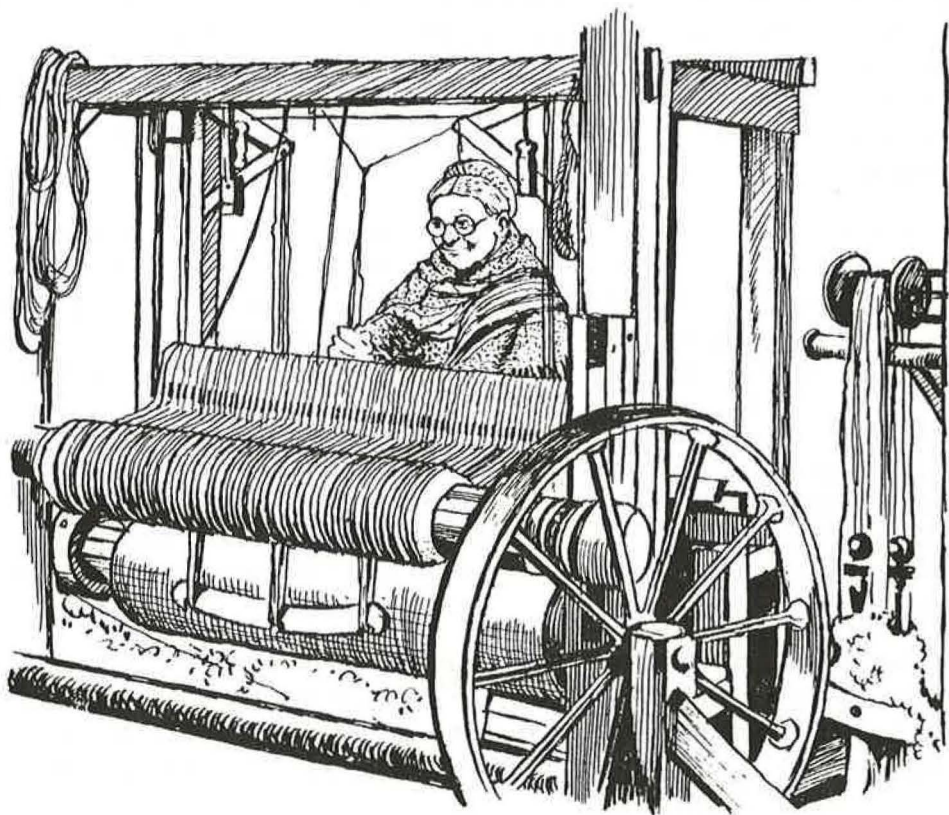
Although there was flax grown locally, primarily for home use, most of the flax was imported from Holland. In 1725 a premium to encourage the growing of flax in Scotland was introduced but as there was 'much sowing of poor ground with bad seed just to claim the premium' the premium was soon withdrawn.

The typical linen woven in East Fife was a coarse brown linen such as Osnaburg, Dornick or Dowlas which was usually sold unbleached to merchants from Cupar, St. Andrews or Dundee. Bleaching mainly for home use was done at the common bleaching field along the High Road. The well is still in front

of the house at 34 High Road. Some people in the village have said there was another common bleaching field at the Lady's Well, now filled in, in the field at the bottom of the village, although this field may not have been used for bleaching linen, but only as a domestic drying green.

By the time of the first detailed census in 1841 handloom weaving was already in decline nationally, although it increased in Strathkinness for several years, before it began to decline fairly rapidly. Out of a population of 507 in Strathkinness in 1841 there were 74 weavers, 31 of whom were women. Some of the weavers were children between 13 and 15 years old. There were also 15 yarn winders; all were women and all except 2 were over 50 years old and most of them nearer 70. As at that time there was no poor relief for persons capable of earning enough to support themselves, however meagre that amount might be, they were no doubt compelled to work.

In the 1851 census the number of linen hand-loom weavers in Strathkinness had increased to 101, the majority of them women. There were no yarn winders recorded. By that time the yarn was being prepared in mills and distributed to the weavers who were usually tied to one manufacturer, who might also have the control of the finished linen.





The great number of women weavers helped to produce a gross over supply in the market. Wages were forced down, and the standard of living of the weavers, which in the early 1800s had been relatively high, was lowered and in many cases it became extremely low. The over supply of the market leading to low wages and the spread of machine looms eventually destroyed the hand-loom weaving industry.

By 1871 the number of weavers in Strathkiness was down to a total of 36 and by 1881 only one or two elderly weavers such as David Dishart were left.

The decline and eventual disappearance from Strathkinness of such a major occupation had a profound effect on the village. People were forced to find other work and although the census of 1881 shows that the population of 584 was higher than in 1841 when it had been 507, by 1891 it had fallen to 401, or by about one-fifth. There were fewer jobs in the quarries than there had been ten years earlier and people left the village for towns and cities. Some of the people who remained, including many women, found employment in the Guardbridge Paper Mills which had opened in 1875, others worked at the Seafeld Tile Works and some became shop assistants or domestic servants in St. Andrews.

## STRATHKINNESS QUARRIES

Quarrying was one of the most important industries in Strathkinness, going back many hundreds of years and continuing well into this century.

There were 122 men (and boys) recorded in Strathkinness (not including the large farms in the area) in 1841, and of these about 15 were quarry workers — one man was listed as a publican as well. There were proportionately more men working in the quarries from Knockhill, Nydie, Edenside and Kincaple. When weaving, which had been the main occupation of the village, began to decline, more men became quarry workers, although even more became agricultural workers. Some of these men who were forced to give up weaving became labourers in the quarries. The number of men working in the quarries in Strathkinness had at least doubled between 1841 and 1881. As late as 1911 the traffic from the quarries was still heavy, and the District Road Surveyor reported that year "The traffic from the freestone quarry at Knockhill, Strathkinness to St. Andrews has cut up that road".

*Rosalind Garton, geologist and resident of Strathkinness, has written the following note about the Strathkinness quarries:—*

'Strathkinness lies on rocks of the Calciferous Sandstone Series of the Carboniferous Period which comprise thick sandstones with limestone, coal and ironstone interbedded, all of which have been worked in the vicinity.

'There were many sandstone quarries in the village in the past, some of which have been infilled. With the exception of Nydie, the largest of the quarries, it is impossible to say from which quarry stone was used for particular buildings. Even at Nydie there was probably more than one quarry worked. There are quarry holes in several places in the village; by Bonfield Farm, in the field northwest of the village beyond Bonfield Park (which has been built on an old quarry), at the copse of oak and fir trees on the north side of the Strathkinness—Nydie Road and at Nydie itself. The Nydie quarry is still in existence, although overgrown. As was often the case with quarries, towards the end of its life shallow mining took place and there is now a gallery supported by pillars of sandstone.

'The earliest record of the use of Strathkinness stone is in the facing of St. Rule's Chapel which was completed in 1070. **The Statistical Account of Scotland 1790** tells of St. Rule's being faced with Strathkinness stone, possibly because sea stone or rubble was used as internal filling. This is visibly the case in the ruined wall at the west end of the cathedral, where Strathkinness stone covers a variety of rock rubble including pieces of igneous rock.

'It is believed that Strathkinness or Nydie stone was used in the building of Balmerino Abbey and that a road existed between the two places.

'Strathkinness stone was used to build the original Holy Trinity Church (the Town Kirk) in St. Andrews, which was built in 1412, although Strathkinness stone was not used in its restoration in 1907–1909. The west end of St. Andrews Cathedral, some of St. Salvator's Chapel and the old university library were also built of it, and Strathkinness stone was widely used in the late 1800s and early 1900s when Newport and Wormit were expanding.

'Stone from Strathkinness was used extensively for buildings in St. Andrews especially in the 19th century. Nydie stone was used to build Greyfriars Gardens in the 1830s, as well as Hope Street, Abbotsford Crescent, and Howard Place in the 1840s. The College Halls in the quadrangle at the University of St. Andrews were built of Nydie stone in 1846 as were some of the laboratories in the quadrangle which were built between 1892 and 1900. St. Leonard's Church in St. Andrews built in 1904 was the last major building to be constructed of Nydie stone.

'It is unlikely that any house in the village was built of anything other than Strathkinness stone as there is no house which stands out as looking different in that respect. The local stone is white or golden and weathers to a grey. Cupar stone weathers to a buff colour because of its iron content and looks quite different.

'The brick, pipe and tile works at Seafeld, near Easter Kincaple, which closed in 1942, probably made most of the pantiles used in the village. The works used local clay which was deposited at the end of the last Ice Age'.



## ACCOUNT BOOKS

There are account books still in existence of three businesses formerly carried on in Strathkinness. Each in its own way illuminates the past.

The account books of Andrew Thom & Sons, Joiners, record many changes since the first book in 1850 when Andrew Thom came to Strathkinness from Kame, Montrave, near Leven, to set up in business as a joiner. His first workshop was in the building at the corner of Sunnyside and Main Street, now used by Frits Akerboom as a workshop, and he lived in the house next to it where the Akerbooms now live. His business soon developed and by the time he moved his workshop in 1867 into the building on Main Street, formerly the Secessionist Church and then the Free Church, he had eight employees in addition to members of his family also working in the business. After moving his workshop he built a new dwelling-house on the adjoining land which he called "Nelson Cottage", the maiden name of his wife. Sir James and Lady McPetrie now live in "Nelson Cottage"; and the workshop was demolished many years ago.

The early account books show that he did ordinary jobs such as repairing pick handles (four pence), paling for pig-styes (one shilling and four pence including nails), and repairing a stable door (two shillings and three pence including wood and nails). A joiner's wage at this time was twopence an hour. In addition, Thom did work for the schoolmasters of both the Free Church School, Mr. Stewart, and the Parish School, Mr. Peattie; also for the Free Church minister, the Reverend Adam Thorburn, for whom he repaired a folding desk at the cost of two shillings, made a new clock case for £1.10.0., 'lifted drawers' and repaired a lock for sixpence and a portmanteau for fourpence.

He also did some work in St. Andrews for Mr. Aikman, a grocer, and for people like Mr. Haig of Kincapple and Dr. Watson-Wemyss of Denbrae. In 1855 Thoms had a contract to lay a new floor in Ceres East United Presbyterian Church for which they were paid £14.15.0.

Thoms became well-known for their coffins and there are lists covering many years of those made. The following is a list of those made in 1856:—

# Chests

			£	s	d
1856					
Jan.	5	Ann Barclay Dewar's child. Cloth — aged 12.	1.10.	6.	
	19	Catherine Sime aged 81 years.		18.	
	25	Margaret Band, 37		18.	
Feb.	20	Mr. Charles Younger in cloth. Breastplate	2.10.	6.	
Mar.	15	Margaret Buist, aged 84 years		18.	0.
	21	John Rollo		17.	
April	18	Mr. Alex. Younger in cloth. Breastplate	2.10.		
May	30	W. Braid, aged 32 years. Killed in; Strathkinness quarry		18.	
July	12	John Rye. Killed with a horse and cart		12.	
		David Birrel's child. Cloth		12.	
Sept.	6	William Short		18.	
	27	D. Bennet's child. 6 weeks		5.	
Oct.	4	D. King's child. 8 hours		4.	6.
	7	D. Reekie, aged 31 years. Killed in; Lumbo coalpit		1.	6.
	18	Isabella Simpson or Mrs. Head Kincaple		18.	
	24	N. Clark's child. 10 weeks. Cloth		7.	6.
Nov.	1	C. Miller		13.	6.
Dec.	27	John Douglas' child Kincaple aged 2 days		4.	6.
	31	Margaret Walker		18.	0.
			<hr/> £17.19. 0. <hr/>		

Andrew's son, David, succeeded his father and in 1896 he was succeeded by his son, Andrew, and a business was opened up in St. Andrews, although they continued to keep their premises in Strathkinness until the 1930s.

In the 1900s the firm of Andrew Thom & Sons did a great deal of fine work, especially in oak, in the restoration and renovation of many buildings, including Holy Trinity Church, St Andrews, the University of St. Andrews Chapel, Guardbridge Paper Mill and Strathkinness Parish Church in 1936.

When Thoms moved to St. Andrews in 1898 they took over the firm of Thomas Hains in Kinness Park, and about five years ago Thoms was bought by a large firm based in Glasgow, but the name Andrew Thom & Son has been retained.

The three account books of William Yule, who was a grocer in Strathkinness near the top of the east side of Main Street start in 1859 and continue until 1882. The first few pages of the first book are carefully numbered and the entries are also carefully noted, but it is not long before both are less carefully noted, and page numbers disappear altogether.

It seems that people ran up bills to a rather large extent, contrary to what many people have said, that people in the past did not buy what they could not pay for.

Mrs. Alice-Anne Ellis studied the books and has made some notes on her findings:—

In general, accounts are settled monthly, but are only partially settled, the amount owed being carried forward to the next month's tally.

In 1859, the monthly tally for one account might amount to, say, £2.14.5. of which the customer might pay £1.14.0., the remainder being brought forward into the next month. By 1880 the amounts owed to the shop have become much greater. A customer may owe £20. 3.11. and only pay £1. 4.0. every month or fortnight.

One customer, Thomas Younger, owed in the region of £20 in May 1880, but regularly paid off £1 or £2 at a time. Mr. Yule (or perhaps it was his son by this time) seems to have given up keeping a running total of Younger's debt and only notes the goods bought and the amounts paid off. By December 1880 the amounts paid off have dropped to 12/- or 15/-. By April 1881 Yule has begun to keep a more careful tally of Younger's expenses which are now more or less settled fortnightly. Whether the large debt of £20 or so was paid is unclear. By June, Yule has given up again — whatever is customarily "carried over" in accounts, after the partial settling of a bill, is ignored in Younger's case. Occasionally, however, Younger pays slightly more than necessary; in August 1882 where the bills are 16/4d. and £1. 2. 3., he pays round sums of 18/- and £1. 6. 0., suggesting that he is, in fact, still in debt to Yule.

Some goods were bought at much more frequent intervals than nowadays, e.g. sugar and tea bought almost daily. Bread was bought every couple of days, though sometimes, as shown in John Taylor's account, more than once a day.

By 1879, 10 or 11 customers ordered **The Scotsman** and paid for it monthly.

There is a separate entry:—



1880

James Edie

May	Powder 5 lbs. Powder 7 lbs.	6. 0.
	2 Hanks Fuses	9.
	1 Package Dynamite	11. 3.
	20 Dyn Caps	

James Taylor was a customer for many years and his bills were comparatively large. For the month of January 1861, his purchases (or his family's purchases) can be analysed as follows:

	TOTALS	£	s.	d.
barly 3½				3½
black (stove blacking) 1, ½				1½
blue ½				½
bread 7½, 10½, 10½, 7½, 8½, 7½, ½, 2, 7½, 1, ½, 7½, 4, ½, ½, 4, 7½, 7½, 7½, ½, 7½, 1, 1, 4, 7½, ½, 4, 4			11.	1
buter 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 1/1, 6½, 1/1			13.	6½
candle 1½, 1½, 1½, 1½, 2, 1½, 1½, 1½, 8½			1.	9
chese 1/-, 1/9			2.	9
copie (copy paper? bought on same day as ink) 1				1
drops (medicinal?) 1, ½				1½
fat 7, 7			1.	2
globe (for lamp) 3				3
ink ½, ½				1
laces 1½				1½
matches 1				1
otmeal 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4			12.	0
oil ½, 6, 6, 6			1.	6½
pesemeal 1/-			1.	
pins 1				1
powders (medicinal?) 1½, 1½				3
rock (?) ½				½
salt ½, ½				1
sgr 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6			5.	6
B sgr 1				1
sop 5½, 5½				11
taly (tallow) 7, 7, 7, 7, 7			2.	11
tea 3, 6				9
thread ½				½
tobacco 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6			4.	
		£3.	0.	8½

In January 1863, much the same variety of items appears on his account, but ham, pork, nails, quistions (probably the "Shorter Catechism" which was in the form of questions and answers), sirop, weck (wick) and trecal also appear.

"Dust" is appearing on other people's accounts, and seems to be rather an expensive item, usually costing 1/-. Although ideas have been put forward as to what "dust" was (hen food, tea, something for use in the quarries), it is not at all clear what it was.

**List of customers with accounts in 1859-60:**

John Anderson	Andrew Puller
George Aitken	Robert Pullar
Thomas Bett	John Robb
Thomas Carmichael	Thomas Sinclair
Thomas Corstorphon	James Taylor
John Duncan	John Taylor
Thomas Herd	Thomas Thomson
Alexander Kinsman	Mrs. Westwood
George Lowden	Thomas Younger
Agnes Mair	

**Customers with accounts 1861-62:**

John Adamson	David Lowden
George Aitken	George Mair
Thomas Bett	Agnes Mair
Thomas Carmichael	Andrew Puller
Thomas Corstorphon	Robert Puller
John Duncan	John Robb
James Edie	James Taylor
James Edie Junior	John Taylor
William Evans	Thomas Thomson
Archibald Herd	John Willison
Thomas Herd	Thomas Younger
Alexander Kinsman	

3 customers lost since  
1860-61 and 7 customers  
gained

**Customers with accounts 1868:**

John Edemstone	Alexander Kinsman
Thomas Bett	David Lumsden
Thomas Corstorphone	George Mair
Thomas Dalzel	Agnes Mair

James Douglas  
John Duncan  
William Edie  
James Edie Junior  
William Evans  
Henry Ward  
William Herd  
Thomas Herd

James Mitchell  
Andrew Paton  
Mrs. Puller  
William Rodger  
John Taylor  
James Taylor  
Thomas Thomson  
Thomas Younger

9 customers lost since  
1861-62 and 10 customers  
gained.  
John Edemstone certainly =  
John Adamson  
Possible that Lumsden =  
Lowden.

**Spelling of names very variable:**

John Adamson changes from that to John Edemstone at end of Sept. 1862.

James Douglas = James Duglas = James Dugdlas

Thomas Corstorphone = Thomas Corspherton

William Rodger = William Badger

Possibly David Lowden = David Lumsden

There is an envelope in one of the books addressed to Mr. Youl, Grocer,  
Stackness.



*Mrs. Ethel Mudie has contributed the following information from James Edie's Account book:*

There are still in existence records between 1866 and 1877 of the business run in Strathkinness by James Edie. The Edies are an old village family; most of the men worked in the quarries, but James Edie also made scythe and hack stones which were sold to firms in Arbroath, Cupar, Kirkcaldy and Edinburgh as well as St. Andrews. His premises were at the lower end of the village.

In his records of this period names still known in the village are mentioned, viz; Peattie, Malcolm, Carstairs and Dalrymple.

An extract from his account of 1868 reads:—

August 8	2½ Dizan Syth Stones	
	@ 1/8 per Dizen	£0. 4. 2.
"	5 Dizan Hook Stones	
	@ 6dp. per Dizan	2. 6.
" 10	3½ Dizan Syth Stones	
	@ 1/8 per Dizan	5.10
' 10	7 Dizan Hook Stones	
	@ 6d. per Dizan	3. 6.
		<u>£0.16. 0.</u>

The following quarries are mentioned in his accounts: Radernie, Drumcarrow, Bog, Rungally, Blebo Mains, Blebo Craigs and Craigsanquhar. Stone was paid for by the yard and priced from 8d. to 1/- per yard.

Another extract from his accounts of 1866 reads:—

June 13	50 yards Craigshanquar	
	@ 8d. per yard	£1.13. 4.
	50 yards Blebo Mills	
	@ 1/0 per yard	2.10. 0.
	80 yards Blebo Craigs	
	@ 8d. per yard	2.13. 4.
		<u>£6.16. 8.</u>

A dozen scythe stones sold for 1/6d. or 1/2d. each.

Rates of pay ranged from 3d. to 4d. per hour.

Another extract from his accounts for 1866 reads:—

	1866 money got stone quarrying:	
May 16	200 yards Drumcarrow Craig	
	@ 8d. per yard.	£6.13. 4.
	5 days work	11. 8.
		<u>£7. 5. 0.</u>

## STREET LIGHTING AND DRAINAGE

Almost everybody who had lived in Strathkinness before the 1939-1945 war commented on the coming into the village of 'piped water and deep drains', and on street lighting, both of which were introduced in the early 1950s.

There had in fact been street lighting by paraffin from 1903 until 1916. The St. Andrews District Council Committee record that in April 1903 'Andrew Thom, Strathkinness, intimated that the inhabitants of that village had resolved to light the roads there with paraffin lamps, and (was) desiring the authority of the Committee to the erection of lamp posts upon the main road running through the village'. It was resolved to grant the desired authority on condition that the posts were acceptable to the Road Surveyor.

Not all residents seemed to approve of street lighting, as in 1904 Mr. William Niven appealed against a lighting district for Strathkinness. But in that same year Mr. Charles Brown became the first lamplighter with the duties of lighting the lamps each evening, putting them out in the morning and keeping them in good repair, for which he was paid one shilling and five pence per day. The paraffin cost six and one half pence a gallon. An inventory of the Strathkinness Lighting District property in 1905 showed that they owned fifteen cast-iron lamp posts with lanterns and paraffin lamps, one lamplighter's ladder, a two gallon oil jar and a filler for the lamps. In 1909 several additional lamps were provided for the village and the lamplighter's payment went up to one shilling and ninepence.

Later that year the lamp post on the corner of the High Road and Church Road was reported to 'have been so placed as likely to be knocked down if two loaded carts passed each other at that place'. The situation was discussed and it was decided that the lamp post should be removed.

By 1911 three new lamps had been erected (but not presumably at the corner of the High Road and Church Road), and William Reekie replaced Charles Brown as lamplighter. His salary for the season was £14.10.0. There was no lighting in the summer months, and during this time the lamps were stored in the building on the corner of Main Street and Sunnyside (now used by Frits Akerboom as a workshop).

In 1916 there was a report in the **St. Andrews Citizen** to the effect that the 'villagers were up in arms' having to pay for lighting they did not have. It had been decided that year not to light the lamps for the winter season as the cost of paraffin had gone up and also the lamps could be seen by enemy vessels at sea. It was decided to store the lamps indefinitely and by 1928 it

was costing fifteen shillings a year just to keep them in store.

It was not until after the Second World War that street lighting returned to Strathkinness.

There are people still living in the village who think the old well water was superior to the water that comes from the tap, but the truth is that most, if not all, were at some time or other condemned as unfit for domestic purposes.

Because of general concern with the quality of the water, by 1893 many Special Water Districts had been set up, but the report on Strathkinness said that, 'although it is desirable that steps should be taken without delay to have the village properly drained ... they cannot recommend the expenditure by the District Committee of so large a sum of money as would be necessary for that purpose, and if the Local Authority undertook to drain Strathkinness and assess the whole district for the expense thereof, a similar course must be followed in the other villages'. The subject of a Special Water Supply District came up again in 1907-8 when an analysis of the water taken from twenty wells showed that nine were passable for domestic purposes but the other eleven were 'either doubtful or definitely unsafe'.

Although there had been many epidemics of water-borne diseases and the schoolchildren suffered frequently from diarrhoea and 'wateries', the 'feeling of the village was strongly against the Special Water District ... a few inhabitants favoured the idea and were pressing for it' was said at a special meeting held in the village to discuss the proposed water scheme. They argued that not all the wells had been tested and that at any rate the cost was too great. One of the few who favoured the setting up of a Special Water Supply District for Strathkinness was Mr. Andrew Thom who expressed the view that 'the introduction of one, if it could be financed, would be the making of the village'.

In April of 1910 on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health, two wells were closed, five others were to be cleaned out and repaired and the others were to have more samples taken for analysis. There continued to be tests on water from the various wells, and other wells were closed at times. Notices were put up at the wells found to be unfit for domestic purposes, and at one time 'Mr. Thom was to find out how much inconvenience the closing of unsatisfactory wells could cause in the distance the water would have to be carried'.

In addition to the concern expressed about the water from the wells, there were many complaints about the drainage. As the cost of draining the village properly was too high, drainage pipes were often cleaned out, repaired and sometimes replaced with new ones; but having pipes throughout the

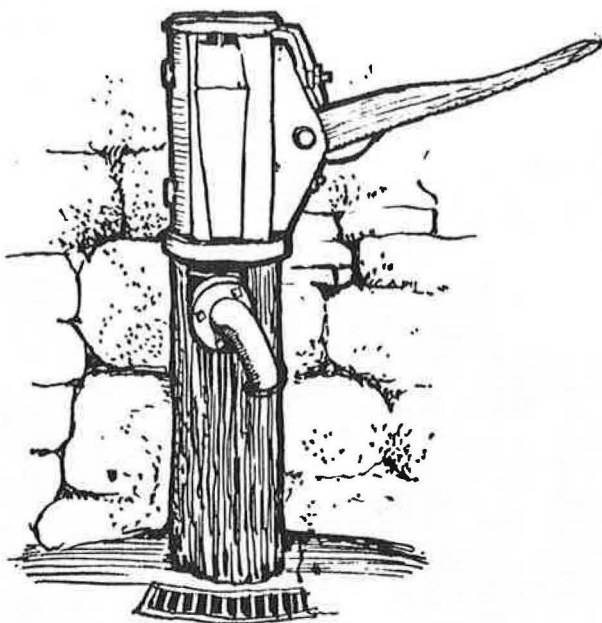


village, apart from the cost, was considered to be insanitary. In 1923 Mr. Robert Taylor, after complaining several times earlier, that 'there was no way of draining the houses on the east side of Main Street except by the ditches, and in dry weather some degree of offensiveness arose' was told 'it is quite practical to dispose of waste water on the garden as is done in other parts of Strathkinness and other villages'.

The proposed plan of a series of rams to pump water to the village was too expensive to implement, but Mr. Younger had a ram installed for the use of the Youth House built in 1909 and for Bonfield Farm which he owned.

It was not until 1956 that both water and a proper drainage system came to Strathkinness. Even those who preferred the well water are pleased to have proper drainage which, as Mr. Thom said in 1910, has been 'the making of the village.'

*THE PUMP  
AT THE SCHOOL*

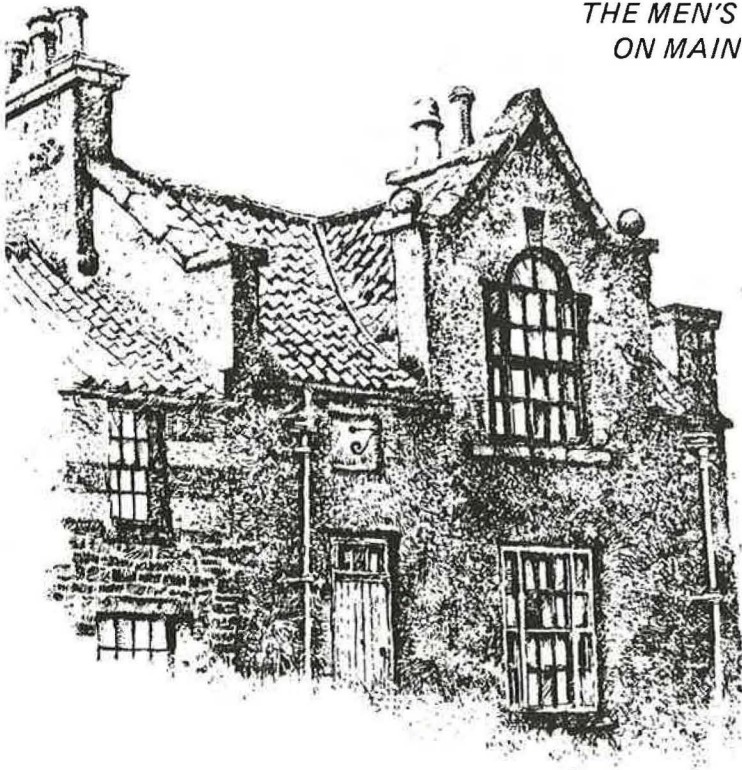


## THE MEN'S CLUB, THE YOUTH HOUSE AND THE NURSE'S HOUSE

### The Men's Club

When Mr. and Mrs. James Younger bought the Mount Melville Estate in 1900, Mrs. Younger, in particular, took a keen personal interest in Strathkinness. In addition to her concern for the welfare of the schoolchildren Mrs. Younger built three houses in Strathkinness, to the great benefit of the village.

The building at 8-10 Main Street known as The Men's Club was built in 1907 as a Community Leisure Centre. The land was given by Mr. and Mrs. Younger and the building was paid for partly by subscription and partly by Mrs. Younger. There was a reading room, a lending library and a billiards room. Mrs. Younger supplied everything for the Club, including the books, and she paid for the caretaker.



*THE MEN'S CLUB  
ON MAIN STREET*

In 1907 the library was stocked with 479 books, many of them standard classics such as Shakespeare, Burns, Dickens, Mark Twain, Jane Austen and

Sir Walter Scott. The books covered a wide range of subjects including history, biography, poetry and fiction, as well as Chamber's Encyclopaedia and Gazeteers, and there were also books and manuals on practical subjects. The only subsequent additions to the library were four volumes of Queen Victoria's Letters, in 1908; all the other books were printed between 1900 and 1906.

Membership of the library cost two shillings a year, paid quarterly in advance; books could be lent only to the persons who subscribed, and only one book could be borrowed at a time. The library had 135 registered subscribers and at first it was fairly well patronised, but gradually the number of books borrowed began to decline, and in 1918 the library ceased lending books.

There is no way of knowing how many times books were referred to or looked at in the library, but there is a list of the number of times each book was borrowed between 1907 and 1908.

Sir Water Scott had the greatest number of books in the library with 22 novels, and the total number of times his books were borrowed, 118 times, was greater than anyone else's.

Anthony Hope's **The Prisoner of Zenda** and its sequel **Rupert of Henzau** were each borrowed 17 times.

A. Conan Doyle's **Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes** proved as popular as Jerome K. Jerome's **Three Men in a Boat**, being borrowed 18 times each.

Seven books by Jules Verne were borrowed more than 80 times, with **Dropped from the Clouds** and **Secret of the Island** slightly more popular than **Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea**.

Mark Twain had five books in the library, with a total number of borrowings of 69 with **Huckleberry Finn** the favourite with 15 borrowings and **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** borrowed 14 times.

Three of the most popular books in the library were by Guy Boothby whose **Kidnapped President** was borrowed 23 times, **Doctor Nikola** 24 times and **Pharos the Egyptian** especially popular being borrowed 33 times.

There were 17 books by Charles Dickens and they were borrowed more than 100 times, with **Nicholas Nickleby**, **Pickwick Papers** and **The Old Curiosity Shop** being the most popular, with only one borrower for **Sketches by Boz**.

Jane Austen had five books, which were borrowed 63 times, with **Pride and Prejudice**, **Mansfield Park**, and **Emma** borrowed more often than **Northanger Abbey** and **Sense and Sensibility**.

R.D. Blackmore's **Lorna Doone** was even more popular than Jane Austen's



**Pride and Prejudice**, being taken out 18 times.

Books on history were not very popular. Macaulay's **History of England** was borrowed once, as was one volume of Gibbon's **Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**, and nobody took out Carlyle's **History of Frederick the Great**.

John Mackintosh's book about Scotland was borrowed 5 times, but his books on Germany and Ireland had only one borrower each, and no-one borrowed his book about Japan.

A few people borrowed books of poetry; there were 7 borrowers of Lord Tennyson's poetry and one of Walt Whitman's.

A book on the theory and practice of the steam engine was borrowed 11 times, and one on practical carpentry 7 times.

Although the library did not lend books after 1918, books could still be read on the premises in the room where carpet bowls was played.

The Men's Club eventually ceased altogether in 1980 when the building was sold.

### **The Youth House**

*Miss Dorothy Robertson, who was Warden at the Youth House, has written this history of the House:*

'The Youth House was built by Mrs. Younger of Mount Melville in 1909 as a Women's and Girls' Club, and she provided a Club Leader and a domestic. The groundsmen at that time came down from Mount Melville to maintain the grounds.

'The Episcopal Church Sunday School was run by the Club Leader for many years in Youth House, Mrs. Younger being a keen Episcopalian.

'Guides were started in Strathkinness a year prior to St. Andrews — in 1918 when they were registered, with Miss Chandler as Captain. The W.R.I. also met in Youth House.

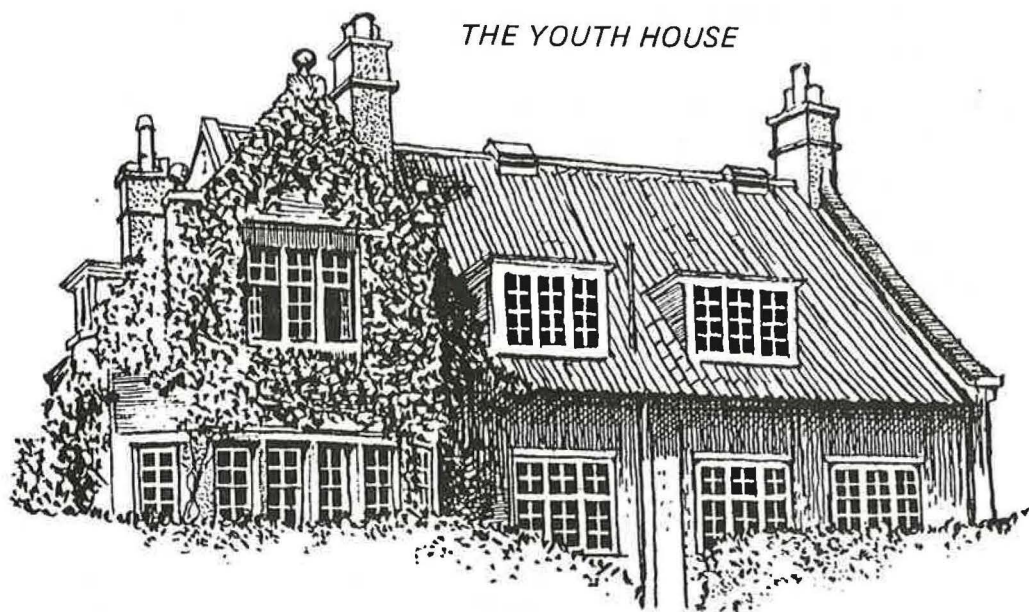
'During the Second World War the Youth House was requisitioned by the Home Guard when the late Mr. Alex Gray and Mrs. Gray took up residence there, and their youngest child, Isla, was born in Youth House — the only child ever to be born there.

'In 1944-45 Mr. Murray Stewart, County Youth Organiser, negotiated with Captain Younger (as he then was) on behalf of his father to obtain Youth House for the County and this was granted on the understanding that the

village should have facilities in the House as previously, it being a "Deed of Gift". The tennis courts which had been sorely neglected during the war years were brought back into use by Mr. Gray who had been appointed by the Fife Youth Committee (Education Committee) as Caretaker and Groundsman; the courts were put at the disposal of the village for a nominal rent of one shilling per annum.

'When the County acquired the Youth House, it was used for residential purposes by the County Youth Committee almost every weekend for training. Holiday groups used it during the summer weeks when the village was not using the building; they came with their own leaders, the Warden being responsible only for the welfare of the groups, but not for the actual programmes.

*THE YOUTH HOUSE*



'In 1945 Miss McCormick was appointed Warden. She was responsible for the maintenance of the building, and ran the Youth Club, which was not for girls only but was a mixed club. The official opening took place in 1945. In 1946 Miss McCormick was succeeded by Miss Walker, and Mrs. Gray was appointed as part-time cook during residential periods. Miss Walker ran the Club from 1946 to 1952 — although she did not run the Guides or Brownies.

'In 1951 Miss Dorothy Robertson took over the Wardenship and Youth Leadership in the village and also ran the Torch Club in St. Andrews. The residential side of the Youth House was more fully developed in her time, and a great deal of tact was needed to arrange for the village to have facilities in the House when there were residents in it.

'Due to ill health Mr. Gray resigned in the 1950s and Mr. Archie Webster took his place; later, when Mrs. Gray retired, Mrs. Webster was appointed as Cook.

'Miss Robertson retired in 1968 and Mrs. Rae was appointed to succeed her, but with no responsibility for St. Andrews.

'The building was damaged by fire in 1976 and after many years of wrangling, it was sold and is now a private dwelling house.'

### The Nurse's House

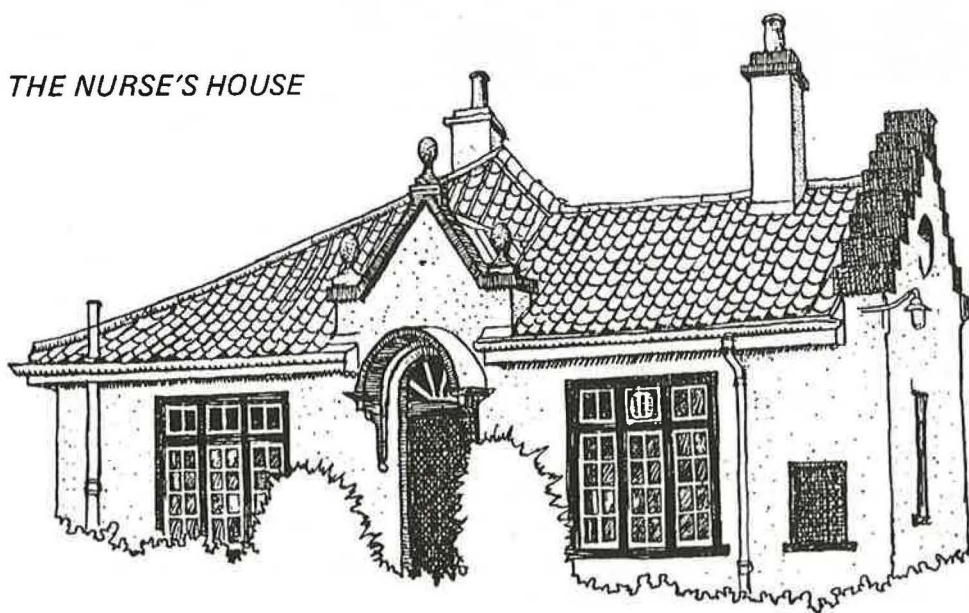
*In 1926 Mrs. Younger built a house for the District Nurse in Strathkinness.*

*Miss Annie Simpson and Miss Ella Simpson have written this account of the Nursing Association:*

'At a meeting held at Mount Melville on 18th November, 1924, and convened by Mrs. Younger, Mount Melville, it was decided to form a district Nursing Association to be known as the Strathkinness and Denhead Nursing Association. Annual membership would cost six shillings; non-members would pay one shilling and sixpence for the first visit and nine pence for subsequent visits of the nurse.

'The District Nurse lodged at Hall House (the former Free Church school-master's house) until in 1926 Mrs. Younger built the Nurse's Cottage (on the same side of Main Street at the bottom of the hill).

### THE NURSE'S HOUSE





'Mrs. Younger retired from the Association in 1929, and a committee elected at a Public Meeting held in the Mitchell Hall (the former Free Church School) took over the running of the Association under Mrs. Ballingall (Nether Strathkinness) as President. The village financed the Association by raising money from whist drives, concerts, and sales of work. This continued until the Health Service took over in 1948.

'Mrs. Younger bequeathed the cottage to the Association in 1942, together with a sum of money for the upkeep of the property. In 1963 the cottage was sold as it was no longer needed as a Nurse's home.

'The Association started a Chiropody Service in 1959 for the Senior Citizens, which continued until the Health Service took over in 1966. Since then the interest on the investments has been donated annually to the various village organisations.'

## 'KIRK AND COMMUNITY'

In June, 1963 Mr. Wallace Adam offered to print, free of charge, a Parish Magazine. It was hoped that the first issue would be out that October, but it was not until 1969 that the Rev. Alestair Bennett produced the first news-sheet. After Mr. Bennett's retiral in 1976 Mrs. Veronica Smart was responsible for keeping the newsletter going.

When the Rev. Douglas Galbraith became the new minister in 1977 he took over editing the newsletter. A copy of one of the first of these issues of the magazine now called "Kirk & Community", in June 1978 has written in the top right-hand corner: 'With thanks for the ideal:

*Mr. Galbraith sent the following contribution from Australia:*

"'Kirk & Community' was a monthly news sheet which appeared between September 1977 and June 1981 and was delivered free to every home in the village and as far as possible to the surrounding population.

'The editor was Douglas Galbraith, Minister of the parish for most of that period, who saw it as a service rendered by the church to the community.

'Regular features included a **village diary** (under various titles) which advertised events sponsored by any organisation, a **Gossip Column** (sometimes called 'Village People', 'Looking Back' etc.) which recorded personal successes, reports of the Community Council, PTA or other meetings, and any other happenings in the community – like the final removal of the unsafe bell and belfry from the Village Hall, and the 100th birthday of Kate Rook.

'**We're New Here** each month introduced new arrivals to the village. Phone numbers of **Heid Yins** were regularly listed.

'Two features were aimed at increasing residents' knowledge and awareness of their community. From the fifteenth issue onwards, each month a farm or local business was described at greater length with its history, present function and the personalities involved. From time to time, also, extracts from John Duncan's 'history' of the village were reprinted.

'The news sheet was typed at the Manse and reproduced, as a community gesture at the Guardbridge Paper Mills, by arrangement with the late Mr. Wallace Adam, an Elder of the Kirk.

"'Kirk & Community' was not seen as a means of 'pushing' the Church, whose news and events took their place alongside the others; rather the intention was to show that Church and Community belonged together, that 'religion' was not an isolated activity of a few, carried out in a building apart.

'The fact that the Gothic lettering in the masthead was interchangeable between the two parts of the title was intended to underline this. (Another reason, of course, was that otherwise the editor would be left with a pile of Lettraset Gothic sheets, complete except for the Ks, Is and Rs!) The regular feature **Last Word**, however, offered a Christian reflection on the events of the day'.

Because of the pressure of work Mr. Galbraith tried to find somebody else to take over the editorship, but as nobody came forward at that time (no doubt partly because nobody thought they could produce a newsletter nearly as good as Mr. Galbraith's), he continued until June, 1981, although he was no longer minister of Strathkinness.

After the Galbraith family departed for Australia the task of compiling and editing "Kirk and Community" was taken on by five young people: Jillian Morris, Donny Farmer, Alan Gyle, Graham Laidler and Mike Carr. Their issue of August 1981 is a masterpiece of brevity. In one page they announced that the Rev. Alexander Strickland would preach in Dairsie, Kemback and Strathkinness on Sunday 30th August, followed by voting; they thanked people for the support the Roundabout Club had received in raising funds for the construction of a Cheshire Home in Fife; they listed contacts in the village 'with corrections or omissions (sic) next month'; and they finished the page with a delightful postscript:— 'Apologies for the brevity of this month's edition. Despite digging like moles to find news we could find none — the villagers must all be in the Tropics sunning themselves'. In 1983 Graham Laidler and Mike Carr were promoted to Ace Reporters and they 'had help from Andrew Duncan too'.

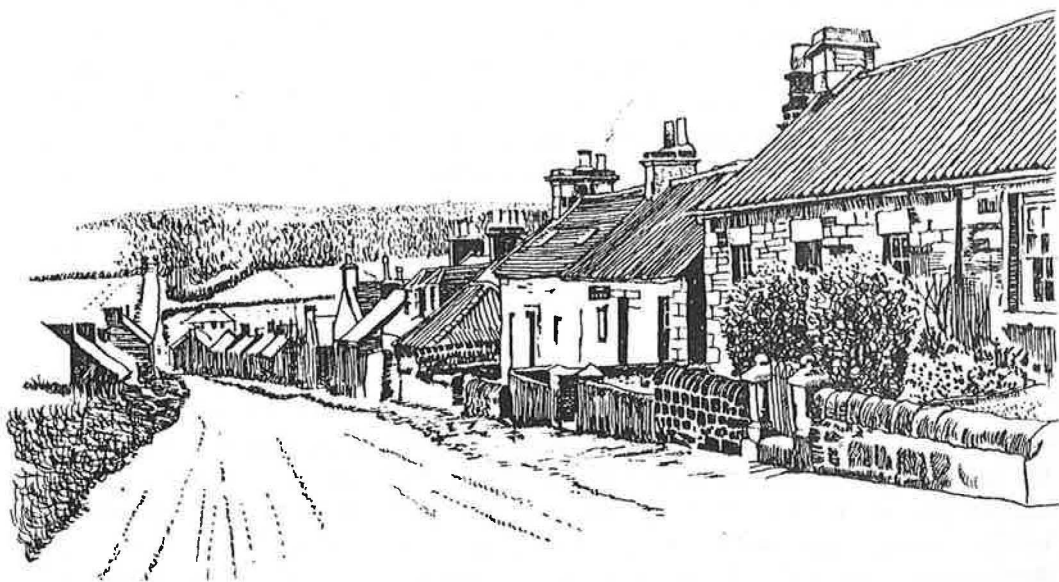
When Alan Gyle left, Susan Backhouse took his place. The young people continued to do an excellent job, even though they were all busy with school-work and other activities. In 1984 Susan needed a replacement typist. For the last two years she and Mike Carr had kept "Kirk and Community" going, but because of pressure of work they were forced to give it up. In 1985 Mrs. Louise Edward took over the typing and Mr. and Mrs. K. Overend did the duplicating. When Mrs. Edward's husband had a serious accident the Overends took over the typing as well as the duplicating.

Ken and Margaret Overend have worked hard to keep "Kirk & Community" more than a mere calender of events. They are anxious to continue the welcome to newcomers and they would like people to tell them in advance of what will be happening so they can make sure notices are put in before and not after an event. Mr. Strickland has continued the practice of the **Last Word** section started by Mr. Galbraith.



A few of the items which have appeared over the years, with various editors, include Kate Rook's 100th birthday in March, 1979; the Parish Church ceiling caving in and the use of the Village Hall (the old Free Church) for communion on May 4th, 1980; the eventual filling-in of the notorious pot-holes on Church Road; farewell to the Galloways after more than thirty years devoted service to the community in September, 1981; the sale of the manse in 1982 and the making of the car park at the Kirk in 1984.

It is no slight to the other editors to say that during Mr. Galbraith's period as editor "Kirk & Community" was a social history of the village; all those who have kept it alive should be thanked for the part they have played in helping to keep the village a community. In addition to the editors, all those who deliver the newsletter should be thanked and Guardbridge Paper Mills who have given the paper since the first issue in 1969 deserve thanks for their generosity.



## THE VILLAGE HALL AND THE CHURCH HALL

Most of the meetings and activities of the village take place in either the Village Hall or the Church Hall.

### The Village Hall

*Mrs. E. Mudie and Mrs. C. Reekie have contributed the following account of the Village Hall:*

Strathkinness Village Hall was originally the United Free Church in Strathkinness which united with the Church of Scotland in 1935. It was sold for £75 in 1938 to twelve persons acting as trustees for 'behoo of the inhabitants of the *quoad sacra* Parish of Strathkinness and to their successors in office as a Public Hall or for such other purpose as a majority of said inhabitants personally present'. It was sold with entry as on 1st March 1938.

The original Trustees were David Macrae Greig, John Robert Cuthbert, Wm. Duncan, Thomas Laing, William Isles Mitchell, Walter Nicoll, Wm. Yule Craig, Robert Niven, David Bruce, Rev. John Hall Patterson, Thomas Nicoll Craig, and Alexander Coutts.

The Trustees are elected at an Annual General Meeting from the general public who attend. This committee then elect their office bearers who are responsible for the upkeep of the Hall. In 1984-85 the cost of running the hall was £1,818. Organisations which use the hall include Drama Workshop, Badminton (2 evening and 1 morning session), Medau Rhythmic Movement, Brownies, Guides, Youth Club, Strathkinness Primary School for P.E. and Strathkinness School of Dance. Dances are also run by other organisations from time to time.

The lets cover the day to day running costs of the hall but it is necessary to hold fund-raising functions for major repairs. These functions include dances, whist drives, coffee evenings and mornings, and an annual Christmas draw. A new venture has been the coffee mornings on Thursdays during the summer when the hall is not being used by other groups. People passing through the village as well as people in the village can have a cup of coffee or tea and a chance to buy home-baking.

The North East Fife District Council also contributes towards the expenses with grants for specific repairs.

In 1984 when a new boiler for heating the hall was required, a great many fund-raising events were needed to raise the amount of money necessary for such a major expense.

The present (2nd August, 1986) Trustees are:

Mr. J. Arbuthnot (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs. C. Reekie (Secretary)
Mr. J. Backhouse	Mr. D. Sinclair
Mrs. J. Blyth (Treasurer)	Mr. J. Smith
Mrs. A. Coutts	Mr. M. Taylor
Ms. R. Garton	Mrs. B.A. Verner
Mr. W. Graham (Hon. President)	Mr. S. Younger (Chairman)
Mrs. J. King	Mrs. C. Younger
Mr. I. Law	

### **The Church Hall**

*The following account is written from information supplied by Mrs. Jessie Singleton:*

With so many activities going on in the village one hall is not sufficient to fulfil all its needs. The possibility of another hall in addition to the Village Hall was first discussed in 1955 when the Kirk Session considered a hut for congregational purposes, but at that time nothing was decided.

In 1962 'the Trustees [of the church] were to be petitioned to ask for permission to apply money from the sale of Mansedale [the former Free and United Free Church manse] towards the building of the Church Hall', and it was not long before the hall was built in the grounds of the church.

The Baird Trust (a Church of Scotland Trust) 'asked for a letter of acknowledgement for a grant of £300 towards the Church Hall to be engrossed in the minutes'.

The letting of the hall is done in an informal way by Mrs. Jessie Singleton. There is no set letting fee, but a contribution towards the upkeep of the hall is expected from those using it.

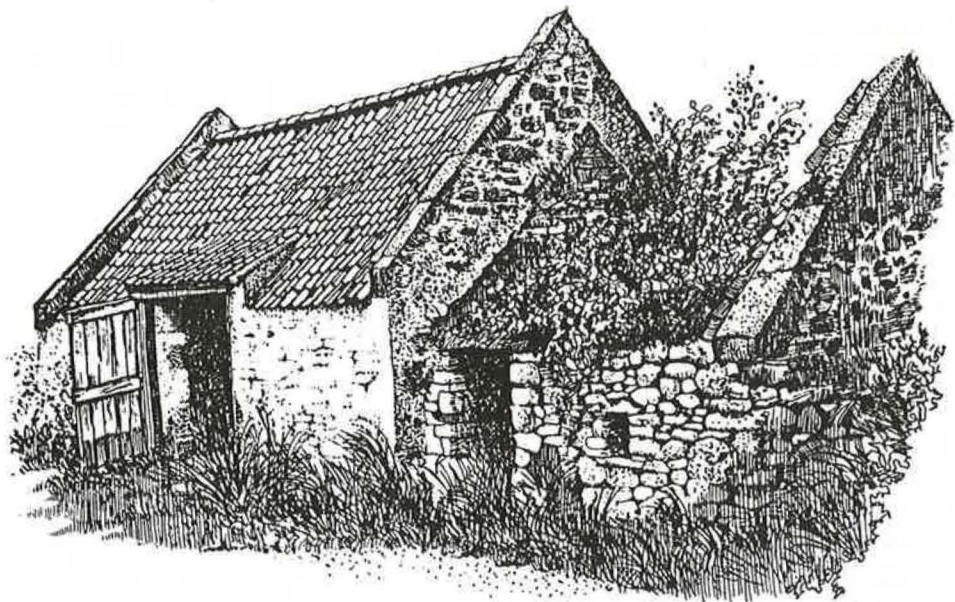


## HOUSES IN STRATHKINNESS

Although there are no buildings surviving in Strathkinness older than 1761, and most of the older buildings date from no earlier than the 1800s, there are several references in title deeds to ground feued before 1761 which mention houses and other buildings already on the land being feued.

The first mention of a house, as yet discovered, is in a feu charter relating to 'all and whole the Town and Lands of Poffle of Strathkinness with houses, biggings, yards, crofts, paths, pendicles and pertinents' which was granted in 1754. A feu for 'a house and yard and certain pieces of lands of the Poffle' was granted in 1757. In 1775 General Melville acquired a 'house, yeard and pieces of ground in the Poffle with the south part of the barn and the little stable at the east end of the houses of Robert Douglas...'

All that remains of the name 'Poffle' today are two semi-detached houses; 'The Poffle' and 'The Other Poffle'. There was a row of buildings in front of the remaining two houses, thought to have been built around 1800. All but two of these buildings were demolished in the 1930s and one of those left is in a dangerous condition.



The house known as 'The Poffle' has undergone several substantial alterations. In the early 1900s it was a piggery and later a dairy. The byre was converted into bedrooms and the central run-off trough can still be seen under the floor of one of the bedrooms. The rooms are asymmetrical as the

very large blocks of stone could not be moved during conversion. 'The Other Poffle' has also been extensively modernised and extended.

The land between the present 'Poffle' and the road to the north was sold to the Fife County Council for £250 in 1952. The name of the road was changed in 1960 to Sunnyside, having been known before that as either Poffle Lane or Poffle Road. Eighteen houses have been built on that part of land which was at one time only a very small part of 'The Town and Lands of Poffle'. Another part of Poffle land, latterly known as The Paddock, has recently been sold for building two houses.

The oldest surviving house in Strathkinness is 'Lilac Cottage' at 45 Sunnyside on Pettycruik. It was feued to Robert Aitken in 1761 by Henry Bethune of Clatto. The house was built in 1761, the same year the ground was feued, but it has been extensively rebuilt. It seems to have remained in the Aitken family until 1920 when the feu of the property consisting of several houses was obtained by the father of the present owner of the property.

'Kellock House' 47 Sunnyside, on the other side of Pettycruik, is another of the oldest houses in Strathkinness, although not built until nearly thirty years after 'Lilac Cottage' (the present name of the house). It was feued in 1796 to David Atkin, a mason from St. Andrews. By the next year a 'house with two byres' was built on the site. The house was sold in 1815 to a sawyer, James Traill from St. Andrews, and in 1852 it was sold by public roup (auction) for £27 to a baker, Thomas Scott. He sold the house a year later for £80 to another mason, James Dewar from Strathkinness. Then in 1852 the same Thomas Scott who sold the house in 1852 bought it back in 1866 for £80, but sold it in 1868 to another baker, James Scott of Strathkinness for £150. (It is not known whether the two Scotts were related but the census returns of 1841 and 1861 show a James Scott as one of two bakers in Strathkinness.) The house remained a baker's shop until 1869 when James Scott, who was indebted to Robert Tod, a flour merchant from Leith, was obliged to convey the property to him to pay his debts. The property was put up at public roup with an upset price of £150, but as there were no offers at that price the property was subsequently offered for sale at the upset price of £120. It was bought by Robert Lyell, a vintner, St. Andrews, who paid £152 — £2 more than the first upset price. There is no record of a Robert Lyell who was a vintner in Strathkinness in the census of 1871, so it is likely that he had bought the property for letting, which was a common practice. At Robert Lyell's death in 1892 the house was again sold at public roup, this time for £125 when it was bought by a widow, a Mrs. Janet McCubbin. She bequeathed it in turn to her brother and sister during their lifetime and it then went to her nephew John Coupar Lyall, an insurance agent in St. Andrews who sold it in 1922 for £250 to Robert Dow, a farmer



of Easter Strathkinness. He willed it to his widow who in turn willed it to her son, also Robert Dow, hotel proprietor, who resided in the house until his death in 1979 when it was bought by its present owners.

The house on the corner of Sunnyside and Main Street was built sometime in the 1830s. It was a public house until Andrew Thom came to Strathkinness in 1850 to set up in business as a joiner. He lived in this house on the corner which was next to the place he used for his workshop. When the Free Church built their new church he obtained the old Free Church building as a workshop and built a new house in its grounds in 1867. The building on the corner reverted to being a pub again and continued as a public house until the middle of the 1940s. It was called 'The Strathkinness Arms' in its earlier days and from the 1930s it became known as 'Laing's Inn'. After the end of the war it was a bakery for a short while, it then became a house for letting to the R.A.F., and then became vacant and was becoming derelict, until its present owners took it over in 1968, and are painstakingly renovating it themselves.

The feu of one of the properties on The Pleasance, which was at one time part of Kellock (or Skelloch) Loan, recorded in 1746, is one of the first feus to be found in Strathkinness which was feued by David Meldrum of Kincaple. There are Meldrum feus of other pieces of ground in The Pleasance but they mostly date from 1800. No dates of buildings are given on these deeds but it seems likely that the houses were built, for the most part, soon after 1800. Their leases were for one thousand years, and the usual annual rental was ten shillings and six pence.

Main Street was not built on until after other houses had been built in other parts of the village; the first building on Main Street was the Secession Church, built in 1801 and since demolished. Most of Lower Main Street was built around the time of the Disruption in 1843 when the Free Church took over the Secession Church building. After the new Free Church building was erected in 1867 more houses followed on Main Street. Most of the property on the west side of Upper Main Street was Melville property, while the whole of the east side was part of the school glebe. At the division of Strathkinness Commonty in 1777 part of the land given to the school was across the main road. In 1788 General Melville exchanged some of his land on the east side for some land on the other side, and consequently all the school land was now situated on the same side. The school glebe feus were granted mainly between 1829 and 1860. Although the deeds show the date of feuing the land, they rarely show the date when a house was built on the land. Nor is it possible to know for certain where people lived. As late as 1881 the census report states, 'This village is divided by the turnpike road...the divisions and streets having no names except a very few houses, the remainder all going under the name of Village of Strathkinness'.



The property at 14 Main Street known as 'Fossil House' (because of the fossilised tree trunks in front of it) was leased in 1879 by John Whyte Melville to Mr. Robert Mitchell, quarry master. The cottage behind it, 12 Main Street, now called 'Sithean Cottage', was converted from the stable of 'Fossil House'. From fragments of newspaper found in a window frame it appears that the conversion took place in 1950. In the grounds of the cottage there is a well which had an electric pump which was used after 1936 when electricity was installed until water was piped into the village and which provided both 'Sithean Cottage' and 'Fossil House' with water.

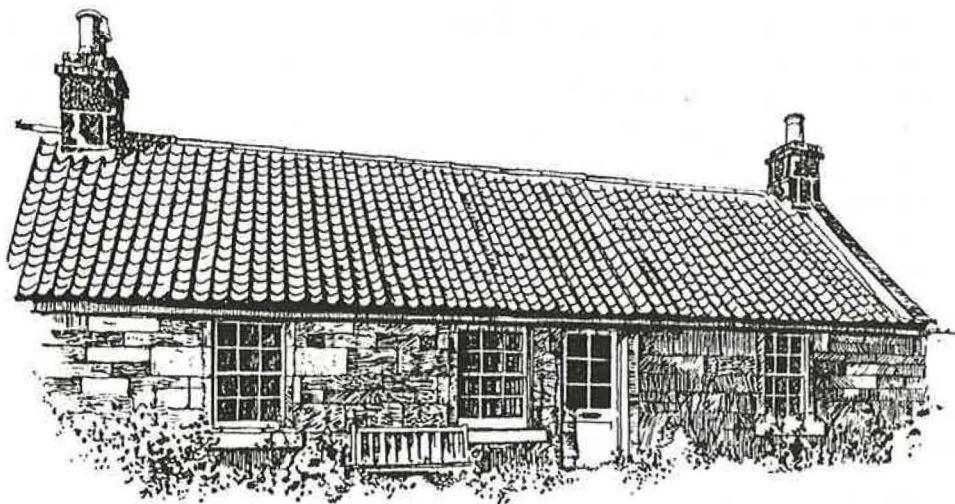
The deeds of 'Bonfield Cottage' were originally given for another site. In 1824 John Whyte Melville leased land to Andrew Lumsden 'to build a house and keep it in good order'. In 1851 Mr. Whyte Melville wished to extend the working of his quarry up to the site of the house. With compensation worked out by referees 'for the draining, manuring and trenching' of the land, a new site 'lying immediately to the Eastward and equal to the ground relinquished' was given to Mr. Lumsden in place of the original land.

Three cottages on Church Road, numbers 5, 7 and 9 were all part of the schoolmaster's glebe. They were originally two-roomed cottages with a store-room in the middle. Until the late 1960s the floors were made of earth and covered with linoleum. They had two box-beds in the living-room and one box bed in the best room. The ranges had a sway (a hook for hanging pots) and a chain over the fire. And, as was common in the village, there was a pigstye in each of the gardens.

Another property on Church Road which was part of the schoolmaster's glebe was number 11, 'Barley Rig'. It was two cottages, one a but and a ben with an apprentice's loft over it leading to a large stable workshop which was the other part of the property. It had first been feued to a wheelwright who had set a broad ring into the floor. The converted house was built into the shell of the two cottages.

The house on the east corner of Main Street and the High Road opposite 'The Tavern' now called 'Brig-a-Doon', and at one time called 'The Toll House' was part of the schoolmaster's glebe and was first feued in 1828. It is known that a toll-bar was in operation there by 1816 and census records of 1861 and 1871 give the names of toll keepers, but there is no evidence that they lived in that house or that it had ever been a toll house.

'The Cottage', 24 Church Road, is one of the few older properties in Strathkinness for which all the title deeds and documents have survived and are available for study. It is worth giving some of its history as it reveals many aspects of past life in the village.



In 1800 General Robert Melville agreed to give a lease of land to Spence Douglas, blacksmith, on condition that he 'should build a good House thereon'. Later, having built a house, probably in 1807, he was given a regular tack (lease) for 299 years. The property extended from what is now 22 Church Road to the point where Sunnyside and Church Road meet. All mineral rights were retained by General Melville, which was a common stipulation, but in Strathkinness the chance of finding useful minerals was not unlikely. There is a letter in the Melville Papers in the Scottish Record Office dated 1762 which says, 'I have made enquiries anent Coal being in the lands of Strickiness and Ballon and it is evident that Coal has been wrought in the Lands of Ballon, tho' not in the Memory of Man, and it is the Oppinion of a Coal Master, who was consulted in this Matter, that there are Meikles (much) in the Lands of Strickiness'.

Spence Douglas's rent was 1 firloft (4 pecks) of wheat, 1 firloft of barley and 1 firloft of oats yearly. He agreed to 'keep the Houses built thereon or to be built by him in a habitable and tenantable state...and to leave them at the expiry...in the same condition'. Any houses to be built were to conform to a 'plan lately executed by John Bell'. (Many landowners at this time were having their estates surveyed and maps drawn up to indicate feus or tacks; unfortunately this plan does not seem to have survived.) Any houses to be built had 'to preserve the regularity in the appearance of the Village' Furthermore, any 'Subtenants, Cottars or Dependents' were to remove from the property at the expiry of the tack (in the year 2099) 'without any previous warning'.



When Spence Douglas died in 1830 he was 'indebted to sundry persons'. His son John, who was only twenty years old at the time, had within the space of two months made over the property with all its rights to two separate parties, one of them acting as Trustee for a group of creditors. They agreed to sell the property jointly and to share the proceeds. Spence Douglas had not necessarily failed in business as a blacksmith. As he had been involved in the first leasing of feus in the schoolmaster's glebe in 1811 he may have got into debt because of land dealings. The public roup for the sale of the property was held in 1832 in the house itself, with an upset price of £85, with the 'person making the last and highest offer at the outrunning of a half-hour sand-glass to be the offerer preferred' and with payment to be made in full within one month. John Kaid, who had been Spence Douglas's partner in the feuing of the school glebe, bought the property for £87 having offered one pound more than Spence's son John.

John Douglas set up another smiddy further along Church Road at the property now called 'Morenish' and which remained a blacksmith's shop for many years. John's son, Spence, is still remembered by some people in the village. (Miss Marion Brown who lives in one of the old people's cottages almost opposite the houses built by the first Spence Douglas is his great-great-granddaughter.) John Douglas's lease, which was also Melville property, was quite different from that which had been given to his father. The initial lease was for nineteen years only, and his rent was £6 a year, plus the statute labour tax. (Statute labour had been a means of making roads and keeping them in repair, but it had been commuted to a tax almost everywhere by 1790.) He was obliged to 'labour, crop and cultivate the land according to the most approved rules of good husbandry as generally practiced in the neighbourhood'. Spence Douglas who did not have as much land to cultivate had only been given the right 'to pluck and plant'. (After the division of the commonities and feuing of the land by the heritors many of the landowners were insisting that what were termed the 'new methods of agriculture' should be practised by their tenants.)

The property bought by John Kaid in 1832 consisted of several houses which had been built by Spence Douglas before 1815. When John Kaid died in 1841 the houses were again sold by his son who needed the proceeds to pay off his own debts. This time the property was sold at a roup within the house of James Lyall, vintner, with an upset price of £120. At the outrunning of the sand-glass, during which there had been several offers, William Peattie, weaver, of Strathkinness having offered £134, became the owner. William Peattie probably bought the houses for renting as he already owned property in Strathkinness.



He had no direct heirs and the property went to Robert Adamson who had formerly lived in St. Andrews but was later resident in Cupar. He left the property to his wife's neice, Mrs. Margaret Nairne Wilkie who continued to let the houses. She moved to London and sold off part of the property she had inherited for £136 in 1867 to Robert Forgan, golf club maker of St. Andrews. The property she sold was two houses which were separated from the rest of the property and built at right angles to the others, at the intersection of Sunnyside and Church Road, now made into one house called 'Newton Lea'.

The remaining three houses were sold by Mrs. Wilkie's heirs. When the property was put up for sale in 1913, at the upset price of £120 there were no offers. It was bought later that year at the reduced upset price of £100 by Mr. William McKendrick, a joiner from Dundee, who had previously bought a nearby house at what is now 20 Church Road, and whose wife 'belonged the village'. Her nephew, James Peattie, was living in one of the houses her husband bought from Mrs. Nairn's heirs. Mrs. McKendrick had no children and when she died in 1934 her neice in St. Andrews, Mrs. Elizabeth Brace, inherited the houses which she sold the following year for £150. Mrs Catherine Dennison from St. Andrews who bought them, let them as separate houses until 1946 when she decided to sell the property in two lots. One lot, consisting of two houses, was sold for £150 to Mr. James Duncan who was living in one of the houses. The other lot consisting of a larger house was sold for £100 to Mr. James Peattie, paperworker, who had been living in the house for over thirty years. Many people living in Strathkinness remember the Peatties; one lady remembers there being two brass double beds in each room. Mr. Peattie died in 1947 and his daughter Mrs. Jean Peattie Gray inherited his house.

In 1959 Mr. James Duncan, lorry driver's mate, son of Mr. James Duncan who had bought one part of the property in 1946 died intestate. According to neighbours of the Duncans, his widow had a roup, reputedly the last to have been held in Strathkinness, at which she sold all her husband's belongings before she could be assessed for tax. Mrs. Duncan's right to inherit the property was challenged in the Sheriff Court, but she was found to be 'absolutely and exclusively entitled to her husband's estate'.

In March 1963 Mrs. Duncan sold her property for £100 to Miss Anne Crawford from Edinburgh. In May of the same year Mrs. Gray sold her part of the property to Miss Crawford for £300. The houses which up to this time, whether owned by one or more persons, had always been rented out separately. In 1963 they came together as one house and the 'making of the village' which Andrew Thom had said earlier would be the result of a proper water and

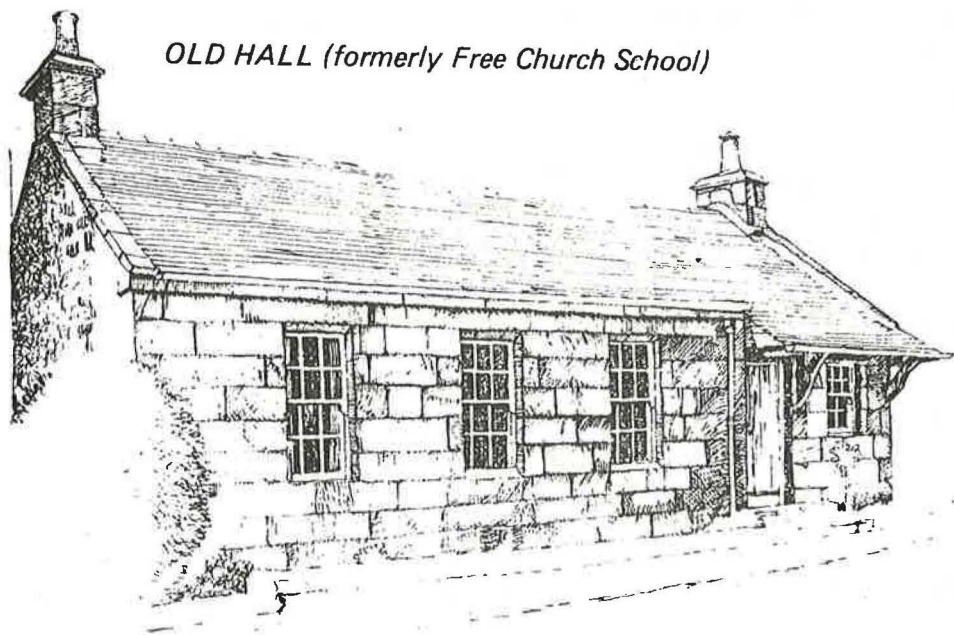
drainage system, meant that property such as 24 Church Road was now the kind that was developed and modernised. It is part of a row of cottages which like others in Strathkinness, in The Pleasance and Bonfield Road, although renovated and altered still retain much of the character of an earlier century.

In the early 1960s when Mount Melville and Drumcarrow Crescents were built, forty-seven new houses brought many more people into the village. In 1950 the County Council built six houses on Bonfield Road, and in 1953 six more houses were built on Church Road beside the playing field. In 1957 eight houses were built on the High Road, and in 1960 twenty-two houses were built on Sunnyside, including six specially designed for older people.

*OLD PEOPLES' HOUSES*



*OLD HALL (formerly Free Church School)*



With the first phase of building at Bonfield Park, completed in 1957, fifteen more houses were built, and the second phase has brought the total number of houses at Bonfield Park up to thirty-six.

Some of the spaces between houses have been built on within the past few years, and The Men's Club on Main Street, The Youth House on Bonfield, and the old Free Church School on Lower Main Street have all been renovated recently.

Strathkinness is a blend of houses containing houses of the 19th century interspersed with newer ones and council houses well designed to fit in with the earlier houses. The two crescents of houses also fit in a small rural village.

It was not until after the two crescents of houses were built that houses had numbers on them. Names of houses were changed, moved from one place to another, or there could be more than one similar name in the village, so when the Post Office decided all houses should be numbered some of the confusion was removed.



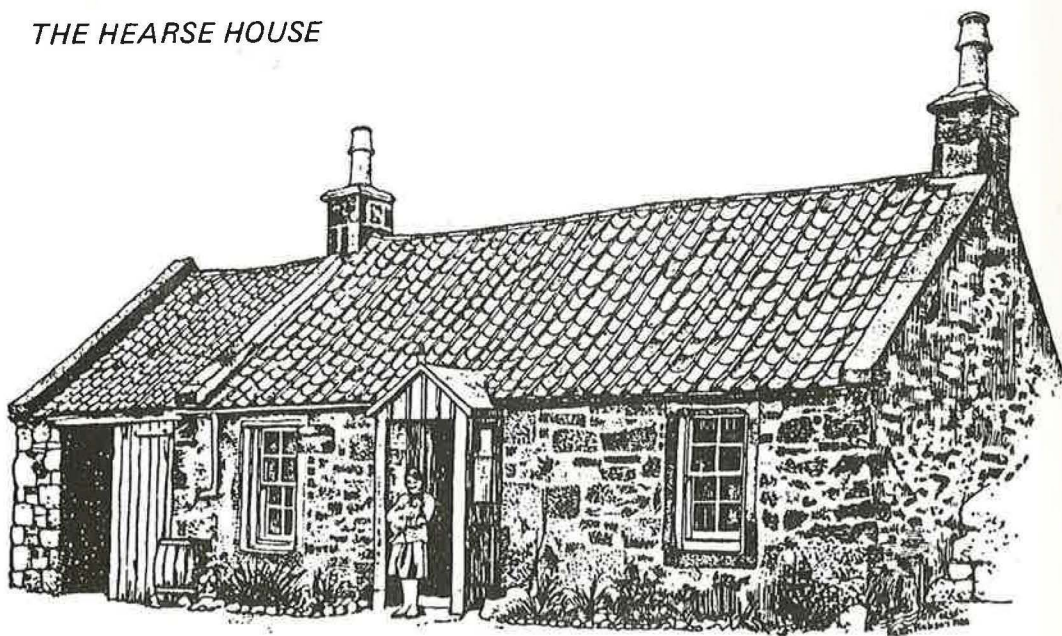
## THE HEARSE HOUSE

A feature of Strathkinness which, according to Mrs. Betty Willsher, an expert on gravestones in Scotland, was most unusual was the 'hearse house' now 36 High Road.

The hearse kept there and maintained by public subscription was used by the villagers to carry the coffins to St. Andrews for burial as there was no burial ground in Strathkinness. A farmer would loan a horse to pull the hearse-cart and villagers would walk behind to the burial ground either at the cathedral or, when that became restricted to those who could afford to buy a plot there, to the Eastern Cemetery, adjacent to the cathedral — a distance of some four miles.

The practice seems to have died out in the early 1900s, as John Duncan says in his reminiscences of the village that by the time of his youth (around the turn of the century), the hearse was becoming dilapidated.

### *THE HEARSE HOUSE*



## THE MELVILLES

Robert Melville, who became one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Fife, was the son of the Reverend Andrew Melville of Monimail. He was born in 1723 and in 1744, after having completed his education at Leven Grammar School and the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, he began his distinguished career in the army. He first saw active service in Flanders in the War of the Austrian Succession, and in the West Indies in the Seven Years War where, beginning with the rank of major, he was soon promoted to lieutenant-colonel for the part he played in the capture of the French island of Guadeloupe in 1759. In 1763 he was made Governor of that island.

He was second in command of the forces which captured Dominica, and he took part in the capture of Martinique in 1762. He was then promoted to Brigadier-General and in 1763 appointed Governor-in-Chief of all the French islands in the West Indies seized during the War and retained by the Treaty of Paris (Grenada, The Grenadines, Dominica, St. Vincent and Tobago). He retained the post for seven years, and it is reported that he showed 'great judgement and humanity' and that 'much advantage to the islands' resulted from his regime. However, it has also been said that he was less sympathetic towards the French Roman Catholic inhabitants than was the British Government and other British officials, although there is no suggestion that he was in any way oppressive.

General Robert Melville had extensive economic interests in the West Indies, and in 1767 he was given a royal grant for 300 acres on Dominica, which he named Melville Hall Estate, where he developed an extremely profitable plantation producing sugar and rum based on slavery, the established labour system in the West Indies at that time.

With the wealth he amassed in the West Indies he extended the lands he had inherited from his father, which enabled him to become one of the most influential landowners in Fife.

General Melville, like many other landowners of the time, was interested in farming methods and in different species of plants. In 1765 he established, on St. Vincent, the first Botanical Garden in the New World, which was to be used for the propagation of plants of medicinal and commercial value and also as a nursery for valuable tropical plants.

It was to obtain rare species of breadfruit for this Garden that Captain Bligh set out for the South Seas in **H.M.S. Bounty** in 1787. A subsequent voyage made by Captain Bligh five years later landed over 500 rare plants from Otaheiti at St. Vincent for the Botanic Garden



Robert Melville never married, although he had a daughter, Charlotte Melville, whose mother was a slave. It was a not uncommon practice in the West Indies for Europeans to make alliances of this sort with slaves, as it was thought by many white people that the heat and prevalence of disease made the islands unsuitable for white women. Children of such alliances were given privileges denied to other slaves on the plantation and this did not seem to be resented by the other slaves. A daughter would be allowed to run her father's household, but would not be allowed to take a place in society with him. General Melville left his daughter very well provided for, provided she did not ever leave the West Indies.

John Whyte, Robert Melville's cousin and heir, was closely associated with Robert Melville in all his interests in both the West Indies and in Scotland. He was himself heir to estates in Bennochty in Fife. In 1798 he was given Royal License to add Melville to his name, and from 1798 much of Robert Melville's property was transferred to him. General Melville was blind for the last few years of his life, and by 1803, six years before his death, John Whyte Melville was being designated as 'John Whyte Melville of Strathkinness and Bennochty'.

*CRAIGTON 1698*



Lands in John Whyte Melville's possession in 1803 included:—

Strathkinness lands formerly in the name of Lord Burleigh, Lumbo, portions of the lands of Strathkinness of old, five portions of 'Baloan' 68 acres of Denbrae, part of Hollowhill, parts of the lands of Clatto, the lands of 'Bonefield', The Town and Lands of Poffle of Strathkinness, lands in Bogward, Denhead, Prior Acres, Craigton, and various lands formerly belonging to sundry other owners.



John Whyte Melville continued to extend his land holdings and when he died in 1813, four years after Robert Melville, more property in Strathkinness, as well as Strathkinness Farm, Rummond Farm, Tongues of Clatto and Bishopton had been added to the property held by the Melvilles.

His son Robert was only eighteen years old when he inherited the estates and he died not long after coming of age. His brother, also John Whyte Melville, was also a minor when he inherited the estates from his brother in 1818.

It was this John Whyte Melville who became closely identified with the affairs of the village, and who gave the land for the Parish Church and the manse in Strathkinness, although he himself was an Episcopalian, and was instrumental in the building of the Episcopal Church on Queens Terrace in St. Andrews in 1869. In this church there are two very fine stained glass windows commemorating his wife and himself.

Before the Disruption in 1843 he and his wife, Lady Catherine, who was a daughter of the Duke of Newcastle, had been in the habit of attending the Episcopal Church in St. Andrews (in North Street until 1869) in the forenoon and the Parish Church in Strathkinness in the afternoon. (This would have been in the building used jointly by the church and the school as the Parish Church was not built until 1864.) It was said of Mr. Whyte Melville, 'while a conscientious Episcopalian he had no prejudices....it would not have occurred to him that he could not worship as well in one place as in the other. But he preferred his own church'.

Mr. Melville was reported to have been 'in some respects the most public man in Fife'; he was Convener of the County, a member of the first School Board for the Landward District, the first chairman of the Parochial Board in St. Andrews, the Right Worshipful Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, twenty years an active member of the Court of the University of St. Andrews, an original Trustee of the Parish Church in Strathkinness, a member of the Fife Hunt and Captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

Mr. Melville had two daughters who predeceased him, and his only son, George Whyte Melville, a Victorian novelist and noted horseman, was killed in a riding accident in 1878. Shortly before her death Lady Catherine Melville erected the fountain monument on Market Street in St. Andrews to her son's memory.

When John Whyte Melville died in 1883 at the age of eighty-six his property in Strathkinness went to his cousin James Mackintosh Balfour who also added Melville to his name. The Balfour Melvilles owned most of the property in Strathkinness until 1900 when it was sold to Mr. James Younger of Alloa.

## ANECDOTES

Anecdotes are not only interesting or amusing in themselves, they also illustrate aspects of life.

There is a story told in the village about the Free Church and the Parish Church, which if not true, might well have been. In the Free Church there was a window high up in the wall from which a good view of the Parish Church could be obtained. When the two churches were holding services at the same time, somebody would keep a watch from the window to see when the members of the Parish Church came out. The Free Church could then allow its congregation to depart, as a longer service had proved that the Free Church was Godlier than the Parish Church.

*A story Mrs. Nancy Webster of Bonfield Road related is about her uncle, chauffeur to the Younger family:*

'The head chauffeur at Mount Melville, Mr. A. (Sandy) Grieve, one day had to take Mrs. Younger to St. Andrews shopping. When the shopping was finished he assisted Mrs. Younger into the car, then got into the driver's cabin and started up the engine. In the meantime Mrs. Younger had seen one of her friends across the street, opened the other door and went over to speak to her. The chauffeur got back to Mount Melville, got out of the car and opened the back door to let Mrs. Younger out and found she wasn't there. So he had to go back to St. Andrews and, needless to say, was worried in case he got "told off". However, Mrs. Younger saw the funny side and smiled, then was driven safely home to Mount Melville'.

*Another true story, told by Mr. Alf Arkle, 'Lilac Cottage', Sunnyside, is the sort of thing that could happen to any child:*

'In 1930 at the age of ten the Kinness Burn was a great attraction to me and other boys from the village. It seemed to have about four times the volume of water it has today. At a point about mid-way between Tongues of Clatto Farm and the main road there was a small stone bridge. One day in bright sunshine a friend and I noticed a shoal of small fish dart under the bridge. After a close inspection, we decided they were young trout about two inches long. We had no net, but with a lot of patience, we managed to coax two into a small tin.

'My first intention was to keep them in the rain water barrel. (Every house had a rain water barrel then.) However, I was told that young trout needed fresh running water. The well at Pettycruik was a rather unusual type only about eight feet in depth and five feet in diameter with a concrete slab covering the top. Outside the well were steps going down to a small door which one

could open and look down into four or five feet of water. The door was usually locked and only used when the well was cleaned out. The day I was looking for a place to put my fish the padlock had been left open, so I opened the door and slipped the fish into the well. I could only visit the well when I thought there would be no adults around. Then I used to drop in a small earthworm and watch the fish devour it.

'I do not know exactly how long the fish were kept in the well, but one day, I overheard a neighbour tell my father that there was a trout in the well and they were speculating as to how it had got there, and worse still, I heard my name mentioned. I baited a small hook that evening and managed to catch one. What happened to the other fish I do not know, but I never saw it again as the door was then kept locked. The interesting thing was that the fish had grown to about twice its original size. If the water in the well had been contaminated, as has been said, I have been told by experts that the fish would have died.'

*The late Archie Webster, raconteur, told the following story:*

'I was ploughing at Blebo on land belonging to Dr. Low. The share gie'd a dunt on a muckle flat stane. I cried on the grieve. He cam over and said "Brak it up, Erchie, brak it up". But I said, "Na, na, it micht be auld. Hae a word wi' the laird. He gae'd tae the big hoose and cam runnin back shouting "leave it alane, Erchie, leave it alane. The laird's phoned St. Andrews 'varsity and they're sendin oot an archangel tae inspect it".'

As Dr. John Thompson, former Rector of Madras College adds, 'Unfortunately, the written word cannot convey Archie's intonation or his chuckling delight in the story'.


There are many more stories that could be told which, in their own particular way reflect life in the past.





## REMINISCENCES

Several people have written about their early days in Strathkinness. Mrs. Margaret King, when caretaker of Strathkinness School, wrote and illustrated, for the schoolchildren, an account of what life was like in the village when she came from St. Andrews nearly forty years ago.

'The house we lived in stood across the field from the school — 'Sunnyside' It was the length of the four houses where Jason (Mrs. King's grandson) stayed and his daddy was born there. It had two rooms, a kitchen, a big wash-house, a stable and a byre. At one time it had been a wee croft. There was no water or electricity; we had a pump between the stable and the byre so all water had to be carried in pails to the house and then carried out again as there was no sink. We burned Tilley lamps and sometimes candles; a big barrel stood at the corner for the rain water. This was used to wash with; on washing day you had to start early as the wash boiler fire had to be lit. It was a three

cornered thing  with a big fire under it as there were no washing machines then. A big bath sat on a trestle for rinsing the clothes and we also

had a big mangle . You put towels and sheets through it and sometimes if you were a bit careless, you could nip your fingers. A friend of mine

had one of the first washing machines which was a funny shape . You turned a handle and it agitated the clothes; it was on wheels and it worked.

'Some houses in Strath at that time had earth floors. They had home-made rugs in front of their ranges (fires); the rugs were made of rags and were pretty drab being mostly black, navy or green. The ranges were the pride and joy of the lady of the house. They were black-leaded and the steel polished

until you could see your face in it.



'There was an oven on one side with a wee boiler you could fill from the top and a brass tap from which you could get hot water. Lots of folk cooked in the oven and fried their bacon and eggs on top. A black kettle always sat on top so that you always had hot water. The girdle was placed on top of the range and you kept the fire quite low and baked bannocks and scones.

People ate plainer food then and a pot of broth usually sat simmering away. Houses with a room and kitchen were called "buts and bens". Lots of them had boxed-in beds on one side of a wall and you had a wee scullery (kitchen now).



Jug for water



Basin for washing in and  
Pails to keep water in.



A marble slab  
for baking on

'The toilet was usually put up a mile away from the house; the first one consisted of a long scrubbed wooden board with a round hole in the middle and a pail under it; but in later years they had a chemical closet which was a bit better. It was an eerie place on a winter night and a windy place too as there was a space above the door. A candle was used and you had to look to see if there were any creepy-crawlies about. The man of the house usually emptied it into a hole in the garden. Vegetables grew big in those days! Chamber pots were used a lot then.

'In one house near the foot of the village the lady was a dressmaker. I had the girls' frocks made there and she often told me that John, her husband, had been up through the night shooting rats; he kept a gun at the side of his bed.

'An old lady who was very tiny stayed at the top of the town — she lived to be over 100. She had a set of drums and used to sit at her front door playing them. Many years later I said to her one day "Do you still play your drums?" "No", she said, "the rats ate the skins of them". There was another family who lived in a wooden caravan along at the corner of "The Cherries" (on the High Road). There was an old granny, aunts and children. They must have had a long way to carry water, probably from the well you see in front of Mrs. Hughes' (further along the High Road). The caravan went on fire one night. The piece of land there (in front of Mrs. Hughes') belongs to the village and is called the "well green". People bleached their clothes there long ago. There also stood an old house between the old Irish Huts and Mrs. Hughes' house where lived a real old worthy who smoked a clay pipe; she told many tales. She didn't have much comfort — a box bed, a chair and table and always a dog (well fed). She lived to be a good age. She and her man, when they were younger, were sort of "rag and bone" sellers.

'Two doors up from Verners' shop of today stood the village store which was just one room of the house. They sold all kinds of things but the thing I

remember most was the big barrel of herring (salted) which stood in the narrow passage. The floor boards were rotten and how it didn't go through them I'll never know. Then along came the Galloways and made the shop, which was attached to the house they stayed in further up. We had a fish and chip shop for a while. Then up where Mrs. Akerboom stays (on the corner of Sunnyside and Main Street) was Laing's Pub which was a real dark affair. It changed hands to a George Nunn but he sold up to go trapping on the Hudson Bay. After that it became a baker's shop and a tea room with a big bakehouse at the back —you could get rolls straight from the oven at 6 a.m. The Post Office was there for a wee while and also a shop where Mrs. Hacking stays (38 Main Street); groceries and Post Office — it had changed again! Later on another shop opened up near the top of the town. Many years earlier there was one across from the monument. There was also a Co-op next door to Mrs. Coutts (34 Main Street) but long before her time. It was burned to the ground. There was also a butcher's shop and slaughter house. A dairy was round at the back of The Poffle. Many piggeries were in the village 60—70 years ago. A weighbridge stood opposite the pub at the top of the town and some rings are still in the wall where the men from the Knockhill stone quarry tethered their horses while in for a pint when the stones were getting weighed.

'Long years ago there were two brothers who lived at the End o' Jean's at this end of the Pleasance Row; they had a horse and cart selling china, doormats, chamber pots, black lead, etc. One brother stayed on the cart and the other walked about shouting, "Pan, shine..." There was also a house along Bonfield Road, one room of which was a shop; they sold vegetables and Hislop was their name..

'The Youth Club was the meeting place for the W.R.I. who had a very good entertainment group and put on a lot of concerts. A skiffle group was formed and this played many times in the village and to many W.R.I.s around Fife. Also 25-30 years ago a country dance class was held in the school; in addition there was dressmaking and art. Down at the far side of the nurseries was Mitchell Hall where many dances were held.


'Down at Kincapple Farm they sometimes had barn dances in the barn and a sight to behold were the 16 Suffolk Punches and the Belgian horse which they had there. They came up the back braes to be shod at the village smithy.

'Many changes have taken place in the school. At the new end (towards Main Street) before the change you entered by a big green door. To the left stood the staff toilet and on the other side the boys' cloakroom with two sinks at the window and rows of green pegs all numbered. The two front classrooms had a folding partition which, when opened up, made one big



room. Dances were often held in it (country dancing). The spare back room was the dining room with three long tables and three forms. Mrs. Thomson's office was the kitchen for washing the dishes. The dinners at that time came from Tayport. The present staff room was the girls' cloakroom which also had rows of numbered pegs and sinks in the windows. Miss Anquitel's room had no porch or toilets and a black stove stood in the room; it had to be kindled every morning early so that the room would be warm for 9 a.m. Later in the evening it was cleaned out and reset for the next day. Where you see the skylight at the backdoor stood the boiler house with a big boiler which had to be kept stoked to heat the main building; some days it took the hump and was dour, depending on which way the wind blew. If it was out of the north it burned quickly, but if out of the south on a muggy day it just lay dormant; at that time we used large anthracite.

'The toilets then were at the back of the present dining room where there is a whitewashed wall; there were six in all, and during a bad snowy winter they froze up a lot. I remember a long time ago the Council sending along a man

with a brazier  to try to defrost them - it was soon got rid of. Every time

a child needed the toilet someone had to go with them. The school sometimes had to close early. The floors long ago were swept with Dustmo; you put this sort of sand at one end and then swept it to the other end. It kept the dust down but filled the seams in the wood. Before the boiler house was built, every room had a big open fire and the desks were doubles and went up in rows so that the children who sat at the back were quite high up. Some people in the village remember when it was like that. The Headmaster then was called Mr. Mauchline, and when the old boiler house was knocked down we found netballs and balls still in the wrapping paper with his name on them; they hadn't been opened. There were also lots of old maps of Lions and Tigers and other old maps which were burned in the boiler.

'At the Strathkinness Schools Centenary (of the Education Act of 1872) many interesting items were displayed including silver thimbles, medals and some very interesting old photographs, log books, etc.'

Another description of village life has been written by Mrs. Catherine Gray, Morenish, Church Road who came to live in Strathkinness more than fifty years ago.

'Strathkinness in 1923 had no sanitation and all water for drinking and cooking had to be drawn from wells. As the well water was hard due to the lime content, water for washing was taken from rainwater from the roofs collected in barrels outside each house door, which was soft and lathered well.

All clean water had to be carried in pails and dirty water was poured down the drains. Washing, which was hard work in those days, was done in tubs with scrubbing boards and hard soap. If one did not have a wash boiler, white articles were boiled in a huge pot on the kitchen fire which made them as clean and white as they are today. Every housewife had a personal pride in her line of sheets, etc. hung out to dry in the fresh air and sunshine. Lavatories were outside with pails which had to be emptied.

'Paraffin lamps were used for lighting, the wick being trimmed and the globe polished each morning ready for the evening; if one forgot to prepare the lamps in the morning and tried to fill them in the gathering gloom of the evening, it was most probable that the paraffin would overflow and the resulting smell would linger in the house all evening. Candles were also used to light one to bed.

'Most houses were a butt and ben (two rooms) with a small room in the middle used for water and coal pails, sweeping brushes, a table with a basin to wash the dishes and a bread bin. There were beds in both ends with white covers and valances which were always clean and starched, and under the beds clothes baskets were kept and anything one wanted to keep out of sight. All the houses were well-cared for, the windows sparkled and the brasses shone. Gardens were usually large and cultivated and vegetables such as potatoes, kail, turnips and peas were grown. Most people also kept a few hens for eggs and a fowl for the pot.

'In the field opposite the smiddy the men played football, and in August, about market time, a flower show was held there. There was keen competition with flowers, vegetables and onions. Mrs. Younger provided a marquee and lent many beautiful plants from her hot houses at Mount Melville, and she always presented the prizes.

'The village was supplied with drinking water and cooking water from wells and nearly every garden had one. The main wells were the one at the school, one opposite the Girls' Club (the Youth House), one at Lower Main Street and one at Mrs. Hughes' where the bleaching green is.

'There were a few smallholdings in existence; The Poffle — Mrs. Douglas; California which had a horse-mill until the new houses were built; and Harry Peattie's piggery where Mount Melville Crescent now stands.

'Electricity came to the village in the 1930s and water and sanitation after the end of the war in the 1950s when Council Houses were built and things began to settle down again. We then began to have electric cookers, washing machines and all mod cons. Cottages were renovated, beds were now installed

in bedrooms, bathrooms were added, there was piped water and sanitation and also street lighting which was a joy after the black-out of war time. In addition streets were improved and resurfaced with pavements on which to walk.

'In 1923 there were two pubs in the village, a policeman, a district nurse, together with a post office and two churches. Mr. Patrick, shoe repairer was in the main street where Mr. Verner now lives. Mr. Lumsden, who lost a leg in the 1914-18 war and became caretaker of the Men's Club, also mended shoes. Maggie Malcolm's (now Margate) sold sweets, biscuits, lemonade, etc. Henry Laing's shop sold groceries, soap, paraffin etc. Jessie Wilson ran the post office and also sold haberdashery, writing paper postcards, etc. (where Mrs. Hacking now lives). Mrs. Craig at the top where Mr. Polompo now lives sold newspapers and groceries; we had our "Courier" delivered every morning as we do nowadays. Where the new houses on Sunnyside are below the Lemonade Works (now used by J. and D. Walker Bros.), Willie Young butcher, came round with his van. Mr. Arkle ran a market garden and came round with a horse and cart selling fruit and vegetables; he also sold coal and would collect goods which came by rail to Guardbridge Station. William Niven & Sons moved their butchers' shop (Marina Cottage) to Church Street, St. Andrews in 1923, but continued to use their slaughter house, where Mrs. Weir Breen now lives, for many years. Mr. Sweeney had a tailor's shop in Upper Main Street where the late Mr. and Mrs. Cockburn lived.

'Taylors' Nurseries were well known for their plant, seeds, tomatoes, bridal bouquets, wreaths etc. It was a family business run by the late Mr. Robert Taylor and his sons -- latterly by his grandson.

'One could hear the anvil ringing early in the morning from the village smiddy as Mr. Cunningham, the blacksmith, prepared the shoes for the work horses from the surrounding farms. Mr. J. Walker who was an expert in wrought iron work then took over and there are some beautiful examples of his work still to be seen in the village today.

'Andrew Thom & Sons had a family joiners business on the site of the garden where Sir J. McPetrie now lives. His workshop was previously the Old Free Kirk in which hand made coffins were produced. All the joiners trained by Andrew Thom were excellent craftsmen.

'The primary School was staffed by a Headmaster who lived in the School-house assisted by three lady teachers. There were also travelling music, art, and gym teachers. Evening classes, which included dressmaking, were popular and were taken by Mrs. Stobie, the Headmaster's wife.



'The Parish minister lived in the Manse. The Free Church Manse was Mansedale, where Mrs. Danskin now lives. In 1923 the Ceres Free Church and the Strathkinness Free Church had united (they united in 1917), and the minister lived in Ceres. The Free Church Manse was let to a retired minister who later went to Edinburgh. When the congregations in Strathkinness united the Free Church was sold and is now the Village Hall.

'In days gone by there were five smiddys (at different times) in the village; (1) Where Mr. Walker is today; (2) Where my bedrooms are in Church Road (Spence Douglas); (3) Knockhill; (4) Sunnybraes (Bonfield); and (5) Church Road (Spence Douglas's grandfather, also called Spence Douglas) (3) and (4) were, I believe, for sharpening tools for the quarries.

'The Girls' Club in Bonfield Road was built by the late Mrs. Younger of Mount Melville in 1909. She once told us at a meeting in the Club that her father had given her the inspiration to build the Club which was for women and girls; she staffed it with a Matron, a maid for the Matron and a cleaning lady. The Matron's quarters were beautifully furnished and consisted of a sitting-room, kitchen, scullery, bathroom, bedroom, spare bedroom, linen cupboard and maid's room. The public part consisted of a large hall upstairs, a cloak-room and toilet, together with a lower club room. Before electricity came the lighting was by gas made by carbide in the gas house at the gate. There was a netball pitch in the garden, a tennis court over the road and a putting green, all of which were kept in first class order, as was the garden by gardeners from Mount Melville. (The house in which the tennis nets were kept has now been vandalised.) Mrs. Younger paid for it all.

'On Mondays the girls had handcrafts: on Tuesdays the older women did handcrafts, basket-making, batik work etc; on Wednesdays the young women played netball and other games; Thursday nights were for the older women and as private houses were small and there were often beds in living rooms, we all met in the Club and someone would read, sing or recite; it was in fact, a social evening with a cup of tea — we all took turns to bake something special. I am afraid that television has now changed things a little but we still carry on the Social Club and try to entertain senior citizens with whist drives, etc. Once a month on the first Thursday in the month the W.R.I. meets; this was also started by Mrs. Younger and Lady Kilmany in 1918. Mrs. Younger was our first President.

'On Friday evenings the Brownies met and then the Guides followed. Miss Challis was Matron then and took the Brownies and Guides, also supervising the handcrafts, games, etc. for the other groups.

'From 10 until 12 noon on Saturdays Miss Challis had little girls from 3—5

years to play with toys; they also played singing games and had a wonderful time — this was a forerunner of the subsequent Play School. On Sundays the Episcopal Church Sunday School (All Saints) met in the hall in the morning.

'The above summarises the normal week in the Girls' Club and in addition, of course, there were Christmas parties, Hallowe'en parties, etc.: all greatly enjoyed.

'I ought to add that there was sanitation in the Girls' Club. Water was driven by a ram from the burn and the sewage went into a cesspool in the Club Grounds.

'The Men's Club was also started by Mrs. Younger. It was situated in the Main Street and was open every evening to members. It was run by a caretaker who lived with his family in a house next door. The Club consisted of a reading-room with numerous books, dominoes and also a billiard table. It was popular and much patronised by the men of the village.

'Armit, baker, Church Street (St. Andrews) had a baker's van once a week until the war years when the Guardbridge Co-operative Bakery van called on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Butchers called on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. William Niven & Sons and also D.P. Niven, Church Street (St. Andrews) called on alternate days. After the end of the second world war Guardbridge had a delivery of meat on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; by this time the other butchers had more or less retired from business.

'Mr. D. Greig called round the village farms selling ironmongery, china, soap, etc.'

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*Miss Agnes Traill has written about Strathkinness as she saw it as a District Nurse in the village for many years.*

'At the age of 88 one can quite truthfully say "At my next birthday I will enter my 90th year".'

'This is a great gambit sometimes played by very old people who enjoy talking of their great age, but in Strathkinness there was little need for this for an exceptional number had not only reached this milestone but had passed it, and though some were sadly affected with failing sight and hearing, most were physically and mentally alert.

'A Doctor retired from Public Health, who lived in the village, attributed this longevity to the blue actinic light of which there is a plentiful supply in Strath, for few villages in Scotland can enjoy a wider panoramic view to the North of earth, sea and sky, while I was inclined to think the exposure of its

position had a good deal to do with it as when one is prepared for the cold one is less likely to be caught by a sudden drop in the temperature. Now I regret not having made a proper study of the subject and can only briefly refer to the general circumstances which prevailed to make this little community tick with the unhurried measure of a good old grandfather clock into a healthy and usually serene old age.

'Human interest which is of the greatest importance was provided by the family usually with the assistance of good neighbours.

'Diet, though plain, would be quite substantial with porridge, milk, eggs, bacon, cheese, fish from the coast,, excellent beef with fresh vegetables, and soft fruit from the garden which might also support a few hens. Soup was a general favourite — broth, potato and lentil.

'Housing was often old-fashioned for some cottages still had earthen floors simply covered with thick red tiles which meant they were damp. Coal fires were always used for heating and although box beds had mainly disappeared, their brick hard hair mattresses were still in evidence.

'In spite of these Spartan conditions, when the Local Authority built lovely little bungalows with all mod cons, there was difficulty in persuading these old people to move into them although they had a say in the design by taking part in a questionnaire stating what they would like to find in such houses.

'The water supply was from wells and drainage was by cesspool or garden pit known as the 'duffy hole'.

'Clothing can be described as solid, built on the foundation of the semmit and topped off with dark windproof serge skirts or trousers, layers of woollies and a bonnet. Women usually wore a pinafore on top of all this, while the men could favour a denim jacket. The semmit was a thick flannel undershirt which had an unfortunate tendency to shrink and could be the cause of painful backache to the nurse who had to peel it off at bedtime, especially when the patient suffered from rheumatism. These semmits grew to be as close fitting as an onion skin but were greatly loved for the comfort they bestowed. Injury to the back was an industrial hazard in District Nursing.

'In these days of weight watching it may be of interest to record that of the ten nonogenarians in Strath, four were heavily built as were the others of great age in the country area round about.

'This was not a life of idle luxury and it did not vary greatly from the pattern of living in the country in other parts of Fife and as few people could boast so many aged people, one must try to seek a reason.



'Physically the well water could play an important part. Socially there would always be full employment with the quarries, the paper mill at Guardbridge, the land and the proximity to the town of St. Andrews; as thrift was much admired, any opportunity of a second job would not be ignored.

'It is also important to remember the interest and kindness shown to the village by the members of the Younger family at Mount Melville by the endowment of the Youth House, the Men's Club and the Nurse's cottage. The first two served to ease the strains and tensions of cramped living conditions in addition to providing educational interests, and without the cottage such a small village might not have been considered for a nurse on the spot. These three buildings of a distinctive type were an ornament to the village.

'The combination of family, good neighbours, adequate money and a better pension, thanks to a government which understood the hardships of the past, may be summed up as: "I have a good bed, a good fire and an egg to my tea so what more could I want! God has been good to me"... spoken of course in the direct vernacular of East Fife.

'It is not often in nursing that any condition causing distress is reported by euphemism, but indulgence in alcohol was one of these, being referred to as a weakness, a silent lifting of the elbow indicating the source of the trouble. One old lady had had this misfortune in her family when her husband in sadness at being left out of things became an alcoholic causing untold misery at home. This very old lady nearing her century was silent and withdrawn and long after her death her daughter told me the reason.

'It is a well known fact that Scots people enjoy words, and even under the influence of a friendly dram one will find them enunciating with relish. This particular pleasure in language probably stems from a long association with the powerful phrases of the Bible's English, plus a great fondness for Robert Burns, at the other end of the scale who, in spite of his personal weaknesses, had an endearing love of the countryside and the ways of country people'.

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*Mr. and Mrs. Robert Galloway have written about their early days in Strathkinness running the village shop:*

'Our arrival in Strathkinness on 29th March 1949 was as a result of buying the village shop which at that time supplied villagers with their grocery and newspaper requirements. Under the post-war rationing system the shop had the grand total of twenty-eight registered customers.

'Weekly rations, per person per week, were 8 ounces of sugar, 2 ounces of

butter, 2 ounces of cheese and 2 ounces of bacon. Other goods which were in short supply were sold on a points system.

'In May 1949, each person received a new ration book and it was only at this point that they were allowed to change their grocer if they so wished. It was then that the number of registered customers shot up to 230 (approximately). Things were looking up at the village shop!

'This increase in turnover continued due to the loyal support of villagers and customers from surrounding areas and allowed us to extend the premises at a modest rate. As the years went on, an off-licence for the sale of wines and spirits was added and in 1962 we were successful in our application for the Sub Post Office agency.

'Facilities in the village in 1949 were rather primitive to say the least. No-one had yet enjoyed the luxuries of regional water supplies or a proper sewage system. In the early 1950s however, these services came to the village and from then onwards, it started to expand. Kitchens and bathrooms were being installed in most of the existing houses and the authorities started building projects such as council housing at Church Road, Bonfield Road, High Road and Sunnyside. Previously these areas had been open fields.

'Next door neighbours to the shop were the late Willie and Mary Bethune. Some years after our arrival in Strathkinness their cottage was put up for sale and we bought it with the long term plan of eventually converting it into a new shop as our existing premises were becoming smaller due to the installation of such modern items as refrigerated counters, display units and other equipment.

'In 1979, therefore, we obtained planning permission for the conversion of the cottage and the finished result was the shop as it now stands.

'In September 1981, we retired from business to Balmullo and took with us thirty-two years of interesting and happy memories of our life in Strathkinness and of our many friends there'.

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*At a gathering of the Mudie family not very long ago they recalled their memories of the village in the 1930s. The following is a digest of their recollections as contributed by Mrs. Ethel Mudie:*

'They lived in School Cottage (the home of the school caretaker) on Main Street which is now called "Gowanbank". They recall walking down the den from the High Road to go shopping at the Co-op in Guardbridge, or occasionally getting the train at Guardbridge for Dundee or Edinburgh.

'The activities in the village centred around the Women's Club and the Men's Club (both given by Mrs. Younger), and the Mitchell Hall.

'The children attended the Episcopal Sunday School which was organised by Mrs. Younger who presented medals for one year's perfect attendance at Sunday School. The children attended Guides and Brownies at the Women's Club where the Warden was a Miss Watson.

'The tennis courts opposite the Women's Club (the Youth House) were maintained by the Mount Melville gardeners who came down to cut the grass. The putting green was added much later. The Tennis Club organised matches between other clubs such as Guardbridge and St. Andrews.

'The Mitchell Hall was T-shaped and was used for dancing classes and concerts. There were also religious meetings held there which were taken by students from St. Andrews University.

'The Episcopal Sunday School had outings when the children were taken to Mount Melville in horse-drawn breaks from Johnston's in St. Andrews.

'Some of their other memories are:—

'Sheets being spread out to bleach on the bleach field at Ladywell.

'Taking rubbish in a barrow to the top of the High Road (now Bonfield Park) ——— best of all getting a ride when he was taking ashes to the top on. "Old Arkle's" horse-drawn cart, pulled by Mary, his horse.

'Going to Church in St. Andrews (All Saints) in Parfitt's open charabanc which came from Blebo Craigs.

'Hearing Henderson-Stewart M.P. when he was visiting the village. Everyone, including the children, collected at the War Memorial to hear him speak.

'The nurse living at the foot of the village, and the doctor coming from St. Andrews on a bicycle.

'The Home Guards drilling at the wide part of the road outside the Youth House at the beginning of the 1939-1945 War.

'Kate Rook delivering telegrams.

'A fish wife from Arbroath coming to the village each week; she walked up from Guardbridge with her creels.

'J. Greig, with his horse and cart, selling pots, pans and china.

'Night classes when cookery and dressmaking were taught. At the end of the season Jimmy Shand came to play.

'Mrs. Younger presented perfect attendance badges at the school and a



watch was given for seven years' perfect attendance. Lena Mudie was the last person to receive this award in 1939-40 when she was presented with a silver watch on which her name had been engraved. The oldest day school medal in the Mudies' possession is one presented to Magdalene Edie in 1906.

'The shops in the village at that time were:

At the top	Craigs	Paper and General Store
Corner of Bonfield and Main Street	Laings	General Store
4th down from Village Hall	Johnston's	Post Office
Lower Main Street	Polompos	Chip Shop
Sunnyside (Kellock House)		Bakers
Top of the Village		Pub
Corner of Main Street and Sunnyside		Pub

'Nivens on Main Street had the "killing house".

'Cunninghams on Main Street were the blacksmiths.

'The changes in the village noted between 1965 and 1985 include the sale of the teacher's house, the sale of the manse, the closing down of Maxwell's potato sheds and Wilson's bottling plant, the amalgamation of the parishes of Dairsie, Kemback and Strathkinness, the fire at the Youth House, the houses built at Bonfield Park and Bonfield Court. As the houses have been sold and the cottages renovated and often enlarged, the population of the village has changed. It has become a dormitory'.

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An anonymous contributor has written about an unusual farming technique of fifty years ago.

'Before the 1939 war an old Aberdonian by the name of Sam Herd stayed in a caravan at Kincapple. He had two steam engines with all the implements to go with them to plough the land. A steel wire rope was fixed to a turn-table, on each engine. Two men, one at each end of the field, pulled the rope to plough, harrow and cultivate the land.

'The steam engine was also used once during the war to pull an aeroplane out of the Eden'.

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Another contribution from someone who has seen many changes in the village is that of Mrs. B. Pairman, who with her late husband ran "The Tavern" for many years.

'When we first came to The Tavern in 1954 I could have written a book at that time with all the stories told to me of past life in the village by the then O.A.P.s and 'Worthies' of the village. They were mines of information! Unfor-

fortunately, however, I can only remember snippets. My mind goes a complete blank and is not reliable now ... and what I do remember at different times I wouldn't swear to it being what I originally knew.

'I know there used to be three pubs in the village at one time. The corner house opposite 'The Tavern' (now Brigadoon) is two cottages made into one. The one on the corner was once a saddler's, and the one opposite the Tavern was a pub. The lintel over the present bathroom window was inscribed "Wine and Spirit Merchant", this being the front door of the cottage. When these buildings were bought in 1959 and converted into the present house, the builders found an old saddle in the loft of the corner house.

'Another pub was the corner house at the junction of Main Street and Sunnyside which later became a bakery.

'At one time the lounge of my house (Mackray Cottage) was another open Smithy, and my garage was a stable; the rest of the house was another but and ben.

'There were four single ends at the top of Main Street between the pub and the Men's Club. These were literally one-roomed houses with a tiny scullery, an outside toilet and probably a coal house. There was a long thin strip of ground to the west. In 1967 the second of the four single ends was extended westwards and made into a small cottage. In 1981 the last single ends were also incorporated into this building, and together with an extension at the back, doubled the size of the house.

'One of the great characters of the village, Kate Rook, lived in the third single end. She was widowed in the first world war, and at one time was the village postman. She had a set of drums which she played on the front steps of the house. She smoked a pipe, chewed tobacco, enjoyed a bottle of stout and talked to you over her top teeth, as they always fell down! She spent her latter years in Stratheden Hospital where she celebrated her 100th birthday.

'When we bought 'The Tavern' in April 1954 and moved into the house, the only water on the premises was from a tap in the wash-house (now the pub's store) and a tap in the beer cellar. Kettles of water were boiled in order to wash the glasses and all the toilets (house and pub) were dry. (Miss Isa Warden, whose mother and father had earlier run the pub, said in the early days of 'The Tavern' the bar was only a kitchen with an old stove and hearth). Later on in 1954 water was put into the house and hot water from a boiler was piped into the bar. Proper flush toilets were at last built, and in 1959, with the arrival of deep drains, major alterations were carried out on the house. All the west facing windows had been blocked up at some time and this no

doubt may have gone back to the days of the window tax. Included in the renovation was an extension housing the kitchen, and the addition of another bedroom by joining up with the first of four single end cottages next door.

'In the early part of our twenty four years in 'The Tavern' it was very much a man's pub, but gradually, over the years, women became part of the clientele, and the place became a real social meeting place. It was always very much a Locals' Pub and Saturday night was the busiest night of the week. The highlights of the evening were the darts and domino competitions. Aleck Crowe ran the dominoes for many years ... before, during and after the period we were at the pub. The first prize was always a steak pie which was no doubt much appreciated by the winner for Sunday lunch!

'There was no Sunday opening in those days, the hours of business being 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (later changed to 11 a.m. — 2.30 p.m.) and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the evenings. During the early years we were the only "late bar" in the district. St. Andrews closed at 9 p.m. and Cupar at 9.30 p.m. Some of the 'young bloods' would leave St. Andrews on 'time' and go to Cupar until 'time' — then on to Strath Tavern until 10 p.m.! It was never a mad caper, but just a ritual.

In 1978 'The Tavern' was bought by Alexander, the butcher, St. Andrews for his daughter, Fiona. At the time she was the youngest publican in Scotland. Fiona successfully introduced Pub Lunches to 'The Tavern'. After two years she left to get married and it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. D. Coutts, the present owners'

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Julie Cockburn and Fiona Barnett, two girls who have not long since gone to Madras, have written about their primary school days at Strathkinness School.

'We started Madras College in August 1985. I, Julie, with my friend Fiona, are going to tell you about Strathkinness School, and what it was like when we were there. There were only two classrooms and in each one there was a teacher. In the infant class, there were 4 primaries -- primary 1-4. In the older class there were 3 primaries --- primary 5-7. Miss Anquetil took the infant class, and Mrs. Thomson, who was the headmistress, took the older class. The school got quite a few visiting teachers, not including a Monday teacher named Mrs. Mowat. The rest of the subjects were taught by the teacher of the class. Mrs. Thomson had a secretary, Mrs. Coutts, who only came in the morning until about 11.30.

'Fiona did not go to Strathkinness School for very long. She was only there from Easter '85 to summer '85. She came from a town called



Dunfermline. She told Mrs. T. that she thought the school was a lot more interesting than her previous school.

In each primary there were no more than 10 pupils. In primary 5 there were 5 pupils, in primary 6 there were 9 pupils and in primary 7 there were 6. Most of the time we all did the same subject like maths. Julie and I weren't very keen on arithmetic because the teacher wasn't always there when you needed her because you were stuck. We did not get a lot of written work on Monday because our Monday teacher taught us songs and read stories and also drew pictures. Mrs. Mowat was there in the morning so that Mrs Thomson got to do some important paper work.

'From Easter to summer we used to go swimming which took up most of Monday morning. We got quite a few television programmes.

'We will tell you what one of the days of the week at Strathkinness School was like. We will pick Wednesday. We went to school about 8.50 a.m. We met each other at the school, then played about with most of the people in our class until 9 a.m. Then the bell rang and we all crowded into the cloak room. We kept our coats on and went through to the class room and waited for the teacher. When she came through she told us to get our gym kit ready and line up outside the gate. Then we walked down to the village hall. Once we had gone down to the village hall Mrs. Thomson decided what kind of P.E. we were going to be doing. She decided it would be dancing. We didn't like dancing very much, so we weren't very enthusiastic.

'After our dancing we went up to school again and started some maths. At 10.30 some people had their milk whilst the others just went straight out to play or bought peanuts or crisps at the tuck shop. We got 30 minutes for our break which we usually spent skipping or just talking to pass the time away.

'After playtime we had singing together when only some of the songs were alright. That took us up to lunch time. At lunch time a few took school dinners, while most went home.

'The lady who was the janitor and dinner lady was Mrs. Farmer. She was a very kind lady who used to give us sweets.

'After lunch it sometimes wasn't very exciting. First Mrs. Thomson read a chapter of a book to us, then we played I Spy or Give Us a Clue. Mrs. McGavin usually came through about 2.30 after having done sewing with the infants. Most of us enjoyed the afternoon with Mrs. McGavin but others didn't really bother at all. The rest of the afternoon we had crafts up until 3.20. At 3.20 the bell rang and finally after another day we went home.

'We hope we have given you a good description of a Wednesday at Strathkinness Primary School

By Fiona and Julie'.

Fiona and Julie must have learned more than they imply as they are both doing well at Kilrymont (the junior department of Madras).

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Mrs. Nan Peattie who came to the village in 1930 to be housekeeper to Mr. George Peattie and later married him, and also cleaned the Parish Church for many years, has written about her early memories of Strathkinness.

'I came here in September 1930. I was quite taken with the beautiful view of this village. It was a lovely day when I came and I thought it was the most beautiful place I had ever seen. It was so peaceful; everybody was friendly and helpful.

'We had lovely walks in the summer. The nights were long and light, and the neighbours were very friendly when you met them having a walk.

'My husband, Mr. George Peattie, walked down to the Mill (Guardbridge Paper Mill) and walked back at night again in all kinds of weather, none the worse of his walking up and down every day for years. Sometimes he was lucky and got a lift home if the weather was bad; people were more considerate in those bye-gone days.

'If you needed help you had to go down to the bottom of the village for the nurse. We were very lucky with our doctor and our nurse.

'I have spent many happy moments in the village. There was no water and you had to carry your drinking water in two pails. It was very dark in the winter; there were no lights in the village and there were no toilets.

'I have seen a lot of changes in this village since I came and I think this T.V. has spoiled everything. There is too much killing and terrible things which I think T.V. should not show'.

Mrs. Peattie now lives in one of the special houses built for the older people on Sunnyside, and is extremely happy in her house with all its conveniences.

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Several other people have told me stories which they are glad to have recorded, but which they did not wish to write about themselves. There is not room to include all of them, but one, that of Mr. Ralph Coutts, is an unusual one. When he and his brother, when they were young lads, were playing outside their home in Kincaple, they saw a large tree fall and narrowly miss hitting their mother who was hanging out clothes. They went to investigate

the tree and found in a hole, high up in the tree trunk, a number of tokens which they discovered to be Covenanters Tokens. They did not realise they were of any special interest and played with them and eventually lost them.

Many of the people in the village I saw and talked to were interested in what I was doing. They were friendly and co-operative, and although many thought they had nothing of importance to say about Strathkinness, they all contributed something useful.

"Jock" Dunn, for instance; a very wise octogenarian former shepherd, who has tramped over, and knows intimately, the countryside for miles around, in answer to a question about his early life as one of twelve children, whose mother could not afford tea or sugar or many other things thought essential by most people in this part of the world today, showed me in his inimitable reply "But we didna' ken onythin' ither", just how very difficult it is for people living at one time to have any real understanding of the circumstances or problems of an earlier generation.

The changes which have taken place in the life-time of those who have lived a long time in Strathkinness are great. They talked about gathering at the pump for a gossip while getting their water, of how they once knew everybody in the village, and how, although they did not have much in a material sense, they were contented with what they did have.

Very few, however, said they thought the past had been better; they did not think it was "the good old days" and they did not want it back. Most did not look at the village through rose-coloured spectacles. For most of them whose life had been hard, the conveniences of electricity, water, drainage — and television — are things they would not now want to do without.



Mrs. Nancy Webster had asked me to include the following poem by her late husband, Archie, who was well-known not only in Strathkinness and St. Andrews but further afield, especially for his Burns recitations. She gave it to me only a few days before her own sudden death, and I would like it to be a tribute to both Archie and Nancy who each contributed so much to the village.

### The Kinnessburn

Astandin by a rippling stream  
Reflecting clear the sunlight's beam  
Aglitterin by the haws and haughs  
With banks o' threshes an o' saughs  
What scenes you pass both sad an gay  
Before you reach St. Andrews bay.  
I think near Clatto you begin  
Into a streamlet for ta run  
By Magus Tongues and Burnside  
Whose field drains help to swell yer tide;  
O'er many a boulder ye dae spill  
An' on ye run by Denbrae mill  
When nature in her summer sheen  
On Lawmill hangs her mantle green  
The drooping boughs a hanging low  
Into thy darkling mirror show  
Still ever on through the Lade Braes  
Where beauty every season stays.  
The old grey city ye run by  
Wi' many a spire and tower on high  
How much a bard could write and rhyme  
Bout what happened once upon a time,  
And like the waters o' the burn  
Are past now never to return.

A.M. Webster.

## VILLAGE ACTIVITIES

As in most villages the size of Strathkinness there is a great variety of businesses, groups and organisations covering a range of interests. Some of these have been in existence for many years, others are developments of earlier groups or clubs, and some are relatively new. A number of small new groups which have been formed during the last few years have added interest and vitality to the life of the village.

One of the changes in Strathkinness, as in other villages, has been in the number of shops. The number has varied considerably over the years and many people in the village can remember the time when there were several shops along Main Street. In 1841 the census return for Strathkinness shows four grocers, four tailors, two bakers, two shoemakers and two publicans. There is now only one shop.

### The Village Shop

The village shop was bought in June, 1984, by Roy and Ann Verner and although it is usually referred to simply as 'The Shop' the name over the door is 'R. & A. Verner'. Roy and Ann are both from Fife, and they have two small children, Roy and Julie. In addition to selling everyday things such as groceries and newspapers they have also recently started a daily delivery of milk, and they sell 'other bits and pieces'. Ann Verner said, 'We do our best to deliver, as people are often housebound due to age, illness or just bad weather'.

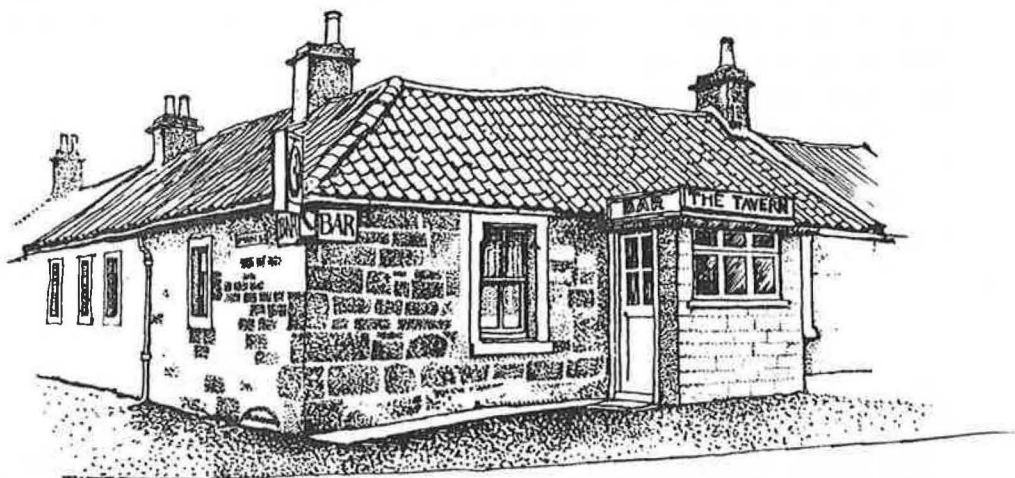


An important part of the shop is the Sub-Post Office. Many small shops and post offices are closing and the only way to make sure that this does not happen in Strathkinness is to support them. Their loss would be felt especially by the older inhabitants of the village who in spite of a bus service cannot always easily get into St. Andrews.

Roy and Ann Verner are carrying on the tradition set by the Galloways. They are hard-working, and always friendly and cheerful.

### 'The Tavern'.

Up until the middle of the 1940s there were at least two pubs in the village. Today there is only one — at the top of Main Street where two turnpike roads met and where there was a toll bar from about 1811 to 1865. Part of the old weighbridge for weighing coal and stones from the quarries can still be seen in the wall of 'The Tavern' on the Main Street side and on the High Road side there is a large iron ring where horses were tethered at one time. 'The Tavern' has been run by David and Jean Coutts since 1980.



As well as being a friendly place where people meet, 'The Tavern' raises money for various causes. Each year a large bottle, into which people have been putting their change, is broken, with the contents going to the Social Club (an organisation for Senior Citizens) for their summer outing. In 1985 they collected over £200. 'The Tavern' has also raised funds for a guide dog for the blind.

'The Tavern' sponsors a football team, appropriately called 'The Taverners'. In 1985 they had an unbeaten record.



Mrs. Coutts serves lunches every day except Saturday. Many people of all ages from Strathkinness, St. Andrews and further afield come for her home cooking.

A village pub contributes greatly to the character of village life, and Strathkinness is fortunate in having one as friendly and welcoming as 'The Tavern'.

### **Taylor's Nurseries**

A well-known business in Strathkinness, patronised by people from a distance as well as by local people, which at one time was one of the largest market gardens in the area and supplied markets in St. Andrews and Dundee, has recently given up business. It had been in the Taylor family for three generations, but the difficulty of finding labour for intensive glass-house cultivation and the pressures of large-scale farming has obliged Martin Taylor, the present owner, to cease running the nursery.

There will be many people who will be sorry to see such a well-known landmark no longer part of the village life.

### **Danskins Transport Services Ltd.**

*The following history of Danskins has been written by Mr. Iain Duncan:*

'Magnus B. Danskin began his career in Road Transport in 1927 when he left Kincaple Farm, where he worked as a ploughman, to join Murrays of Edenside, Guardbridge, as a steam-lorry driver. Soon he purchased his first lorry and went into business on his own.

'Much of his early work was related to road works and the building trade, but rapidly he built up a strong connection with the agricultural community, and for many years that was to be the backbone of his business. During these years and for some time to come his wife, Grace, was active in the running of the business.

'His first garage was the old Free Church which stood in the grounds of what is now Nelson Cottage in Main Street. As his business expanded he built his new garage in Sunnyside, and by taking over smaller hauliers throughout Fife, the Danskin operation grew rapidly before, during, and after the Second World War. Firms like Methven of Colinsburgh, Montgomery of Methil and Tarvet of St. Monans added nearly twenty operators' licences to the Danskin fleet, which by 1947 had grown into one of the largest in Fife. In 1948 Danskins came under the 'Nationalisation Act' and were bought out by British Road Services with the vehicles and premises being operated by new management.

'M.B. Danskin and his assistant, Jim Watson, continued to operate Danskin vehicles, albeit on a much reduced scale, at South Wynd Garage, Colinsburgh, from where they also controlled their quarrying at Belliston and sand extraction at Carriston. In the early '50s 'M.B.' continued his policy of expansion by taking over Robertsons of Auchtermuchty and Rankins of Dunfermline. He also decided to return his operating base to Strathkinness and in 1953 built the present garage in Lower Main Street. While much of the work was still agricultural, raw materials and paper haulage for Guardbridge Paper Mill played an increasing role in the Company's activities. In the late '50s McKendricks of Auchtermuchty and Rutherford Son & Grubb of St. Andrews became part of the company and the takeover of Muirs Transport of Cupar in 1961 saw the Danskin fleet top the 70 vehicle mark.

The deregulation of haulage licences in the 1968 Road Transport Act brought some decline to the Company. Farmers, potato merchants, agricultural traders and other manufacturers were free to put their own transport on the road; many took that option, forcing Danskins to reduce their labour force and move away from agricultural and seasonal work.

The end of the '60s saw a tragic double blow for Danskins when the founder 'M.B.' and his elder son, David, died in road accidents in 1967 and 1969 respectively. It was the wish of Mrs. Grace Danskin and her son, William, that the family business should continue, with Bill Thomson managing the Cupar Depot and Jim Watson and Iain Duncan handling the operation at Strathkinness.

The '70s were not an easy time for the Road Haulage industry, with too many vehicles chasing too few loads, the spiralling cost of fuel and industrial unrest leading to an overall reduction in most haulage fleets, and a period of consolidation. Danskins were no exception, and to remain competitive the Company policy became one of increased articulation with larger vehicles and fewer drivers.

'The Company has had a long standing connection with the food industry through its work with British Sugar and Scotts Porage Oats, and the Company has expanded its activities in this direction in the 1980s by setting up a haulage, storage and distribution system for the products of major manufacturers like Weetabix, Whitworths, Hazlewoods and Pedigree Petfoods. Paper still features in the company's workload through working for Guardbridge Paper Mill, Tullis Russell of Markinch and Smith Anderson of Leslie.

'The expansion of the food distribution business has seen the Company move into a modern warehousing complex at Prestonhall, Cupar. Administration, vehicle maintenance, parking and storage are retained at Strathkinness.

Danskings' Strathkinness depot employs thirty people and their fleet of lorries covers over one million miles a year and carries the family and village names to all parts of mainland Britain.

### **J. & D. Walker, Livestock Removers**

At one time there were four 'smiddies' in the village, but since the 1920s there has been only one, on Lower Main Street, run at first by Mr. Andrew Cunningham and afterwards by Mr. James Walker. Mr. Walker came to Strathkinness in the early 1930s to work with Mr. Cunningham. He then went to Leuchars for eight years but returned to Strathkinness in 1943 to take over the smiddy. Mr. Walker was the last blacksmith in Strathkinness to shoe horses. He did beautiful wrought iron work some of which can be seen in the village, such as the Church gates and the gate of the former Manse.

About fifteen years ago Mr. Walker's three sons set up an animal transport business on the site of the old smiddy.

J. & D. Walker's main work is the moving of animals; sheep, cattle and pigs. They travel mainly within a radius of twenty miles of Strathkinness but they have carried animals to all parts of Scotland and to many parts of England. Their large articulated lorries are a familiar sight on the roads for many miles around.

Their 'floats' are washed out behind the former Wilson's Bottling Plant on Sunnyside, and as the site on Main Street is restricted they also keep some of their lorries there. At times they use their cabs to pull other trailers, but they do not themselves transport anything other than animals.

In addition to the family they employ one man, and one woman in the office.

### **Ed. Cockburn — Agricultural Engineers**

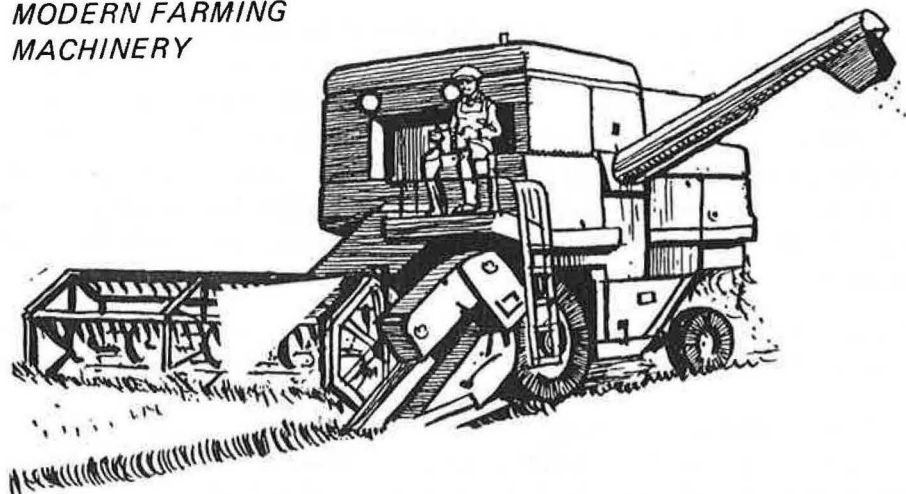
*An indispensable business for a village like Strathkinness is an agricultural engineering business, about which Mrs. Margaret Cockburn writes:*

'An agricultural engineer is important in a village like Strathkinness which is surrounded by many farms. Ed Cockburn's workshop (part of which was originally a piggery) in Upper Main Street, fulfils the needs of farmers in keeping their machinery in working order. In addition, Cockburn's cater for anybody else who has need of a special engineering job. Almost any item can be designed and made to order; from a special bolt, hand rails for the Church Hall steps, or a friendly neighbour's garden gate, brackets to support a nearby pottery shop sign, to something literally the size of barn



doors! Ed with the help of assistant David Christie will tackle the job. New machinery and spares can also be supplied. Recently, car servicing and repairs have been introduced. Obviously, an adaptable small business such as this has much to offer a rural community'.

### *MODERN FARMING MACHINERY*



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As well as the businesses which have been established for some time there are several small enterprises — some one woman enterprises. Some are using traditional skills in a non-traditional way, and others are doing what might be called more unusual things with their talents.

### **Strathkinness Herbs**

Certainly the three young women who run 'Strathkinness Herbs' deserve credit for their enterprise in seeing a market and going into it. Mrs. June Riches, Mrs. Elizabeth Riches (no relation) and Mrs. Sue Dewar set up a joint enterprise, as Elizabeth Riches writes:

'In August 1984 Strathkinness Herbs was started with the aim of growing and selling culinary and medicinal herb plants. The hope was to interest and inform people of the many and varied uses of plants which have been used throughout history, e.g. elecampane, comfrey (knitbone), soapwort, wormwood, sweet rocket, lovage, sweet cicely, and many others.

'As well as the more unusual herbs more ordinary ones such as parsley, sage, chives, etc. are available. A list of the various plants supplied, along with their uses, is available.

'The herbs are organically grown in different locations in the village, and are sold from the three women producers' homes, as well as in the market place in St. Andrews. Fresh, dried, and frozen herbs are supplied to local restaurants and hotels.'

### **Fly Tying**

In addition to taking part in the growing and selling of herbs, June Riches has developed an unusual hobby into a commercial venture. As she says:

'I began tying trout and salmon flies for fishermen in 1984 because of the need to retain an old craft as most flies are now imported from abroad. I sell through shops in St. Andrews, Dundee and Pitlochry. Most orders are for traditional Scottish favourites — Dunkelds, Blae & Black, Invicta, Mallard & Claret, Mallochs Favourite, Greenwells Glory, Teal Series, Grouse Series, etc. Salmon flies include Green Highlander, Thunder & Lightning, Jock Scott, Dusty Miller — tied with feather or hair wing.

'I welcome special orders and can supply any flies framed in a picture.'

June Riches is also a skilled calligrapher who has contributed the printing for this story of Strathkinness.

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There are other young women who are using their skills in different ways.

### **Jenny Morgan**

Jenny Morgan, who calls her business simply 'Jenny Morgan', has become successful in catering — for anything from something very simple to something more grand. There are times, she said, when she slipped out the back door as the guests arrived at the front door. In her own words she explains what her business is:

Jenny Morgan who lives at 'The Cottage', 5 Bonfield Road, Strathkinness, caters for every culinary need — from dinner parties and buffets to freezer filling, or just something for supper.

Jenny is a qualified caterer and has previously worked in London. She started 'helping friends out' locally five years ago, and the enterprise has now developed a steady stream of customers.

One of her principal concerns, as well as high quality and good service, is to make each order as individual as possible.

## **Strathkinness School of Dance**

Another of the young women who is using her talents for the advantage of the village is Jenny King, who is a member of the British Ballet Organisation. The productions she and her children put on are a pleasure to all who go to see them. Jenny has written about her School of Dance:

'The Strathkinness School of Dance first started in 1972 in the Church Hall with approximately eight to ten children, and ran for two years. After a break of five years classes resumed in the Spring of 1980 with ten to twelve children learning Ballet, Tap and Highland dancing. Over the years the School has grown considerably, and now runs two days a week using both the Church Hall and the Village Hall, with children coming from Strathkinness, St. Andrews, Cupar, Dairsie and Kingsbarns.

'In addition to the children's classes the School began an Adult Tap and Ballet class in 1985. These classes are also well attended.

'As well as doing examinations the children take part in concerts, the proceeds of which are kept in the village, helping to maintain halls or boosting funds of the various other active groups in the village.

'Many thanks go to my friend, Mrs. Kate Law. Without her support, friendship and tolerance of my children there would be no School of Dance in Strathkinness'.

*A more recent development in form and movement is a class run by Rosalind Garton who explains thus her —*

### **Medau Rhythmic Movement**

'Medau is a form of movement to music especially designed for women which exercises the whole body without straining it. It also helps improve one's sense of rhythm, co-ordination and self-confidence. It was developed in Germany in the 1930s and was part of the move towards the freeing of women from their traditional bonds, enabling them to enjoy more freedom of expression than they had been allowed previously.

'There are only five qualified Medau teachers in Scotland. The training is long as it involves not only movement training but also the learning of the piano accompaniment, rhythm and the anatomy of movement. Rosalind Garton has a class in the village and is the most northerly Medau teacher in Britain!'



## Strathkinness Spinning Group

Margareta Milner, although spinning mostly for pleasure, has found that people want to buy her spun yarns for their beauty and quality. She writes:

'The question I have most often been asked is why do I bother with such a time-consuming hobby when there is such a variety of wools on the market? Maybe it is because people have become spoilt for choice that many take up this ancient craft and produce beautiful yet simple yarns suitable for weaving, knitting, crocheting, embroidery etc. There is also something fascinating about the gentle humming of a spinning wheel. Many (now spinning) friends of mine got "hooked" just by watching someone spin.

'The Strathkinness Spinning Group, which meets monthly, was responsible for my addiction to the wheel. The group was founded by Grethe Thomson and Barbara Evans. It is a multi-national group with the majority of its members coming from countries outside Britain; namely Denmark, Austria, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States.

'My first evening's attempts at producing a thread resulted either in useless spirals of wool or loose disintegrating bits of fleece. A yarn emerged a few hours and lots of encouragement later — very uneven, but of special character: that is difficult to reproduce once the technique has been mastered.

'How much preparation has to be done prior to spinning depends on the quality of the fleece; some open-textured, short-stapled ones can be teased by hand to shake out dirt and vegetable matter, and spun right away; others may need carding on a pair of carders — a kind of brush set with close metal spikes which transforms a lock of fleece into a tube-like shape called a rolag.

'Handspinners in this country have a very good choice of sheep breeds ranging from very soft (Southdown, Shetland) to coarse and hairy (Blackface, Swaledale) and long and lustrous (Romney Kent), and it is often the soft, medium-long fleeces that appeal to handspinners for their versatility. The fleece itself not only varies in softness (the best parts coming from the neck and back), but also in colour: white and grey Cheviots, white, grey, moorit (moor-red), brown Shetlands, creamy-white Suffolk, and the grey, brown, black and white found in the popular Jacobs. Locally obtainable are Suffolk crossbreds, Jacobs, Border Leicesters, Blackface etc. The wool spun from Ian Law's sheep in Strathkinness proved easy and quick to spin, hard wearing and versatile for hats, mittens, cushions and jumpers.

'Spinning may be thought of as a winter evening's activity in front of an open fire, but it is just as relaxing on a summer's day in the garden. Moreover, the early summer fleeces are full of natural oils and very pleasant to spin.

This does not mean spinners must use their materials quickly — in fact, stored dry and cool, they keep well for years.

‘Spinning can simply be fun and relaxation, with the bonus of a useful produce; it can lead into the unpredictable world of plant dyes (and growing them); or it could be the start of an exploration into design, giving the knitter or weaver control over his product from start to finish, often with the addition of luxury fibres like silk, mohair, or Alpaca.

‘Whatever the outcome, it is always a challenging and satisfying hobby.’

### **The Parent—Teacher Association**

*This account of the P.T.A. has been compiled from information provided by Mr. Peter Royds and Dr. Andrew Riches:*

‘The P.T.A. was formed in 1970 with the aim of encouraging interest in the education and welfare of the children attending the school in Strathkinness.

‘The Association is open to parents of all pupils, past and present. There are regular meetings of the committee elected in accordance with a written constitution, and there are open meetings for the discussion of educational matters.

‘During the winter there are outings, or talks by specialists on subjects of broader interest such as travel, air/sea rescue, etc. Practical sessions on science, mathematics and computing have proved to be very popular.

‘The annual school fete, well supported by the community, has always been a successful fund-raising event. The fete was at one time organised on a larger scale, but the reduction in school numbers, and competing events in St. Andrews during the summer holidays, have made it a smaller affair, but none the less both financially and socially very successful.

‘Funds raised by the P.T.A. are used for children’s outings to the theatre and visits to places of educational interest, such as the Ceres Folk Museum; the number of books in the school library has been increased; funds have gone towards the purchase of a BBC microprocessor and the necessary software; and equipment for activities such as chess, netball, football, and team cricket have been provided.

‘The P.T.A. supports the keeping of rural schools open as they believe rural schools to be to the advantage of future generations of children.’

## Strathkinness Playgroup

*The following item is based on material supplied by Mr. Peter Royds.*

Playgroups in Scotland are relatively new. The first regular group in Strathkinness was started around 1963 by Mrs. Elizabeth Davidson and held at her house at 25 Mount Melville Crescent. The group was later run by Mrs. Veronica Smart and Mrs. Barbara Hobbs, an American living in Strathkinness. Later Mrs. Smart and Mrs. Emily Dale took over the running of the group.

In 1967 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland gave its support for playgroups and the group was given the Church Hall to meet in, although this was delayed for several months due to the Hall having had its roof half torn off in a gale.

The playgroup was registered as a Nursery with the Fife County Council, and after local government reorganisation it was registered with the Fife Regional Council. It is a registered charity and a member of the Scottish Pre-School Playgroup Association, as well as the North East Fife District branch of the Pre-School Playgroups.

The Playgroup has always had a close link with the church. It has free use of the Church Hall, but contributes towards its heating and lighting. Any change in the Playgroup constitution must be ratified by the Kirk Session.

In addition to support given by the church, the playgroup gets a grant from the Regional Council and from the District Council; the Strathkinness Nursing Association makes a contribution each year, and the Open Group gives money each year for the children's Christmas party. The Scottish Home and Health Department refunds the cost of milk. At times the playgroup has held its own fund-raising activities, including a sponsored walk by the playgroup children around the village playground.

When the playgroup started the cost was two shillings a family a month to cover the cost of juice and biscuits. Today the cost is nearly £8 a month. Although there is a good stock of equipment, replacements and additions have become very expensive.

The playgroup is for all children between the ages of two years ten months and school age. The maximum number attending is twenty, as it was when it first started, and when there are more than twelve children a helper is required to be present.

There is now a junior group of Mothers and Toddlers which meets on Wednesday afternoons and has been designed to enable all the mothers and toddlers in the village to come together.



Since the Playgroup first started over twenty years ago there have been nearly twenty Playgroup Leaders, most of them living in Strathkinness. The present leader is Mrs. Janet Royds.

### **Strathkinness Parish Church Women's Guild**

*Mrs. V. Smart, Mrs. J. Singleton and Miss L. Haworth have written the following short history of 'The Guild':*

'The Women's Guild of the Church of Scotland was founded in 1887 by Dr. Charteris with the aim of uniting the women of the Church for worship, fellowship and service. It is organised nationwide under a Central Committee.

'The first record of a Guild branch in Strathkinness occurs in the Church of Scotland returns for 1943 (Year Book 1944), when there were twenty-nine members. Strangely there is no reference to the Guild in the Kirk Session minutes until 1947 when the Session was asked to approve the financial allocations made by the Guild's Business Meeting. It is not certain whether this was actually the first Business Meeting, or the first that the Session took notice of, as it is required to do under Church Law.

'At first the meetings mainly took the form of Work Parties, making comforts for the troops, and after the War items for fund-raising. As late as 1959, meetings were occupied with making blankets for refugees, and a speaker was not a constant feature.

'By 1951 the Guild was appearing in a familiar role;

"The Moderator expressed the view that the church should be scrubbed out before the Communion Service. It was agreed that Mrs. Nicoll (the Minister's wife) should be asked to raise the point with the Women's Guild."

'In the early days the Minister's wife was usually the perpetual President, but nowadays the President is elected from among the members.

'It is generally recognised that the Women's Guild makes a considerable contribution to the work of the Church at home and abroad, not least in fund raising. In our own church in Strathkinness the Guild has over the years helped to beautify the surroundings and enhance the worship, by carpeting the aisles, commissioning new embroidered falls for pulpit and lectern, and providing some of the copies of the new Hymn Book.

'The Guild meets fortnightly in the winter months to hear a variety of speakers, and also holds coffee mornings, jumble sales, an annual Summer Fair, and there are summer outings to beauty spots and winter theatre outings. The motto is "Whose we are, whom we serve". '

## The Social Club

*Mrs. Catherine Gray has written about the former Women's Club and the change to the present Social Club:*

'The meetings before the Social Club came into being were known as the Women's Club, and took place on Thursday evenings except the first Thursday in the month, which was the day the W.R.I. met. We met in the lower Club room in the Girls Club at 7 p.m., presided over by Miss Challis, matron of the Girls Club. We played whist, someone would give a reading, sing a song, or tell a story; some brought their knitting along and we all had a cup of tea with home baking. This was prior to 1939.

'Then in 1944 the Club was gifted to the Fife County Council by Dr. Younger of Mount Melville. It then became the Hostel. We had the use of it as formerly, but of course there was no matron. Mrs. Stobie, the school-master's wife then took over and called it the Social Club.

'On November 22nd, 1945 a committee was formed comprising Mrs. Stobie, Mrs. Greig, Mrs. Buttercase, Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Smith (sad to say I am the only one left).

'We had 35 members, who paid two shillings per annum to help the tea fund, with any surplus being put into the Club funds. We carried on as we did in the days of the Women's Club.

'We also gave the children a party at Christmas, and in 1947 we took the Senior Citizens for a bus drive and High Tea. This has continued every year since. The first outing was to Crail, where we were welcomed by Provost Calder, and in the years that followed we had runs to Arbroath, Aberfoyle, Dunblane, Callander, Stirling, Pitlochry, Linlithgow, to mention a few.

'The membership has dwindled to twelve, as there are many other organisations now in the village. I took over in 1947. We have had concerts and two Burns Suppers in years gone by to raise funds. Coffee Evenings and Bring and Buy Sales with a raffle are now the usual methods of raising money. The last one, on 8th May 1986, raised £121.

'We are helped by a donation from the pub (Mr. and Mrs. D. Coutts), and the shop (Mr. and Mrs. R. Verner), without whose help we would not be able to do so much.'

## **Strathkinness Football Club**

*The following report on the Strathkinness Football Club was written from information supplied by Martin Taylor and by Jack Harrild (obtained from The St. Andrews Citizen).*

'The Strathkinness Football Club has been in existence for many years, and was at one time a more important part of the village life than it is now.

There is a good description in **The Citizen** in March, 1923, of some of the Strathkinness players in the semi-final of the Ferdinand Cup against Leuchars, which Strathkinness lost 0-1. The report says: 'Duncan in the goal was safe and had a quiet afternoon, F. Leighton was cool and prominent for clean and hefty punting, T. Duncan although very robust and forceful was also safe, Clatcher opened none too brightly but improved, Studley opened up well and gave rare passes, Ireland was too eager to do himself justice, Peebles though inclined to wander improved later'.

The Strathkinness Church Magazine of June, 1964 reported that the season just finished had been highly successful. The club finished third in the League behind St. Monans and Crail, and won the Lindsay Cup, beating St. Monans in the final by 3-1. They also reached the Fife Cup final but on this occasion after leading 3-1 they lost to St. Monans by 4-3.

'The Football Club, which is in the Fife Amateur League, formerly played their home matches at Bonfield Quarry (now the site of the new houses built in 1985) and have recently been playing at Cockshaugh Park in St. Andrews. They will return to Strathkinness when the permanent site (located beyond the new houses at Bonfield Park), which has been set aside for a football pitch, is ready.

## **Strathkinness Community Council**

The Strathkinness Community Council was set up following the reorganisation of local government in 1977, when the Fife County Council was replaced by the Fife Regional Council and the North East Fife District Council was created.

Before the Community Council came into being there was a Strathkinness Village Association, formed in 1962, whose aim was to look after the welfare and the interests of the village and to bring complaints and local needs to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

The Association encouraged the village to enter the Best Kept Village Competition which it won twice, in 1963 and again in 1965. Also in 1965



the Village Association built the children's playground between the High Road and Church Road. Money was raised locally and grants were obtained from the County Council and other bodies. Voluntary labour from the village constructed the playground, which is a major asset to the village.

With the advent of the Community Council the Village Association was disbanded, and its work became the responsibility of the elected Community Council.

Mr. Iain Duncan, who has been chairman of the Community Council since its formation, has written the following account as far as the Council election of 1986:

'Under the auspices of North East Fife District Council, a ballot vote was held in June 1977 to elect the six Councillors who would form the first Strathkinness Community Council. The successful candidates were Mrs. Eileen Faed, Mrs. Maisie Graham and Messrs. Derek Thomson, Robert Birrell, William Walker and Iain Duncan.

The inaugural meeting of the new council was convened by North East Fife District Council on the 12th July 1977 to appoint officials and discuss the drawing up of a constitution.

'Community Councils are elected for three years. The next election took place on 13th October 1980. Mrs. Faed did not seek re-election but all the other councillors stood again for election, the sixth place being taken by Mrs. Ethel Mudie.

The third Community Council elections were held in October 1983. Messrs Walker and Birrell did not seek re-election. All other councillors stood again with the vacant positions being filled by Mrs. Kay Younger and Mr. Jim Backhouse.

The Community Council meets on the third Monday of the month in the Strathkinness Primary School. Any members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings either to raise matters or just to listen to how the Community Council goes about its business.

'At the first meeting of the Community Council, in 1977, the office-bearers elected were: Mr. Iain Duncan (Chairman), Mr. Derek Thomson (Deputy-Chairman), Mrs. Eileen Faed (Secretary) and Mrs. Maisie Graham (Treasurer). Mrs. Ethel Mudie became Secretary after Mrs. Faed left the Council, and Mrs. Kay Younger became Secretary in October 1983.'

In October 1986 the fourth Community Council elections were held, when Mr. Iain Duncan and Mrs. Ethel Mudie were re-elected and Mr. Richard

Batchelor, Mr. David Brex, Miss Anne Cassells, and Mr. Kenneth Overend elected for the first time. The following office-bearers were elected on 27th October: Mr. Iain Duncan (Chairman), Miss Anne Cassells (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Richard Batchelor (Secretary), and Mrs. Ethel Mudie (Treasurer).

The Community Council meetings are not well attended by members of the public, and it is doubtful whether many are aware of just how much the Council does for the community. When there is an issue of outstanding importance, such as the proposed hinterland development plan, the public will turn up in large numbers to a special meeting, but otherwise people seem to be apathetic, or perhaps they are not aware of the importance of democracy at the 'grass roots' level.

### Meals on Wheels

*The following report on the important service given to the community by Meals on Wheels has been written by Mrs. Joan Nicholas:*

'It would seem that Meals on Wheels for Strathkinness and Blebo Craigs started in the Spring of 1975, backed by the W.R.V.S. Miss Traill played an active part in getting it off the ground. Miss Conway, from Blebo Craigs, was the original convener. Mr. Hastie from Mount Melville Crescent was the treasurer. Miss Conway retired in May of 1982, and her place was taken for a while by Mrs. Riches. Lady McPetrie is the present convener. Mr. Hastie left the village and Mrs. Joan Nicholas took over as treasurer and liaison officer in January, 1978. She continues to do this work.

'The meals were originally collected from the Schools kitchen in Cupar, but in 1985 this was changed to Lawhead School kitchen. At the start of the scheme, meals were priced at ten pence each; they are now sixty-five pence each. Such is inflation. The hot lock has always been kept in the village school, thanks to the Headmistress, Mrs. Brenda Thomson.

'Twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, a team of two — a driver and helper — deliver the meals around the village in their own car. We have also delivered meals to Pitscottie and Blebo Craigs. The numbers have varied over the years. At the moment six people receive them in Strathkinness.

'About twenty local people are involved in the scheme. Each team does a stint about once every seven weeks. They are always greeted with gratitude, friendliness and grace by the recipients.'

There were several groups which formerly used the Youth House:

## Strathkinness Women's Rural Institute

*One of the many groups and organisations to use the Youth House was the W.R.I., as Mrs. Margaret Birrell has explained:*

'The Strathkinness Women's Rural Institute held their first meeting on 3rd December, 1918, just after the first World War. By kind permission of Mrs. Younger, Mount Melville, the meetings were held in the Girls' Club (Youth House) on the first Thursday of each month. Unfortunately the Minutes do not start until 1929, the first ten years being lost along the way somewhere. The format of the meetings has not changed throughout the years although the number of members has. There is mention of attendance of 104 at a few meetings in the years leading up to the second World War. Just as now, sometimes a meeting had to be cancelled owing to stormy weather conditions. Once, in 1929, a meeting was cancelled because of an epidemic of 'flu in the village.

'Before the days of television, members displayed many talents. There was a Choir, a Drama Group and a Scottish Country Dancing Team who entered many competitions and were very successful. The standard of work was high, with some excellent needlework and knitting done; baking was also very popular.

'The Strathkinness Horticultural Society asked help to start up an Industrial Section at the local Flower Show which was held in August. Inter Institute visits were as popular then as they are now. The Senior Citizens' annual Tea Party was started in the early years and still continues each year. It is stated that the children of the village were given an annual outing to the West Sands, St. Andrews. They went by char-a-banc at a cost of twelve shillings, and Armit, the baker in Church Street (where Fisher & Donaldson now have their premises) supplied bags of food.

'Eggs were collected each April, as many as sixty-three dozen being recorded. Two thirds of these went to Dundee Royal Infirmary and one third to the Cottage Hospital, St. Andrews.

'After the outbreak of the second World War, the W.R.I. could no longer have the use of the Girls' Club as it was commandeered for the Polish Army and later for the Home Guard and the A.R.P.

'In October, 1939, members of the W.R.I. organised a War Work Party to knit comforts for the troops. They met in Mrs. Ballingall's home at Nether Strathkinness each month, and mention is also made of meeting in the School during the light evenings because the School wasn't blacked out. The amazing total of 2,334 finished articles were despatched to the Forces during the war



years. These articles consisted of scarves, gloves, mitts, balaclavas, socks, sea boot stockings and pullovers. Members also helped the local farmers in the fields.

'When the war was over the W.R.I. once again had the use of the Youth House, until early 1976 when the building was damaged by fire. The Village Hall was the venue for meetings until 1979, when permission was given to hold meetings in the Church Hall where they still are held.'

### Girl Guides

*Another group which used the Youth House was the Girl Guides. Miss Dorothy Robertson, Girl Guide Captain for many years, has written about the early years of the Strathkinness Girl Guides, who were registered in 1918.*

'Although there have been many ups and downs over the years, the Girl Guides have continued to function. The Strathkinness Group first took part in county rallies in 1921 when they went to Tarvit, near Cupar, and in 1922 they went to Dunfermline.

'An old log book of the Strathkinness Thistle Patrol shows that they, along with the St. Andrews Guides and Brownies, were inspected in 1924 by the then Duchess of York, the present Queen Mother. That year also, the Group for the first time went camping, to Boarhills. Although camping had to be cancelled during the war it started again soon afterwards, and by the 1960s every member of the Strathkinness Group was going on camping trips.

'In 1968 the Jubilee Year was celebrated, when the guest of honour Miss Watson, the first Guide Captain, cut the cake with fifty candles on it.

'During the 1970s the older girls in the Guides had a barge holiday on the Grand Canal and another year they went to London, which was a new adventure for them. Over the years several girls, have gained Camp Permits, which allows them to take others camping, and there have been several Queen's Awards.'

Since 1974 Mrs. Anna Coutts has been Guide Captain, and meetings are now held in the Village Hall.

### The Brownies

*Mrs. Mary Wemyss has given the following information about the Brownies in Strathkinness:*

'Like the Guides the Brownies formerly met in the Youth House, but they now meet every Tuesday in the Village Hall, from 5.55 – 7 p.m. The Lucklow

District (Strathkinness, Guardbridge, Leuchars and Balmullo) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year with a party for all the Brownies and their Guides. In 1963 Strathkinness won the Brownie Competition Cup, and that year Mary Wemyss (Nicol) became Brown Owl.'

### **The (first) Youth Club**

*Miss Dorothy Robertson has also provided the following information about the first Youth Club:*

'The first Youth Club in Strathkinness was started in 1944-45 by Mr. Murray Stewart, County Organiser. The first meetings were held in the School, until the Youth House could be used following its occupation by the Home Guard. Miss McCormick was the first leader, and she was followed by Miss Sheila Walker.

'There were many activities, including gym classes and boxing for the boys, and in home-making competitions the girls won the rose bowl at least once and were runners-up several times. The Club held dances, when they were joined by members of other Youth Clubs in the area.

'In 1952 Miss Dorothy Robertson succeeded Miss Walker and one of the Club's main activities became the pantomimes of 'Cinderella' and 'Aladdin'. The Club made most of the scenery and the costumes, and the performances, held every night for a week, were always sold out.

'There were annual Hallowe'en and Christmas parties and a bus trip. The Youth Club members visited many places in Scotland, and along with other groups they went to London, Ireland, Holland, and in 1960 to Oberammergau to see the Passion Play.

'At Christmas time we distributed gifts we had made ourselves, such as Radio Times covers, calenders, plum puddings, cakes and jellies, to the older people in the village. On our rounds we sang Christmas carols and were sometimes joined by the Guides.

'Strathkinness Youth Club had two representatives on the Scottish Council of Youth Clubs and had the privilege of being invited to royal garden parties. Several members of the Club were presented to members of the royal family. Margaret Watson was the only Scot present at the Golden Jubilee of the National Association of Mixed and Girls Clubs and was presented to the Queen Mother. She was also presented to the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1958, and in 1961 Margaret Watson and Ellen Kerrigan were presented to Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon.

'Miss Robertson was succeeded by Mrs. Rea when she retired in 1968.' (In November, 1974 there was a presentation to 'Robbie' for her many years' service.)

### The (second) Youth Club

*The second Youth Club in Strathkinness was set up after a meeting in 1975 of the Rev. A. Bennett, some parents and a few young people. Mrs. June Backhouse, the present leader of the Youth Club, has contributed the following material concerning its foundation, its progress, and what it is today:*

'The Club, which was set up in 1975, was known at first as the Kirk Youth Club. It was given a grant of £100 by the North East Fife District Council and became affiliated to the Fife Union of Youth Clubs. Two early leaders of the Youth Club were Dr. I. Easton and Mrs. Eileen Faed. When Mr. Bennett retired in 1978 the Rev. Douglas Galbraith became the new leader.

'Since it was founded the Club has taken part in many competitions; five-a-side football, badminton, fishing, table-tennis, baking, cross-country running, darts, chess and other pursuits.

'The annual Guy Fawkes celebration has been organised by the Youth Club for many years. The Club gives a contribution for fireworks, and other fireworks are given to appointed people to set off safely. For the first few years the bonfire and the fireworks were at the field in the centre of the village, with hot soup, sausage rolls etc. afterwards in either the Church Hall or the Village Hall, but latterly a more exposed and often windswept site has been used, and in spite of an often biting wind, hot soup has been served on the spot.

'At Christmas the Youth Club delivers to the pensioners in the village tea from the Church and Christmas Cards from the Community Council.

'Discos, which have often been held in the Village Hall, used to cost fifteen pence including a sandwich and a drink, but now cost £1 without refreshment.

'The Youth Club received another £100 grant after raising funds from jumble sales and coffee evenings and showing that it had spent £200 on various Club activities. The Club has won several competitions, but the main emphasis is on team spirit. There is a free and easy atmosphere at the meetings in the Village Hall, where a Hi-Fi plays all the favourites, and badminton, table tennis, snooker, darts and other games are played. With another room they could play volley ball or carpet bowls, which is rarely seen these days. The kitchen is the centre for discussion of all manner of things.



'The annual membership fee in 1977 was twenty-five pence plus another ten pence for each meeting attended; in 1986 the membership fee is £1, plus twenty-five pence for each meeting. The cost of crisps has gone up from seven pence to twelve pence in the same period.

'The size of the Youth Club varies from year to year. There were over fifty members in 1985 and in 1986 just over thirty. All young people who have reached high school age are welcome to join us at the Village Hall from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings.'

### **Badminton Club**

*A fairly recent organisation in the village is the Strathkinness Badminton Club, about which Mrs. Kate Law has written the following note:*

'The Strathkinness Badminton Club was started in the Autumn of 1976 when play was on Monday nights and Thursday mornings. In September 1977 a Wednesday evening was added to playing time; it was at this time that Juniors from the age of 12 to 15 years were allowed to play until 9 p.m. At this time we played on two small courts across the hall. During the session 1979-80 an overhang was removed and the court was painted to form one full-sized court.

'Many inter-Club matches and internal tournaments were played when we won some and lost others.

'Badminton today takes place on Monday nights from 7 p.m. until 10.30 pm. and on Wednesday evenings from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. Junior members are aged between 12 and 15 years and they play on both evenings until 9 p.m. There are approximately 12 to 14 players who attend regularly, and 6 to 8 juniors. New members are always welcome.'

### **The Strathkinness Drama Workshop**

Mrs. Carole Tricker has been running a Drama Workshop for all primary children in the village. Due to the pressure of young children and other commitments, the Workshop has had to be suspended until perhaps after Christmas.

The Drama Workshop concentrates on the fun to be found in drama rather than on learning lines in order to appear in a play.

It is hoped that Carole will be in a position to start her group again before long.

The village has many clubs and organisations, some of them going back a long time, and others relatively new.

### **The Curling Club**

The Curling Club is the oldest organisation which still exists in Strathkinness, although it is more in name than in any other way that it now is associated with the village. It was founded in 1868 with a membership composed of men from the village and the farms around it. Its first patron was Mr. John Whyte Melville and over the years it has had some of the finest curlers in the country, including the late Rab Mitchell, who was the third generation of his family to belong to the Club.

It is a long time since the old curling pond down by the burn was played on; matches are now played mainly at the Kirkcaldy ice rink. There are thirty-two regular members of the Strathkinness Curling Club, although many of them now do not live in Strathkinness.

### **The Open Group**

*The Open Group is one of the newest organisations in the village. The following information has been provided by Mrs. Cath Akerboom:*

'The Strathkinness Open Group was established in 1980 after the Mothers' Group collapsed due to lack of members. In order to continue certain commitments of the Mothers' Group, the remaining members decided to form another group. Invitations were sent out and those interested held a meeting to decide what they should do and how often to meet. The decision was made to call it the 'Open Group' as an indication of the welcome to all comers. There is no committee as such, and all members, if present, are involved in making the decisions. The group meets once a month in the evening when a speaker is usually invited to talk on a topical subject or on past times, or alternatively a demonstration is arranged. Coffee is served after the talks, giving an opportunity for discussion.

'Besides the monthly meetings, there are other activities such as Cheese & Wine evenings or a visit to the theatre, etc. The Grannies and Aunties are invited to an afternoon tea. This year we hope to entertain the Grandpas and Uncles too.

'We also have a Coffee Afternoon with Cake & Candy stalls, etc. to raise funds, the money being contributed to various organisations such as the Church Hall where the meetings are held, the Senior Citizens' Outing, the Playgroup Christmas Party, and most important of all towards our adopted ward at

Stratheden Hospital which we visit once a month. There are twenty-six ladies in our ward and on our visits we usually entertain them with things like games, cake decorating, flower arranging etc.; we also have tea and home-made cakes with them. We buy presents for the ladies at Christmas and Easter and send them birthday cakes. We find this very rewarding and the ladies are most appreciative and look forward to our visits.

'If there is anyone interested in our group please do join us in our endeavour to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. The meetings take place every third Wednesday of the month.'

### **A Very Special Coffee Evening**

Coffee evenings are a popular means of raising funds used by many groups in Strathkinness. There was one, however, which was not organised by a group, but which came about because of one individual. Sarah Griffiths, who was thirteen at the time, was greatly concerned about the famine in Ethiopia, and wanted to do something about it. In Sarah's own words,

'I was watching TV with my Mum where they were raising funds for Ethiopia by a sponsored walk, and I said "I wish I could do something like that". My Mum said, "All right, what do you want to do?" and I said, "A sale or a coffee evening". We knew we would have to have publicity so I made posters telling people where, when, and what for and asking for donations.

'My Mum booked the Church Hall for a week or so later. I told my friends and they passed the word round.

'On the Wednesday evening the hall was packed with people and lots of things to sell, given by many people. We also had several raffles which made even more money.

'By the end of the evening we had made £137, all of which was sent to Ethiopia through the Save the Children Fund.'



## THE FUTURE OF STRATHKINNESS?

The question of the future of Strathkinness has been given added meaning with a recently published draft plan for development of the area.

At a packed public meeting, called by the Community Council, held in the Church Hall on 22 September, 1986 over 150 people heard Mr. Jim Hanson, a member of the North East Fife Planning Department, explain the reason for the draft plan.

The District Council has been obliged to draw up a plan which must fit in with the Region's Structural Plan which is looking for 10—15 hectares (a hectare is slightly under two and a half acres) of land to fulfil their estimate of housing needs in the St. Andrews area within the next ten years or so. As no more peripheral housing is, at present, to be permitted in St. Andrews, its hinterland is being considered. The plan presents a possible massive development of Strathkinness with up to 390 new houses and a doubling or even trebling of the population.

The sewage system of Strathkinness, first constructed in 1956 and later improved in 1984, and which also includes parts of Blebo Craigs, can only cope with 1000 people. It cannot be improved because the amount of material the Kinness Burn can take is limited, by its flow, to that number of people. This maximum number has already nearly been reached, and the enormous cost of a new sewage treatment system can only be afforded if there is a very large increase in the number of houses. If Strathkinness is the site preferred it could accommodate the entire projected housing needs of North East Fife. If it is not the preferred site the alternative would be smaller developments in other villages such as Dairsie, Balmullo, Guardbridge, Leuchars, Kincapple or Ceres. Although these places also have sewage problems they are less acute than that of Strathkinness and their expected development would be smaller.

The proposal for Strathkinness includes possible development in both fields on the east side of Main Street, and a complete infill of Bonfield Road, with a road from the High Road cutting through Bonfield Road leading into lower Main Street, and the present entrance of Bonfield Road to Main Street being closed to traffic.

The full, concerned and, on the whole, reasoned discussion, which followed Mr. Hanson's explanation shows there is very considerable opposition, with a few supporters of the draft plan. The opposition was focused mainly on the doubt whether such a need actually exists, the destruction of the quality of the village life, its inability to absorb so many people as quickly as may be

required, the great danger on the roads with such a development and the unwillingness to accept St. Andrews' 'overspill'. Those who disagreed with the majority view thought it would not be such a serious problem to accept and absorb the proposed number of people and a feeling that such a development was inevitable.

Mr. Hanson and Mr. Iain Duncan, the chairman of the meeting, both stressed the importance of writing to the Chief Executive of the District Council to express their views which would all be considered. Mr. Hanson also stated that there would be no compulsory purchase of any land.

Whatever the outcome, and as a new Fife Regional Structure Plan is due to be published soon, the whole situation could change. There is no doubt that the proposal has unearthed a feeling of community spirit which belies the belief that Strathkinness is merely a dormitory town of St. Andrews, Dundee, Glenrothes or any other place.

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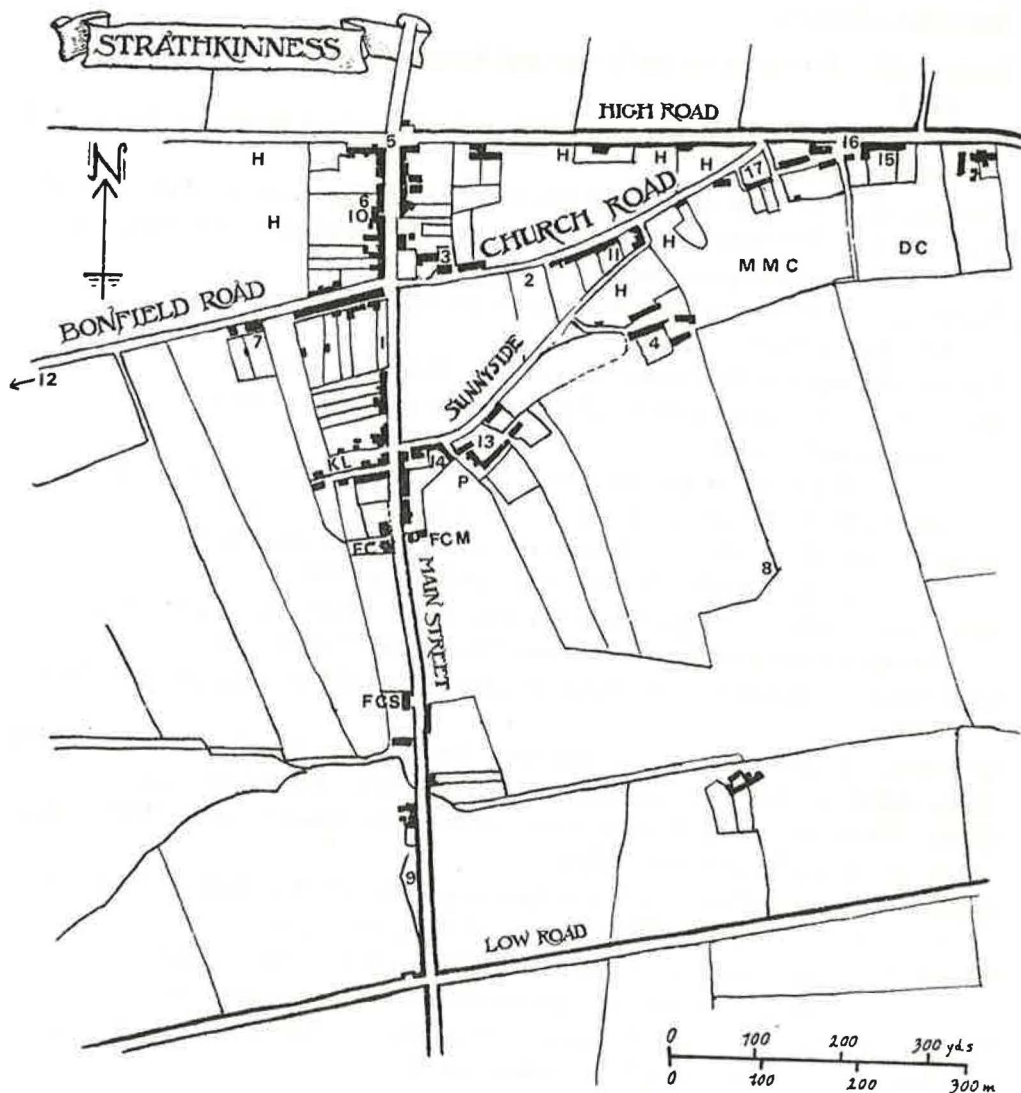
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Map of STRATHKINNESS based on Ordnance Survey Map of 1845

KEY:

1. Free church (now Village Hall)
2. Present church
3. School
4. The Poffle
5. Tavern
6. Men's Club
7. Youth House
8. Lady Well
9. Nurses Home

10. Fossil House & Cottage
11. The Cottage, 24 Church Road
12. Bonfield Cottage
13. Lilac Cottage
14. Kellock House
15. Hearse House
16. Bleachfield
17. Morenish

H = Sites of Local Authority housing  
P = Pettycruik  
KL = Kellock Lane  
MMC = Mount Melville Crescent (Site of)  
DC = Drumcarrow Crescent (Site of)

FCS = Free Church School  
FC = Free Church  
FCM = Free Church Manse

