ROSEMARKIE a village history

[1966]

Ross and Cromarty Heritage Society gratefully acknowledges the permission of The President and Members of Rosemarkie W.R.I. to reproduce this document. [January 2005]

Introduction

During the 1960s(?) there was a competition among Women's Rural Institutes to produce a history of their locality and one which has survived is that written by members of Rosemarkie W.R.I.

Ross and Cromarty Heritage Society is grateful to the current President and members of the Institute for permission to reproduce this absorbing document.

Rosemarkie WRI

[Photograph courtesy of the late Mrs Nancy Forsyth, Avoch, who is third from left in front row.]

During the late 1970s, early 1980s, members of Rosemarkie WRI formed a choir which competed in the finals of a singing competition in Aberdeen.

Table of Contents

The old woman sat contentedly in the warm sun, her vein-gnarled hands resting in her lap, her wise blue eyes looking round with remembered yet ever new pleasure at a scene which changed little but was never dull. She didn't know what gave this spot its strange translucence; probably it came from the combined effects of the clear, smoke-free air, the vast-seeming northern sky reflected in the ever changing waters of the Firth, and the lush green-ness of the growth all around her. As she sat in her garden, a rood of rich soil, running steeply and narrowly down from the house to the Shore Road below, she knew that behind her The Craig, a tree-topped hill of red boulder clay, sheltered her village from the north, that the old Court-hill, relic of the days when Rosemarkie had been in its own right a Royal Burgh, kept the west winds of winter at bay, and that to the South, the land fell gradually away to the smooth flat peninsula of the Ness, with, as backcloth, the hills of Inverness-shire which rose from the other side of the Beauly Firth.

To the east was the sea - bounded on its far shore by the coasts of Inverness, Moray and Nairn, with the eighteenth century battlemented pile of Fort George dominating the immediate foreground while beyond, in the far distance, the headlands of Moray appeared sometimes like mirage islands suspended in the sky above a glassy calm sea. On the northern side of the Firth the rich, sloping farm fields and the new young forests on the ridge above the sandstone rocks, rolled gently on beyond the heights of Eathie to the South Sutor which guarded the entrances to the Cromarty Firth.

At the top of the garden and gable-on to the High Street was the house which had been her parents' home, shared in those distant days with another family, in which she had grown up, in which she had come to live with her husband and in which they, in turn, had reared a family. Now her daughter, evacuated from England during the last war, lived there too with her husband, and their daughters, her grandchildren, had called it home for most of their lives. From it they had married and to it they now frequently brought their own small children to visit the great-grandmother who could tell them so many stories from the past - stories which her own grandmother had once told to her, stories which her own Johnnie, memory strengthened by years at sea when there was no living to be made in the village, had also cherished and passed on so lovingly and with a pride in a very ancient past however dimly felt.

For both Johnnie and herself their roots had been firmly embedded in this corner of Scotland, a small village in the Black Isle on the Eastern seaboard of Ross & Cromarty. True, his people had come from over the hill, but Johnnie had had his schooling in Rosemarkie - wearily trudging three miles there and back each day - and each Sunday he and his people had come down to worship in the Parish Church - the Church which stood in the centre of the village, surrounded by its ancient burial ground, and which dominated the skyline from whatever point a traveller approached Rosemarkie, whether by land or sea.

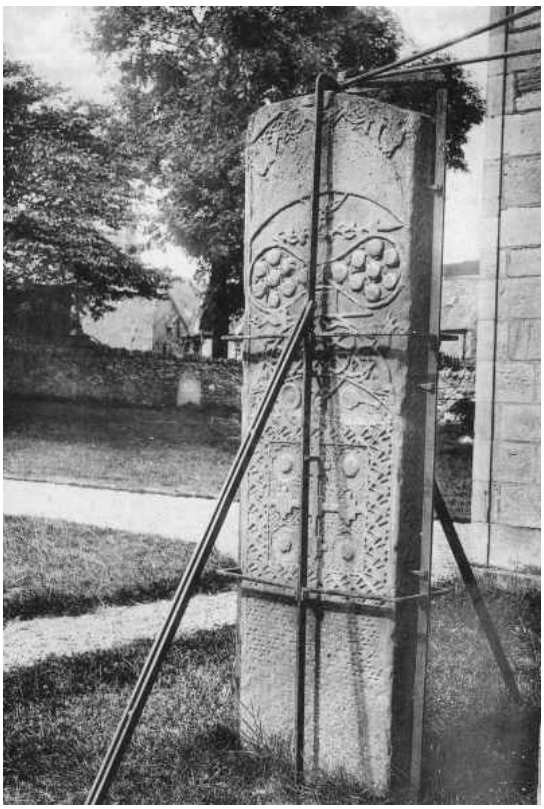
The Church - she supposed that it had all begun there since it was said that long, long ago there had been a religious settlement here, in the bay, of monks who had come from Ireland as missionaries, bringing Christianity to the Pictish tribes, converting them from paganism and the practice of magic.

Today, Rosemarkie is a small and pleasant seaside resort. In the 12th century it was a Cathedral town and a Royal Burgh. Now it is part of the Royal Burgh of Fortrose - a mile away - to which it was joined when the latter was granted its charter in 1455. But long before that, as excavations carried out about 55 years ago in a nearby cave proved, there was a settlement at Rosemarkie even in the Stone Age.

The name Rosemarkie is thought to be Gaelic in origin from Ros - a promontory - and maraichin, seamen. In the old days the name applied not only to the village, but to the entire peninsula - stretching at its broadest and highest part from the village of Rosemarkie on the east to Fortrose on the west - and it is this peninsula, called the Point of Ross, and later Chanonry Point, which was prominent to any seamen sailing up the Firth.

In addition to the evidence of a Stone Age existence found in the cave, it has been discovered that the old churchyard surrounding the present church (built in the 19th century) overlies an ancient shell mound whose contents are mainly the small clam pecten, which probably at one time formed the staple diet of the inhabitants. A few years ago, while the foundations of a house in the present High Street were being dug, pieces of deer antlers were found which had been roughly wrought for use as implements. Bronze Age cists containing human bones have been unearthed from time to time, the most recent being in 1902 when a stone cist was found near the parish manse, containing a skeleton in a sitting position with, beside it, a well-preserved cinerary urn, the upper edge of which had a curiously incised border. (This urn is now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.)

In the churchyard there is a fine example of a sculptured Pictish Stone. It must be a late example as the cross has a prominent position along with the Pictish symbolism, and it would appear from the fact that it has three distinct crescents or "sun-axe" symbols on one front, that the stone was originally erected to mark the tomb of some high dignitary of the time.



Documentary proof of the early history of the district is meagre as may well be imagined, but it is reported in several sources, including Reeve's History of the Culdees, that a body of Culdees (whose name derives from the old Irish cele de meaning servant or companion of God) belonging to the Church brought by St Columba to Scotland, formed a settlement in Rosemarkie in the sixth century, and this became an important centre of their cult. Moluag, an abbot of Lismore, is said to have founded the Columban Monastery at Rosemarkie and to have died there in 577 AD. In 1510 The Aberdeen Breviary mentions the village as the burying place of "St Maloc" and its belief gains credence from the discovery beneath the Runic Cross, when it was found during re-building below the flooring of the church, of a crozier or bachiul mhor, a ring and a crystal ball, symbols of authority said to have been given by Columba only to Moluag.

But in Andrew Wynton's Cronykil the building of the Church at Rosemarkie is credited to Nectan -

Sevyn hundyr wynter and sextene,
Quhen lychtare wes the Virgyne clene,
Pape of Rome than Gregore
The secund, quham off yhe herd before,
And Anastas than Empryowre,
The fyrst yhere off hys honowre
Nectan Derly wes then regnand
Ower the Pechytis in Scotland.
In Ros he fowndyd Rosomarkyne,
That dowyd wes whtht Kyngvs syne
And made wes a place Cathedrale,
Be-north Murrave severalle;
Quhare chanownys are seculare
Wndyr Sayant Bonyface lyvand thare.

Nectan, having been converted to the church of Rome by the teachings of an Irish monk called Boniface, sent to the abbot of Jarrow, in the north of England, asking to have master builders sent to him to build at Rosmarkyn a church of stone (the first in the north) "after the Roman manner". We can imagine that it was "a place Cathedrale" indeed, dedicated as it was to St. Peter and with Boniface who, according to the Acta Sanctorium, was buried before its altar as its bishop and abbot. Between 716 and 1125 there is again little written evidence to go on.

But the church in Rosemarkie must have flourished for when David I - the Sair Sanct - visited it on a pilgrimage in 1125 he raised it to the status of a Bishopric with MacBeth as the first Bishop, and there can be no doubt that the founding of the Bishopric and the residence there of the Bishop and Chapter of the See of Ross would greatly have increased the trade and importance of Rosemarkie and in due time it was raised to the status of a Royal Burgh, or Burgh of Regality, by Alexander II in 1255.

The old lady knew a little of this confused history but she had also heard a tale, told in an old book, of how the church at Rosemarkie was founded by Saint Monan, whose first chapel was at Applecross, and of how his monastery in her village might well have been sited on Minnie's Crook, a field near Rosemarkie still shaped like the head of a Bishop's staff, and of how one of the Scottish kings, James IV, while on pilgrimage to the shrine of St Duthac at Tain, had travelled south by the Chanonry ferry at the Point, having left an offering to the priests of St Monan at Rosemarkie. But she had heard tell, too, of a chapel near the top of the driveway leading to Kincurdie house, where the drive skirts the field still known as the Chapel Field, only that chapel was said to have belonged to Curitan, another name for Boniface. As she sat thinking of these things, she remembered being told that when the Cathedral was moved to Fortrose it was dedicated to St Boniface and St Peter, and that she had heard that one of the old Fair Days had been called St Boniface Day. She knew of the treasure found below the church, but she wondered what could have happened to the other Church treasure, said to have been removed quietly and buried beneath the sand along the shore, no one knew when, nor why, and no one had ever found it again although some claimed to have seen an old christening font far along the shore and well below high water mark.

Between the 9th and 12th centuries life on the Rosemarkie peninsula must have been hard and dangerous and Viking raids would have taken their toll. This was an age which gave birth to many sagas, and our old lady today knows well the story of the battle which was fought between the Danes and the Scots near the grey cairn - Cairn Glas - at Blackstand on the ridge above Rosemarkie. She knows, too, that when, early in the 19th century, one of the many cairns on the ridge was opened, human remains were found. There were stone coffins and weapons of copper and other metals and it was said that after a battle a huge Danish chief was buried there whose skull was said to be so gigantic as to containtwa lippies of bear. After the Vikings the northern parts of the Highlands were involved in the long civil wars between the Gaelic descendants of Malcolm Canmore and his first wife and the family of his second marriage to the English princess Margaret.

It is believed that the rebellious people of the Moray Firth coast were transplanted and replaced by strangers from the south - Scots, English, Normans and a few Flemings. Whatever the truth of this may be, it is interesting to note that, when written records became available for Ross-shire during the late 16th century, surnames and place names in the village and peninsula of Rosemarkie are found to be almost entirely non-Gaelic. This disappearance of Gaelic speech would also have been brought about by the coming of English speaking priests from the south who, over the years, almost completely changed the character of the area. True, MacBeth, the first Bishop of Ross, created by David I, had a Gaelic surname, but he seems to be the only one who had and it is likely that David,

at that time busily engaged in establishing the Catholic Church and the feudal system as instruments of his policy for the pacification of the kingdom, may well have induced the abbots of what were then called Culdee Colleges to accept his plan by installing them as the first Bishops of the Catholic Sees which appeared for the first time during his reign.

At this time Rosemarkie must have been dependent on the existence of the Cathedral there; the people probably worked to provide for the needs of the Clergy and for themselves, claiming even then on the Mulbuie (the wasteland behind the narrow fertile coastal strip of this part of the Black Isle) the right of muir, moss and commontysince to it the people, rich and poor alike, resorted for pasture for their cattle and fuel for their fires.

Although there was virtually no trade with the outside world there would have been a lot of going and coming of kings and princes, pil`grims, churchmen, soldiers and pedlars, across the Chanonry Ferry which was the main route from the south, and possibly all would halt awhile in Rosemarkie for the latest gossip to be picked up about the church and fellow travellers before continuing their journey either north or west.

The old lady thought of the ferry which had linked the coasts of Inverness and Ross-shire at this Point for so many centuries. At one time it had carried men, sheep, cattle and, later, horses and carriages, and before that it must have carried pilgrims and all sorts of travellers, right up to recent years when the soldiers stationed at Fort George used to cross regularly to shop and to be entertained. But the ferry stopped running in 1938 and now all traffic goes the long way round by Inverness town and the Kessock Ferry. In the old days, before the road was built over the Grampians, the only route north from Edinburgh led east of the mountains and over lower ground to Ardersier before crossing by the Chanonry Ferry. How busy it must have been long, long ago, how sad that, since the last ferryman was drowned, there should no longer be a ferry there, although she had heard talk that it might be opened again to help take some of the pressure off tourist traffic from Inverness.

She thought, too, of the Danes who had crossed the seas to come to this part of Ross and she remembered hearing how it was they who had given the Black Isle its name; the Black Isle which is seldom black and is certainly not an island. It was said that when the Vikings conquered Ross-shire this part had been given by their chief to the black swarthy Danes and had become known as Tir'n Dubh Ghuile (pronounced yuile) - "the land of the Black Danes" - and through centuries of common speech became, simply, Black Isle.

We have said earlier that in the 13th century Rosemarkie was created by Alexander II a Burgh of Regality. One of the characteristic features of a Royal Burgh is the division of its area into parallel, contiguous strips on either side of a main street as in the case of Rosemarkie. These strips, or Burgh Roods, each extending to about a quarter acre, formed the qualification of the burgess, each of whom held a rood direct from the king on which he was to provide his house and garden and for which he was to pay to the king or his representative - in this case no doubt the Bishop - a rent of five silver pennies. These rents, together with the fines of the Burgh courts and the tolls or petty customs on goods brought into the Burgh for sale, were collected by the king's officers The antiquity of the Burgh status of Rosemarkie is illustrated by the fact that the present properties on the ancient roods are still what are called "burgage holdings", derived direct from the Crown. To this day the annual payment of £1 is made to the Crown Receiver by the Town Council of Fortrose in payment for the "royalty" or Common Good of the old Burgh of Rosemarkie. This "royalty" or common good was land owned by the burgesses either privately or in common outside the area of the roods.

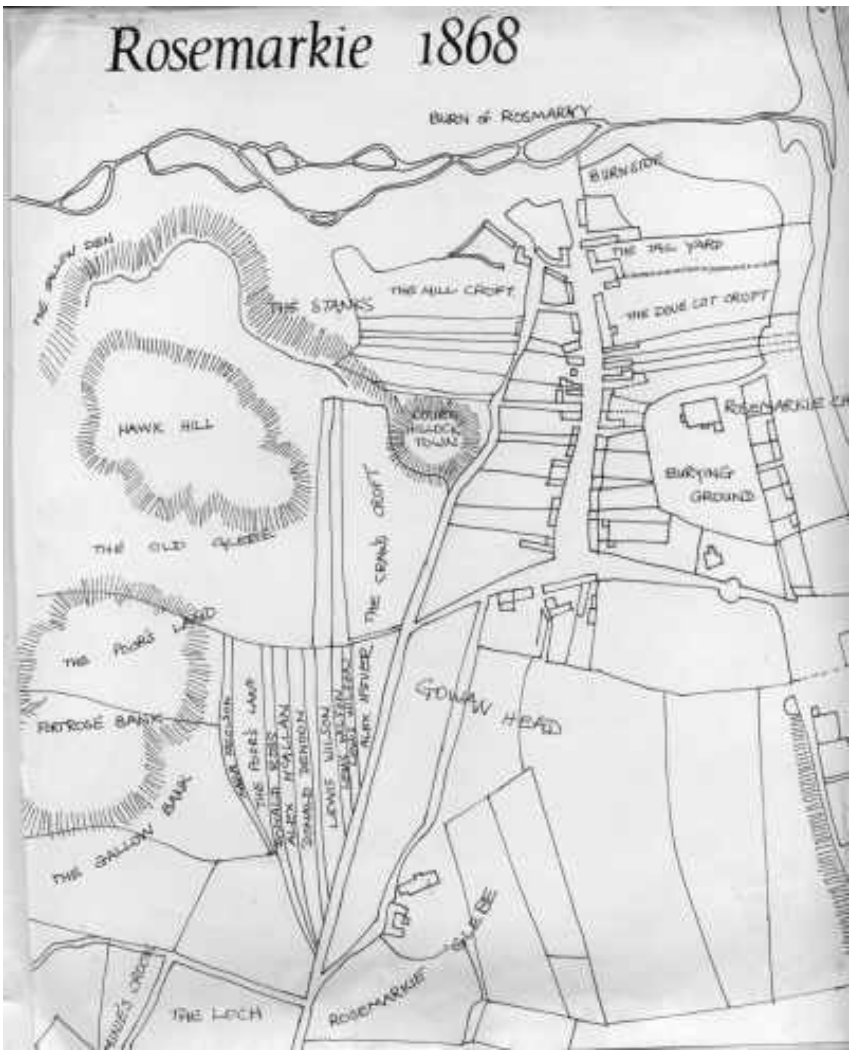
The next stage in Rosemarkie's history came when the same bishop, who had persuaded Alexander to create Rosemarkie a Burgh of Reality with the Bishop as the King's representative, decided to move the See and Chapter of Ross to Fortrose. He may possibly have been influenced by the fact that the site was more spacious for a great cathedral. Whatever the reasons, this decision brought an end to the importance of Rosemarkie as an ecclestiastical centre and altered the pattern of life of its people considerably.

In 1455, Fortrose, then known as the Chanonry of Ross, was in turn created a Royal Burgh by James II and was "annexed, incorporated and united for ever ..... to the said Burgh of Rosemarkie". But it took another two hundred years before the affairs of the two towns were properly joined in one, as Rosemarkie had always its separate bailies, councillors and burgh officer.

The history of the Burgh roods, of the royalty within and outside the boundaries and of the Channon lands between Fortrose and Rosemarkie, which at one time belonged to the Church, suggests that the church lands were carved out of the possessions of old Rosemarkie. The Royalty of the present Burgh was not bestowed on it by any charter, and must be a possession of great antiquity, perhaps from the time when a Pictish tribe occupied the Ness and the lands up to and over the hill behind. During the 6th century the tribe may have granted lands to an Irish missionary for maintaining the monastery he founded. In the 12th century these lands passed into the possession of the Catholic Church which built the Cathedral and manses on part of them, using the remainder for the benefit of parsons and chaplains. About the same time the Crown granted to the Bishop the right of Ferry and Salmon Fishing at the Ness, so that this part, too, was regarded as a purtenance of the Chanonry rather than part of the old Rosemarkie which it was originally. The village of Rosemarkie became a burgh and the rest of the old lands became its royalty. But with the Reformation and after the Act of Annexation of 1587, which ended the power of the Catholic Church, the crown claimed the Channon lands, and a century later the Crown bestowed these lands on Sir George MacKenzie of Covenanting times, who, as superior, became entitled to the rents and duties. This superiority later passed through several hands till recently, by gift, it became again the property of the Town Council of Fortrose, so that once again the modern Burgh of Fortrose, including Rosemarkie, is superior of practically all the lands once held by its Pictish forebearers.

The rood of the ground in which the old lady sits is freehold and may have been so for centuries from the time when the superiority of the Crown or the Bishop became so nominal as to be forgotten. She knew nothing of maps but even she had sensed vividly the essence of the past contained in the names of the different rigs on an old map shown to her of the sale of property at one time belonging to the MacKenzies of Flowerburn, an estate on the hill above Rosemarkie. How much history there might be in the names of the Bishop's Strod, the Trades' Strod, the Dovecot Croft, the Mill Croft, the Plumber's Croft, the Precentor's Croft, etc. etc.

With the building of the new cathedral at Chanonry, the history of Rosemarkie became inexorably linked with the history of what later became the Royal Burgh of Fortrose, although the terms of charters of 1590 and 1592 indicate that both places had councils at these dates, and it was not until 1661 that, by an Act of the Scots Parliament, the two places became one burgh to be known as Fortrose. It seems only right and proper that the Earl of Seaforth, who lived in the Castle at Fortrose, and Mr George Munro, minister of Rosemarkie, played active parts in reconciling the ancient rivals and bringing about their union.



Rivalry there had certainly been during the intervening centuries. As Rosemarkie's fortunes waned with the removal of the bishop and the canons to Fortrose, those of the latter waxed fruitful. Inevitably, trade followed the church to provide for its needs and it is sad to relate that in the Act of the Restoration Parliament of 1661 which finally joined the two burghs, the burgh of Rosemarkie is described as being now totallie decayed and the houses and buildings thereof become altogether ruinous and demolished as also dispeopled, there being but some few residents therein and most of them poor fishermen, while in Fortrose the most part of the inhabitants thereof are described as being merchants, adventurers, shop keepers, baxters, shoemakers, weavers, fleshers, fishers and other manufactories and mechanic trades. But care was taken that Rosemarkie's pride in its past should not be too deeply offended, and for a time two of the four bailies were to come from Rosemarkie, which was to be separately taxed, and in whose Tolbooth the Council or the Magistrates were occasionally to meet.

But there is no Tolbooth now, and no stipulation as to how many bailies or councillors should come from Rosemarkie.

In time, too, Fortrose, with the destruction of its Cathedral and as the effects of the Reformation spread, became an insignificant town with no manufacturers and very little trade, while Rosemarkie remained a village of fishermen and weavers. Today even these trades have ceased and both Fortrose and Rosemarkie are holiday resorts, welcoming visitors from many parts, as in the days of their ecclesiastical glory they must also have done.

The old lady thought back to 1955 when the Royal Burgh of Fortrose had celebrated its Quincentenary, and remembered how at that time old rivalries, which had long laid dormant, had again leapt to the surface, especially when the Town Council had had a sign with the new Burgh Coat of Arms and bearing the legend "Royal Burgh of Fortrose" placed at the entrance to Rosemarkie at the point where the main road from Cromarty crosses the Big Bridge. That sign had been quietly - and with a certain measure of respect for the skill of the craftsman who had made it - dismantled late one night and laid carefully in the Rosemarkie Burn, and to this day the people of Rosemarkie chuckle and still no-one knows who was responsible.

No matter that the sign was replaced - its posts this time embedded in concrete- Rosemarkie, as if almost to a man, had made its protest and, like the old lady now, cherished its more ancient history and remembered with pride that though Fortrose may have been a Royal Burgh 500 years ago, Rosemarkie was one 200 years earlier and that the present Royal Burgh of Fortrose is within the Parish of Rosemarkie.

In winter Rosemarkie is a quiet, douce village; in summer it welcomes an influx of visitors, attracted there by the beauty of the neighbourhood, the beaches, by the golf course and other summer attractions.

It is interesting to note that Rosemarkie is further north than Moscow and further west than Bath. Most people in the south of the country, hearing that it is a village in the Northern Highlands, imagine it to have the sort of climate associated with the north of Britain. In fact, however, Rosemarkie, like its neighbour Fortrose, has a very favourable climate, being by tradition neither extremely cold in winter nor too hot in summer, and never particularly wet. Records kept since 1908 show that the climate is comparable in many respects to that of Bournemouth; that the average rainfall is actually often below that of London and that the Burgh of Fortrose and Rosemarkie ranks sixth for sunshine in Scotland.

The lowness of the rainfall on the northern shores of the Moray Firth can be partly accounted for by the configuration of the land. Many a rain cloud from the west on coming up the Great Central Glen of Scotland is broken by the hills in the neighbourhood of Inverness and part is deflected northward by the backbone of the Black Isle, the Mulbuie, and the other part, skirting the southern shores of the Firth, deposits its rain in the districts lying south of the Black Isle. In Ross-shire, where large areas have a very heavy average rainfall, the driest part is the strip lying east of Tain to west of Fortrose and Rosemarkie with a mean annual rainfall of 25 inches.

The prevailing winter winds are from the south-west and these come from warmer latitudes and, furthermore, cross the Atlantic which is a great reservoir of warmth. Rosemarkie has an equable climate because of its nearness to the sea. Water stores up the heat of the sun's rays slowly, and loses it slowly, and therefore a great part of the heat of summer is stored up in the seas surrounding the coast, to be given out slowly in the winter. Snow and frost are generally never severe in the Black

Isle; although in the days of the salmon fishing along Rosemarkie Bay, the fishermen used to fill the pows (ponds) in the Fairy Glen with water in the autumn so that it could freeze and then be carted, as ice, to the various ice houses where the fish were stored. In the old days simple living would have been bearable in this area and there is one explanation of the name Black Isle which states it was called thus because when snow lay on all the hills on the southern and western shores of the Firth, the Black Isle alone was clear.

Fogs as well as thunderstorms are of rare occurrence, although it is interesting to note that this year already there have been six consecutive days of sea "haar" and one week during which several thunderstorms were heard very close at hand - a curious comparison with earlier years when records were first kept when perhaps one thunderstorm a year might be experienced.

As in other villages, the freakish weather of the present is all put down by the elderly to "all that mucking about in space" .....

Rosemarkie is extremely rich in natural phenomena. Facing eastwards as it does, and out to sea, it enjoys the benefit of magnificent dawns all the year round and, at certain times of the year, those living along the shore can, without leaving their beds, literally watch the sun rise from the sea.

True, the inhabitants of Rosemarkie do not, for the most part, see the glorious sunsets, full of vivid colour which, because of an absence of humidity in the atmosphere of this part of Scotland, can be frequently spectacular.

But, looking to the south and east from Rosemarkie, one sees the effects of the sunset on the surrounding country; sometimes there is an alpine glow on the snow-dusted hills of Inverness-shire, often there is a dramatic effect, as of stage lighting, on the ramparts of Fort George across the Firth, with the colours changing from a vivid orange-red, through a warm yellow to an almost chilly white, while the hills on the mainland beyond are bathed in sunlight which changes gradually until from being roseate they become a rich purple before finally being warpped in the cold dark blue of twilight. While all this play of light can be enjoyed on hills and battlements, the sea, depending on whether it is still or fretful, also changes colour, being sometimes almost reddish-brown as it reflects a spectacular sunset glow; at other times it assumes the eerie underwater green-ness of a dream world of mermaids and monsters of the deep.

Late at night, in the summer, in that time when there is scarcely any darkness and little variation between dusk and dawn, a night twilight glow is seen clearly, even if dimly in cloudy weather, radiating out from behind the Sutor of Cromarty, a glow which appears in the north-east and moves east along the horizon with the sun as it rises.

To the old lady this is a very bald description of something that, to her, is breathtaking. From her window on those summer nights when she cannot sleep easily she looks out to sea and notices that, at times, from midnight onwards when the coastline along the northern side of the Firth is starkly outlined against a pale green late dusk sky, a wonderful red glow appears, at first seeming to rise over the sea from behind the Sutor and then gradually spreading across the near horizon. When the occasional thin wind cloud is outlined blackly against the amazing light she is content and knows the weather will be fine next day.

She knows this night twilight glow well and never tires of wondering at its beauty as she never tires of the displays of the Merrie Dancers in the autumn and winter when they light up the whole sky. But the Ranee's Fan, now, that is another thing - something seen rarely and each time it frightens

her, being something quite beyond her comprehension. The old explorer who used to come to the village on holiday once told her he had seen it here and in Tibet, and that what she noticed at sunset in the easterly sky in spring and autumn, the thing that looked like a fan with moving spokes radiating out and upwards from a curving horizon, was the shadow of the earth's surface and the shadow of the rays of the setting sun. A wonderful thing, surely, but why should it be seen here across her own Firth and what meaning could it have?

Though with the building of the Cathedral at Fortrose, Rosemarkie's importance as an ecclestiastical centre waned, it must have remained a place well-known to travellers from the south who had to cross by ferry to Chanonry Point and pass through Rosemarkie before moving on northwards.

From the ferry the traveller would come along the east side of the Ness, past a stretch of common called the Links which, until recently, extended to the bottom of the bank on which modern bungalows now stand, and behind which the land spread out in an amazing pattern of long narrow roods. Once in Rosemarkie he would no doubt seek refreshment in one of the many alehouses which were reported to exist there, or even, in more recent times, have put up at Miller's Hotel, which stood on the spot where an old coaching inn with ample stable yards must have been.

From the village the main route to the north crossed the ford at the Markie Burn, wound up past Kincurdy where Curitan's chapel may have been, followed a line parallel to the present road above the Fairy Glen before going over the hill in an almost straight line and down to Balblair ferry. From there, long ago, a pilgrim would have crossed on the next stage of his pilgrimage, perhaps westwards, as far as the shrine of St Monan at Applecross or, if the traveller were a chapman or trader, to the hamlets dotted along the sheltered northern shore of the Cromarty Firth. Another road led off this main route and crossed the old Eathie ford to Cromarty from where ferries crossed to Nigg and Tain.

In more recent times, the older inhabitants will tell you, London steamers bound to and from Inverness called at the ferry pier to pick up or drop passengers and goods and certainly, before the days of the Black Isle Railway (whose terminus was Fortrose and which is now permanently closed), passengers for the south and east from the Black Isle and points north, which were served by other convenient ferries, used the Chanonry ferry route to Gollanfield Station on the Inverness side of the Firth where they joined their respective trains.

It is interesting to speculate on the important part played by the Chanonry ferry in the economic life of Rosemarkie. Though there is no longer a ferry boat, it is not so many years since the pier at the Point was still a busy spot and the centre of the salmon fishing industry on which so many of the inhabitants depended for a livelihood. The following description passed on by word of mouth best illustrates the sort of activity there was at the Point right up to the last century: "When I took my first trip south as a boy with my father, who was coachman to the father of the late Mr Fletcher of Rosehaugh, we embarked at Chanonry Point - machines, grooms etc. At the same time all the salmon netted in the district were being sent to Billingsgate and empty fish boxes and stores were being disembarked." At this time there were at the Point two ferrymen's houses, smoking or kippering sheds and an ice house for storing the fish.

Curious to think that at one time - and that not so very long ago - when a farmer fee-ed a salmon fisher to work for him during the closed season he had to undertake "to feed him on salmon on only one day a week and that day to be the Sabbath". There were indeed more salmon netted than could be eaten locally and ice houses had to be built for storing the fish, which in those days sold at 3d per pound! But the upper proprietors of fishing rights on the Beauly Firth became worried about the effects on their own fishings of so much netting round Chanonry and, so the story is told, they managed to have the netting stopped with the help of river pilots from Kessock who swore on their oath that they had made tea from fresh water from a channel off the Three Burns near Cromarty, thereby proving that the rivers of the upper Firth still flowed freely as far out as that! The proprietors having thus successfully extended their riparian rights, declared that salmon had to be fished for only from cobles and no longer netted - a method which threw quite a few fishermen out of work.

But salmon was even then so cheap (1/- per pound) that the proprietors of the rivers entering the Beauly Firth became worried because of the effects on their rod-letting of the sale of cheap salmon. They formed themselves into a company and bought out the lower proprietors, thereby also terminating the leases of the salmon fishers of Rosemarkie and bringing the old industry to an end. The kippering sheds at the Point and the ice house stood empty, and there were no longer any cobles drawn up near the salmon fishers' hut on Rosemarkie beach and no more ice was made in the "ponds" in the Fairy Glen for the ice house near Kincurdy.

As an offshoot perhaps of the salmon fishing industry, boat-building was carried on in Rosemarkie in the 19th century. Naturally, the cobles were made locally but boats, even of the schooner class, were built in a yard on or about the site of Tigh-na-mara. The most famous of these was the Louisa, built of larch from local woods and launched at Rosemarkie in 1852. Adjacent to the boat-building yard there was a "Ropery" and yet another ice house.

Our old lady, like many other elderly local inhabitants, remembers much of the story of the ending of the salmon fishing and the gradual decline in the use of Chanonry Point, caused partly by extensive road-building, partly because of the development of the railways, partly by the silting up

of Fortrose harbour and the area of the pier at Chanonry Point and, finally, by the death, by drowning, of the ferryman in 1938.

Now she looks out to sea at ships which pass by Chanonry Point: cargo ships and tankers which ply to and from Inverness; small fishing boats out from Avoch whose dancing lights twinkle like hobgoblins in the darkness when they are fishing at night for the sprats and small Kessock herring for which the Firth is noted and which are pounced on by gulls, cormorants, porpoises and even the occasional seal.

Sitting by her window or in her garden she has seen fishery cruisers and NATO corvettes sail up the Firth and she has watched warships of all kinds steam round the Sutor into the safe anchorage beyond Cromarty. But there is one ship she rembers especially well, the Queen's yacht Britannia which last year sailed past the Chanonry Lighthouse on the Point to pick up the Queen off Inverness after her visit to Ross-shire and the other northern counties, and then in the hours of early light sailed back again and out to sea - a graceful ship for a graceful lady.

Things have certainly changed a great deal. On the Links which the traveller passed on his way from the Ferry to Rosemarkie there is now a caravan site where before fishermen drew their boats up and dried and mended their nets; where farmers built their stacks and winnowed their corn and dried their lint and flax; where housewives had bleached their linen and young folk had played.

Her father had had a receipted account from Miller's Hotel, dated 1857, showing such items as:

To one gill - 6d
one half mutchkin - 10d
3 gills - 1/3
2 btls. whisky - 4/-
2 btls ale - 1/-

(An interesting comparison with present day prices!) Miller's Hotel was no more but the old Hawkhill House was now much added to and had become the Marine Hotel; there was a new boarding house in the village and though there was now only one "ale house" - the Plough Inn - there were many people still in Rosemarkie who welcomed the new type of traveller by offering them bed and breakfast, as their ancestors no doubt welcomed travellers of old.

Salmon fishing was not the only industry in Rosemarkie. The first statistical account of 1794 showed a way of life which probably continued with little change for another fifty years until factory production drove the old shoemakers and weavers of Rosemarkie out of business. At that time, 1794, when the population was 296, there were merchants, shoemakers and their apprentices, linen weavers and apprentices, mill wrights, tailors, glovers (a really high-class occupation) and smiths, all plying their trades in the village, while those who were fishermen might also work on the land during the closed season.

The manufacture of linen began on a small scale about the middle of the 18th century and during the period from 1800 to 1830 there were about twenty weavers operating in their own homes. The flax was grown on the neighbouring farms and before being spun into thread the lint was steeped in the man-made ponds known to this day as "The Pows". They are situated in front of Fairy Glen House and the supply of water came from the mill lade above.

Perhaps the annual influx of cattle into Rosemarkie in early ages in payment of rents may have been the most important reason for the development of shoemaking and, as in Tain, the hides may have been required to be sent to local tanners. However, the trade developed and it was certainly an important one locally.

The shoemakers and the weavers sold most of their products at the various fairs or markets held yearly or half-yearly in every town or village in the Black Isle, and some travelled as far as Dingwall and Inverness, walking all the way with their wares on their backs. Some of the linen was truly beautiful; one finely patterned example of a tablecloth is on display in the Highland Folklore Museum at Kingussie. The communion cloths still in use in Rosemarkie Church were woven from locally grown flax. The shoes were not of such a high standard, being rather disparagingly known at all the markets as "Black Isle Boxies" because of their shapelessness. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the increased production of machine-made goods, both industries collapsed in time.

Nowadays there is no one particular trade in Rosemarkie, although the old lady remembers that in her youth there was still a shoemaker in the High Street who made his own shoes and that although weaving had died out, four tailors were fully employed in a shop in Bridge Street, the continuation of the High Street which leads to the Big Bridge over the burn before the road climbs the hill to Cromarty and Balblair. In her youth, too, there were two mills functioning. Both are now private houses. But in the 1914 War she remembers that blankets from Fort George were brought over to be

washed in the mill stream, thus giving another instance of the to-ing and fro-ing that there was across the Chanonry Ferry. When she was younger some men worked on the farms, since the greater part of the Burgh consists as it did in older days of agricultural land, but now, in this age of mechanised farming, only a handful of men are employed, except at harvest and potato lifting time when extra "hands" are needed.

Finally, she can also remember the blacksmith who plied his trade near Courthill and who made horse shoes in the evening.

Now, however, as one of the guide books describes it, "The modern role and aspect of Rosemarkie is that of a charming little holiday town, with a Church, good shops, hotels to suit all pockets and what is reassuring to many, electricity, with a plentiful supply of spring water - as well as an excellent golf course, ideal bathing and unrivalled beauty".

Hugh Miller, the famous geologist of Cromarty, described Rosemarkie as one place which "with its long narrow valley and its abrupt red scaurs, is chiefly interesting to the geologist for its vast beds of boulder clay".

The Rosemarkie district, unlike the rest of the Black Isle, is not situated on old red sandstone but on a narrow strip of indifferentiated metamorphic gneissose and schistose rocks similar to those of central Ross-shire, which stretches along the coast from Fortrose to Eathie where the geological picture is further complicated by a strip of sedimentary rocks identified as Jurassic from fossils found in them and therefore much later than the old red sandstone.

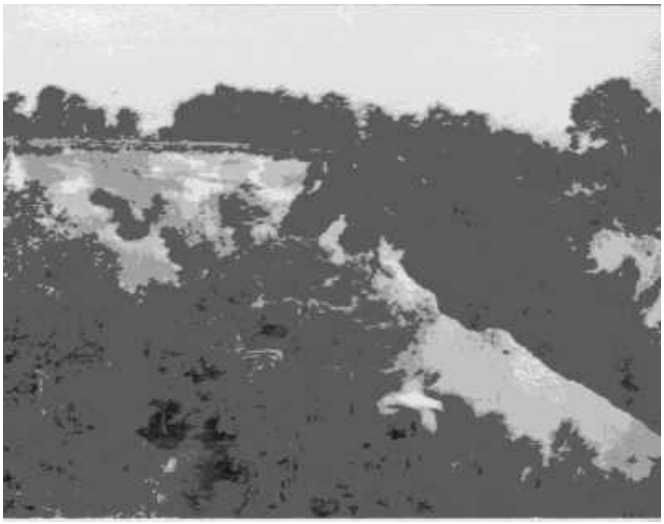
During the glacial period the ice moved from the ice-shed west towards the Minch and east across the Black Isle and Moray Firth to Banffshire. Evidence of this is submitted from the finding of erratics, scattered boulders of rock alien to the rock type of the district in which they have been found, having been plucked from their parent outcrop by a glacier and later deposited. Proof of

glaciation is found in the cliff and red craigs of the Rosemarkie Burn. They are composed of boulder clay, a haphazard unsorted and unstratified assortment of stones in a matrix of sand, clay and rock flour which is the typical deposit of a glacier. The village itself is situated on a series of raised beaches, the result of the uplifting of the land after it was relieved of its immense load of ice at the end of the Ice Age.

The huge cliffs of boulder clay which recede from the shore far up the long narrow valley of Rosemarkie Burn have been described as "hollowed into profound ravines and present imposing and lofty precipices. They are weather-worn, carved into a thousand different forms: here towering for two hundred feet to a pinnacle capped by a solitary boulder, there to perpendicular cliffs perforated with many a swallow's nest, with a complete lack of vegetation except where heath and furze rustle far above."

In summer the denseness and the variety of the foliage forms a scene well worthy of its name, "The Fairy Glen".

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
The primrose pale and voilet flower
Found in each cliff a narrow bower.
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten cliffs retain,
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath,
So wond'rous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.



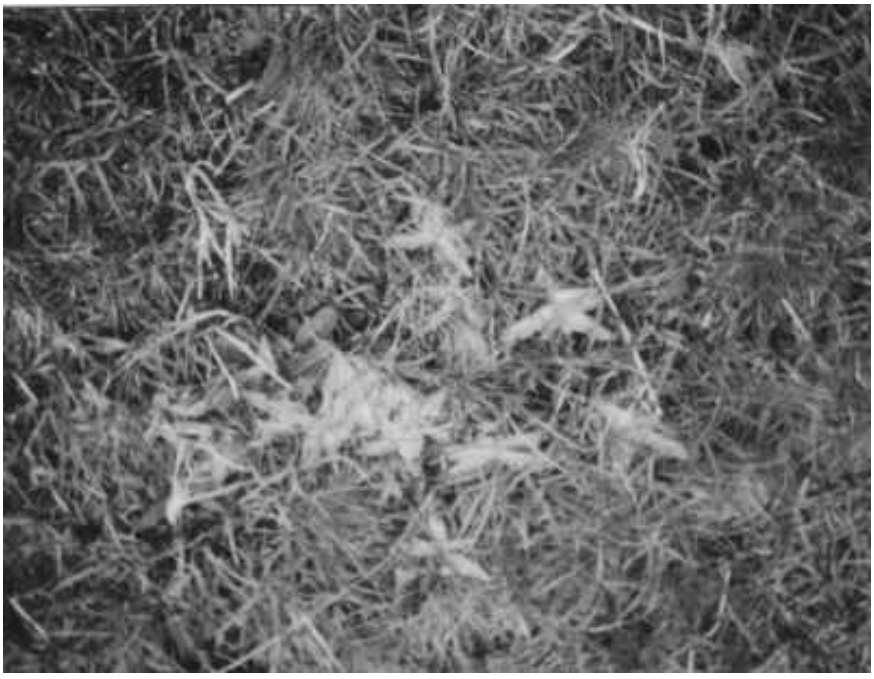
To that might be added another unique feature of the red craigs - they are only the second known inland resting place where fulmar petrels have dared to nest.

Although Hugh Miller described the Glen when viewed by moonlight as a place "where one almost expects to see spirits walk", it looks quite different when the summer sun penetrates between the branches of the infinite variety of trees growing there; and wild strawberries are found massed beside blue speedwells and spotted orchis; and wild pansies are found beneath the birches beside the waterfall.

It is not only among the craigs that the natural history of Rosemarkie can be studied. All round the village there is an almost infinite variety of wild flowers growing in fields, among hedges, along the rocks, on the dunes by the golf course and under trees. Moonwart ferns and Alpine butterwort, Star of Bethlehem and butterfly orchis have been found, as well as giant umbelliferae.

The variety of shore and landscale mean a great variety of bird and animal life also. There are roe deer in the Fairy Glen; foxes have been seen in the Forestry Commission plantations; squirrels, brown rats, long-tailed field mice, moles, brown hares and water rats are all found locally. Geese, waders and ducks of almost every kind can be seen in Rosemarkie or close at hand, as well as herring gulls, greater blackbacks, herons, falcons, kestrels, tawny owls, hoodie crows and jackdaws, many species of warblers, wagtails and a few magpies; and, looking seawards, one can see porpoises and seals, swans, sometimes a shark, sometimes a small whale.

But it is the spring which is the most beautiful time of the year here. To old bones the winter seems long and the sight of the first aconite lifts an old lady's spirits. Soon, now, the gean trees will be in flower along the Fairy Glen road and then the gorse and broom will make the countryside blaze with golden colour. Spring comes slowly in these northern parts but, as if to make up for this, it is usually bountiful in its profusion of leaf and blossom, primrose, bluebell and blazing golden broom.



WILD AND FREE

I love my Home - 'tis wild and free,
No culture does it need:
God placed it there - There let it stand
Fashioned by His Mighty Hand,
And a gift to Adam's seed.
No spot upon this rock-bound coast
Such a lovely stretch of beach can boast
As seen at Flowerburn,
Where wild flowers bloom the whole year round,
And lovely hybridous plants are found
In rocky glen and burn.
The Ferry Ford - 'tis wild and free,
Washed and cleaned each day;
The hand of man has not yet mar'd
This ancient relic - made by the Lord,
Nor stopped the right of way.
The landmarks that for centuries stood
The fiercest shock of wind and flood
Keep nobly to the post.
Grim sentinels they - Oh! could they speak
The story told would blanche the cheek
Of lives - and shipping lost.
The Ferry Cove - 'tis wild and free,
Dame Nature placed it there;
Her throne the rocky dome above,
Beneath, the redbreast and the dove
Each mourning for its mate.
The crystal pendants has no charm for them,
For, lying beside that fallen stem
Upon Dame Nature's bed,
The saving frond of a frozen fern
As if to ward off further harm,
Beneath, both mates lie dead.
The Murray Firth - 'tis wild and free,
He laughs at the coming storm;
Tho' the wild winds whistle, what cares he
He knows the track where the harvesters be
Must keep my boats from harm.
I'll just have a look around by Nairn,
Call at the tail of the bank and learn
What's become of the Fleet.
They all know me, and I know them too,
To be dodging like this, the thing won't do,
Causes their wives to greet.

Composed by King Fern (Devine), Rosemarkie.
An old hermit who lived with his wife in one of the Rosemarkie caves.

If you were to ask the old lady sitting in the sun about schools in Rosemarkie she would tell you that when she was young there had been a small school in a house on the High Street, between Balmungie House and Groam House, now pulled down; and that there had been a Ladies' School in a house on the other side of the street before the Board School was built - beyond Courthill and next to Greenside farm. Now, since the Rosemarkie school was closed between the wars, school children from Rosemarkie, along with children from Fortrose, attend the Academy at Fortrose.

Perhaps if the old records of Rosemarkie are ever discovered, more would become known about early schools there. It might be surmised that perhaps when the two villages of Fortrose and Rosemarkie became one burgh any "lad o' pairts" from Rosemarkie might have been encouraged and, even paid for, to attend one of the several Fortrose schools, some of which were sponsored by the clergy.

At the present day there appears to be an increasing young population in the area. Some men are employed at the two television transmitters as engineers, some work with the Forestry Commission on their extensive re-afforestation schemes along the Black Isle ridge, many travel daily by car to skilled jobs in Inverness, and others have found steady employment with firms concerned in the increasing amount of new buildings going up in the district. Most of them continue to live in Rosemarkie and the Town Council endeavours to house the young married men and their families in a well-laid-out housing scheme.

The fathers of these young men probably attended Rosemarkie Primary School; the young men themselves would have gone to Fortrose Academy and now their children follow them there, and it is hoped that they in turn will continue to find work locally or within easy commuting distance of a bigger centre so that the population may continue steadily and perhaps even slightly increase.

Many of the amenities which attract tourists here are equally attractive to local residents, many of whom enjoy golf, tennis, sailing etc. As well as summer activities there are, as in many another village, more than enough things to join and once the improvements being carried out now to the old village hall are completed, improvements for whose cost money was raised by every organisation using the hall, helped by a generous donation from the Town Council, there should again be plenty of whist drives, dances and a village concert or two each year.

As in most villages in Scotland with any history at all, there are plenty of old tales still being told and weird and wonderful beliefs still cherished, even if they come to the surface only when a book like this is being written, or when an old man sits by the fire with his pipe, a dram or two and a young audience.

Round here it is still held that when the Last Day arrives the seat of judgement will be on the Moor of Navity above the Eathie Burn. True, this spot is nearer to Cromarty than to Rosemarkie but, as in old days when Cromarty was the centre of law and order for the district, perhaps it is only right and proper that the final court should be near there.

Another story relates that the plans for the cathedrals at Elgin and Fortrose got mixed up by the imps who had been ordered to build them in a single night by the wizard Michael Scot. Having finished this work in good time, Michael had to set them to do more lest he should be torn to pieces himself by the dangerous children of Satan who, if not kept busy, would have destroyed their master. He ordered them to build a mound and on the top a road at the entrance of the Inverness Firth from Ardersier to Chanonry Point. To the imps this was easy and they made good progress with the mile long job on a moonlit night till a passing Highlander blessed their labour - and that was the end of that.

Not far away from Rosemarkie, in Munlochy Bay there is a cave where Finn and his warriors lie entombed, waiting to be summoned by three trumpet calls when they are needed to help their country again. A trumpet was sounded once and the warriors stirred, but so frightful did they look that the trumpeter fled not daring to sound it again, and there they still wait - raised on their elbows now - for the trumpet calls that have never come.

Nearer Rosemarkie there are two large country houses each of which is haunted - Flowerburn House by a poltergeist, never seen but always ensuring that any potential intruder suffered dire harm - and Raddery House where the Green Lady walked. No local person would ever walk the low road to Raddery at night for fear of meeting her. But her spirit found rest after a skeleton, found beneath an ancient hearthstone, had been given decent burial.

There are several stories of mysterious disappearances, such as that of the man with his plough and two horses who disappeared suddenly and forever in a shaft above the rocks, a shaft that was said to

have been sunk by a prospector in search of coal; or of the disappearance of a "wifie" who went looking for a lost lamb in one of the caves along the shore and who was never seen again. A party of men who went to look for her went in to the cave for a considerable distance and still could not find the end of it and, discouraged or fearful, returned to daylight and the beach.

Right up to fairly recent times there was, locally, a strong belief in magic and the evil of magic! An old farmer, for whom nothing would thrive, decided to consult a wise man near Inverness, who took out a pail of clear water, put in first a silver ring and then a gold one, and finally a lump of coal from the fire. He stirred all this round for a while, told the farmer to look into the pail and see if he saw a face. He did, and saw his neighbour's. He went home, had things out with his neighbour and all went well.

There is a curious pagan connection surely in the old custom, now died out, of carrying lighted torches through the streets on Hogmanay.

Of witches there seem to have been plenty in Rosemarkie at one time or another - perhaps the legends about them have emanated from the story of the Brahan Seer who was burnt in a barrel of tar on the Ness of Fortrose, but not before he foretold the curious doom that was visited on the house of Seaforth. More recently an old crone was said to have put a curse on a man who had "crossed" her. She made a clay model of her enemy and each day she took the model to Rosemarkie Burn and washed it, and each day a little of the clay was washed away until the day came when there was no more clay to wash, and on that day he died.

Another story of sudden death is that of the architect who designed and built Fort George for the Hanoverians as a frontier garrison for keepting the wild Highlanders at bay after the '45. He is said to have come across to Rosemarkie to view his handiwork, to have been suddenly smitted with remorse, being a good Scot, for what was implied in his achievement, and to have committed suicide on the spot.

Our old lady shivered in the warm sun as she thought of these tales and remembered especially the tale of the unfilled grave by the Grey Cairn on the hill above Rosemarkie, and the story of the man who, having tired of her and found another, enticed his sweetheart there, meaning to murder her. He was disturbed and she went free and to this day, as if in solemn warning, the grave remains open.

But she remembered happier things too. Old Bellac, the wifie from Avoch who used to come weekly to Rosemarkie to collect in the Fairy Glen material for her herbal concoctions and to whom her mother had always given tea; and the illicit stills that had flourished all round the neighbourhood. She thought especially of the one at Ardmeanach where, when the Gauger (Exciseman) suddenly appeared, the crofter's wife made his tea with the golden liquid and while he was "out" - knocked senseless - her husband and his friends had been able to hide all the incriminating evidence. She chuckled then as she remembered some of the "characters" she had known or heard of, such as the man who announced to his friend, "I hear Johnnie Hossack is off to Honomalu (Honolulu) tomorrow; change at Glasgow!" Or Jock Perish, the first man to fly, who tied himself and baited fish hooks to a stout pole and when the geese, after coming to the bait, flew up in desperate flight, Jock, too, was airborne; and geese, hooks, pole and Jock "flew" to Artafallie eight miles away, from where he got a lift home.

Then, too, there was Old Kilravock, whom everybody was convinced was a witch and whose house the children always passed at the run. When she wanted to go anywhere she stood in the road, waved her long stick at the first vehicle to come along, and so malevolent did she appear that even the Queen herself would have stopped and made a place for her in her carriage.

Finally, there is a charm which was said to be effective against anyone possessed of the evil eye, but to be of any use it had to be spoken in good old Anglo Saxon four lettered words.

Local sayings, recipes and "cures"

When the robins come back to the gardens too early it is the sign of a bad winter to come.
The same result follows when the blossom on the broom is too heavy.

He who waits long at the ferry will get across sometime.

A light-heeled mother makes a leaden-heeled daughter.

May ye ne'er want a friend, nor a dram to gie him.

If Candlemas be clear and fair,
The half of the winter is to go and mair.
If Candlemas be dark and full,
The half of the winter is past at Yule.

A dewy May
And a rainy June,
The farmer up
And the gardener doon.

Cure for Diarrhoea - sloes made into jam.
Cure for a Sore Throat - the sole of a sweaty sock bandaged round the throat at night.

Since herrings and oatmeal were for long the staple diet of people in Rosemarkie, there are several recipes making use of both, such as the standard recipe for fried herring -
Split, bone, clean and dry the herrings, sprinkle with salt, coat each with coarse oatmeal and fry in smoking fat.

The best "crowdie" was said to be nothing more than milk and coarse oatmeal stirred together.

The wish of the hungry, possibly here as well as in many other parts of Scotland, was:

O Lord, when hunger pinches sore,
Do thou stand us in stead
And send us, from thy bounteous store,
A tup or wether head.
Amen.

The present day visitor to Rosemarkie finds several things and places of interest to see. He would surely start by visiting the Church where he could inspect the Celtic Stone and ruminate on the meaning of its symbolism. As he entered the Church - said to be the third built on the present site - he would notice, in the entrance, the collection of 18th century pewter displayed there - one Communion cup, one Paten or Plate dated 1640 for Communion bread, one pewter Baptismal Bowl dated 1742, Communion tokens dated 1786, an old Sermon Hour Glass and the old Mort Bell dated 1727 which was rung at funerals.

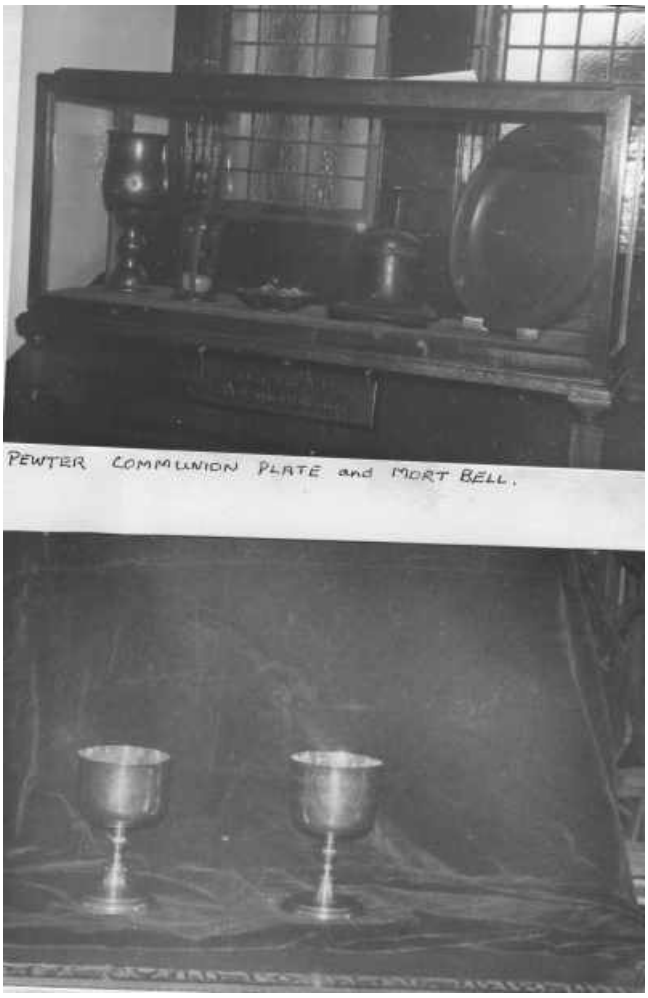
If he were lucky he might be shown the old Mort Cloth which the Church since pre-Reformation days used to hire out to cover deal coffins and from which the Church derived a steady income. In 1751 there is record of the charge for the church mort cloths (there were then three) being 10/-, much less than the charge made by the Town Council who owned two cloths, one of good velvet and the other of good cloth. The mort cloths are generally kept in the same box as the communion

linens which were woven in Rosemarkie. Again, if he were lucky, he would be shown the two beautiful silver Communion cups presented in 1686 by the Countess of Seaforth and inscribed:

Donum Honorab mae Isobeleae Comitissae
de Seafort. In honorem Dei et usum
esslesiae de Rosmarkin

There is an interesting apocryphal story that the Countess, when she realised that she had been unjust in ordering the death of the Brahan Seer in burning tar, presented the cups to the Church as a mark of penitence.

The visitor would certainly spend some time wandering round the ancient churchyard speculating on the symbols on the Celtic Stone and on the history of the early flat gravestones, many overgrown and their inscriptions illegible. Could one of these possibly be to the memory of Sir Andrew Moray, fellow Guardian of Scotland with William Wallace, who died in Avoch in 1338 and was buried in the cathedral of Rosemarkie? He would notice the old cupboard-shaped tomb, dated 1691, in memory of the Millers of Kincurdy, and he would be interested to note the grave of General Bryden, the only man who escaped alive from the massacre in 1842 of the British Force in its retreat from Kabul. He would find himself standing at the "Tommy", the Leslie tomb opposite the east gable of the church, which at one time had had a shelter erected against it for watchers who guarded the cemetery from the depredations of the body-snatchers.



From the churchyard he would wander through and round the village by many old rights of way - some of which are still kept open - and as he wandered he would wonder why there should be so many wells placed throughout the village. He might call in at The Plough and ask about the large stone mantlepiece bearing the initials J.M. and J.A. and the date 1691 - the same initials and date as are on the Miller tomb in the churchyard. He would certainly walk up the back road to Courthill and look across to the Gallows Bank and the Hawkhill behind it and, after admiring the formal beauty and wealth of colour in some of the gardens, he would return to Bridge Street and walk past the old mill, now a dwellinghouse, and into the Fairy Glen where, on his way to the waterfall at the top, he would gaze in awe at the Red Craigs, and particularly at the "Matterhorn" shape of the "Snooty", the highest one of all, on which a solitary fulmar might be resting. If not too tired by evening, he might stroll gently along the shore noticing how, since the days of the salmon netting, the sea seems to have encroached, and wondering how far the spray must be blown in the spring if there was a spring tide and an easterly wind behind it. After crossing the Burn, he would walk past the tennis courts before going down on the shore to wander among the rocks with the odd names like The Tubbuck and The Gunnac and continue on his way while the tide was low, to look for semi-precious stones, garnets and ammonites.

When he reaches the High Street again he might stand by the Arch near where the old Cross had stood and, looking along the street, wonder why there were so few signs there of its ancient history.

But the old lady, by now sitting by her summer evening fire, would listen to his account of his walk round Rosemarkie and she would tell him to look again along the High Street and to notice how, as it did centuries ago, it still cleaves a straight line through the village with houses on either side, some still gable-end to the street (following the Scandinavian pattern?). Behind most of the houses there was a narrow rood of ground running towards the sea on the one hand and up towards the Courthill on the other.

Gently, the would tell him that her house was gable-end to the street, that her rood ran straight and narrow down to the Shore Road and that her property was freehold. She would draw his attention to the position of the Church, almost in the centre of the village, or the village as it had been before the

Town Council build houses at Gowanbrae, and ask him if he didn't agree that it dominated the skyline, being seen from whatever route one took to Rosemarkie?

TOWARDS THE GREAT GLEN.

THE CUNNAC.

VIEWED FROM THE ARCH.

As her eye caught sight of a photograph given to her by her minister she told him a story. A few years ago one of the elders of the Church, General Sir Richard O'Connor, one of the most distinguished soldiers of the last war who now lived in Kincurdie House and who was then also Lord Lieutenant of the County, had been appointed by the Queen to represent her at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As Lord High Commissioner he had invited his Parish Minister, the Minister of Rosemarkie Church, the Rev J B Russell to be his chaplain.

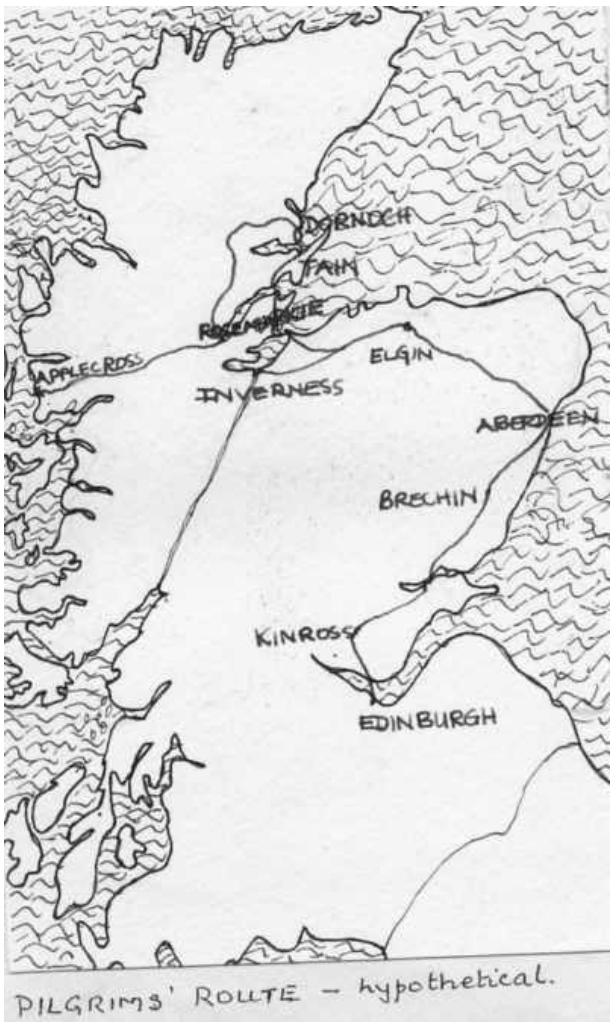
And so the wheel comes full circle. This history started with the founding of a church, a church that flourished, was supplanted but survived, one which, although once again, this time on the grounds of economy, is threatened with amalgamation with a church in Fortrose, has only recently sent a Lord High Commissioner to represent the Queen at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and he chose the church's minister to accompany him as chaplain.

In the early centuries kings made pilgrimages to Rosemarkyn: in this century a Queen did honour again to the Church through one of its members, General O'Connor.

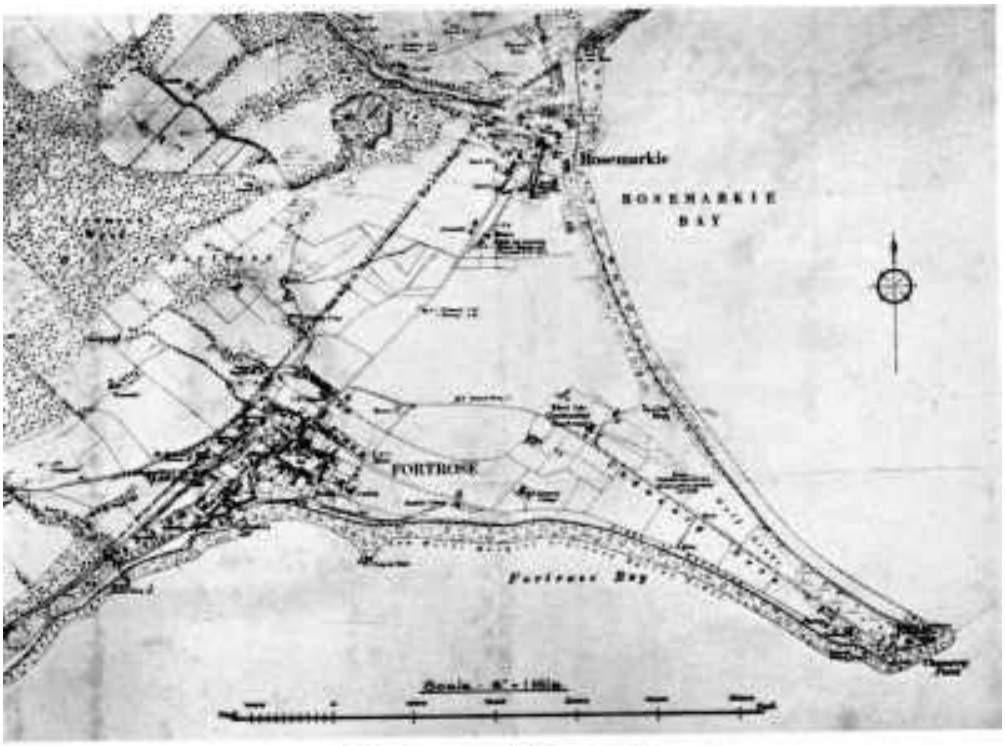
COURTHILL, ROSEMARKIE

Now spring puts on its garlands green
And flowers of varied tints are seen,
And larks their hymns of freedom trill,
While beauty blooms around Courthill.
Bath'd in the floods of golden light,
A fairy landscape meets my sight,
And I survey it calm and still
As I am stationed on Courthill.
The morning beams glance on the sea,
The crystal dewdrops gem the lea,
While hedge and grove, and rock and rill,
Are dear to me upon Courthill.
Sweet music breathes from morn till night,
On radiant hill and rugged height,
And daws flaunt gaily o'er the mill,
And wing their flight across Courthill.
Friendship and love are met with here
Through all the seasons of the year;
Hearts warm and kind that never chill,
Are endless blessings on Courthill.
When spring bedecks the woods and plain,
And autumn yields its waving grain
I long to wander at my will
In glen and glade beside Courthill.
The gentle deed, the generous mind
Be in my humble verse enshrined,
For pleasures made the soul to thrill
Of those who muse upon Courthill.
The rolling sea, the rustic bowers,
The garden walls, the beds of flowers,
Shall fond remembrance wait until
I stand again upon Courthill.

W.B.
1886



PILGRIMS' ROUTE – hypothetical.



Fortrose and Rosemarkie

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserve