

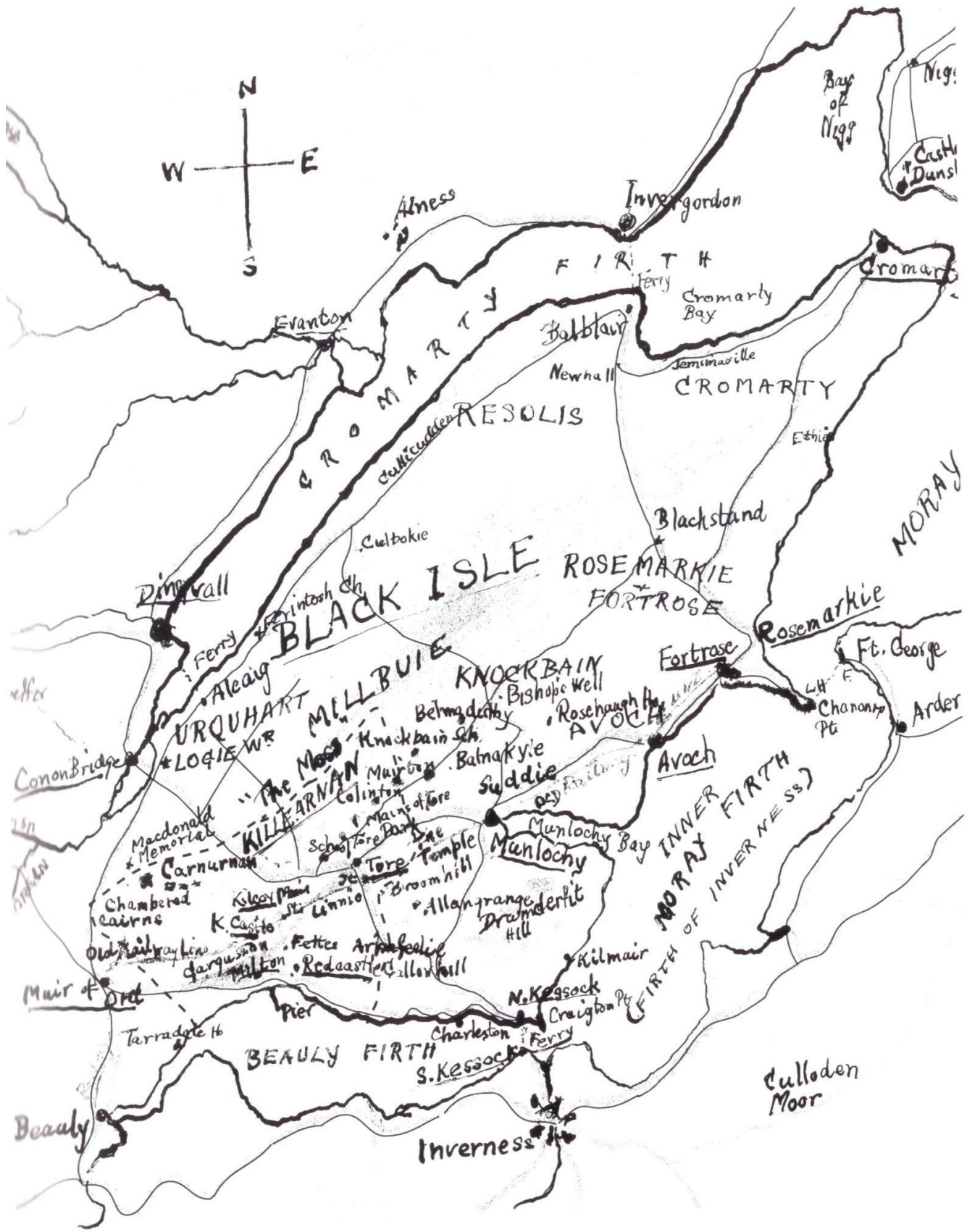
KILLEARNAN

The Story of the Parish

by

Margaret B. Oag





Killearnan: Parish Boundary outlined by Dotted Line -----
 Roads outlined by Hairline _____

PARISH OF KILLEARNAN AND DISTRICT, BLACK ISLE, ROSS AND CROMARTY

JULY 1966

KILLEARNAN W.R.I.

Written by Margaret Oag

THE BLACK ISLE

When friends from afar visit us, they soon ask the inevitable question. "How did the Black Isle get its name?" We can only reply that the certainty of how it got its name is lost in the mists of time. It is thought that the area was once an island separated from the mainland by swamps which later dried up, leaving a peninsula some 20 miles long and about 8 miles wide. The invading Norsemen, in their language, called this peninsula Edderdail, meaning "between two dales or arms of the sea" – the Cromarty Firth on the northern shore, and the Beaully and Moray Firths on the southern shore. Its geographical position also gave the Black Isle its official Gaelic name of Ardmenach, meaning "the height in the middle". This ancient name still survives in the farm of Ardmenach near Fortrose.

This name was replaced by the comparatively modern one of Eilean Dubh or Black Isle, descriptive of the dark woods and heathy moorland stretching across the peninsula from east to west. On the other hand, some scholars maintain that Eilean Dubh is a corruption of the Gaelic for "the island of St Duthac" ("Dubhthach" in Gaelic) who transferred the see of bishops from Rosemarkie to Fortrose in the 13th century. We can take our choice of those two meanings.

CLIMATE

The Black Isle is made up of seven parishes, lying in a temperate belt of climate so that it is quite common to find roses blooming in December in sheltered gardens. Some years ago, meteorological tables of Fortrose, (seven miles east of Tore, Killearnan) and Bournemouth, on the south coast of England, were kept and compared. The average monthly temperature of Fortrose for that period of years was only three degrees Fahrenheit below that of Bournemouth, and the average rainfall was two-thirds of Bournemouth.

In 1955 the Black Isle suffered a long period of drought unequalled in living memory. All private piped supplies dried up so that people went to the old wells until these supplies were also largely exhausted. In the Tore district only one well still gave its delicious, icy water which poured out of the rocky roadside bank into the trough beneath. In olden times it was known as St Boniface Well, named after St Boniface of Fortrose. Now it is famous as “The Cloutie Well” – an appropriate name indeed, to judge by the thousands of rags draped, “for luck”, by the superstitious on the nearby fence!

WATER SUPPLY

Ross and Cromarty County Council had already approached the Government to set a scheme afoot to bring water to the Black Isle from Loch Glass, beyond Evanton, on the northern side of the Cromarty Firth. Their application was unsuccessful. However, so much publicity was given by newspapers to the distress experienced by both man and beast in the Black Isle during this drought – the longest, and worst in 50 years – that the Council’s plea was strengthened. The Government agreed to give financial aid and the Loch Glass Water Scheme was begun in 1956. The water supply was installed in Killearnan in 1959 – a much appreciated boon in our homes and in the fields. Nevertheless, some homes still retain their own very satisfactory pumped supply; a few wells are still in use, the great number now unused, but regarded with rather a sentimental affection.

DERIVATION OF THE NAME KILLEARNAN

The name Killearnan takes us back in history to the time when St Columba and his followers came from Ireland and set up their place of Christian worship on Iona. During the following centuries, missionaries set out from Iona to bring Christian gospel to the mainland. Among them was Iturnan, pronounced I’urnan; he probably travelled, first of all, in what is now Argyll, building his first “cill” or chapel near Campbelltown where we find Killearnan Farm. Later he moved north arriving at last amongst the Pictish tribes. He built his “cill” or chapel, it is thought, on the gentle south facing slope, and with the passing of years, the district became known as Killearnan (cill- I’urnan).

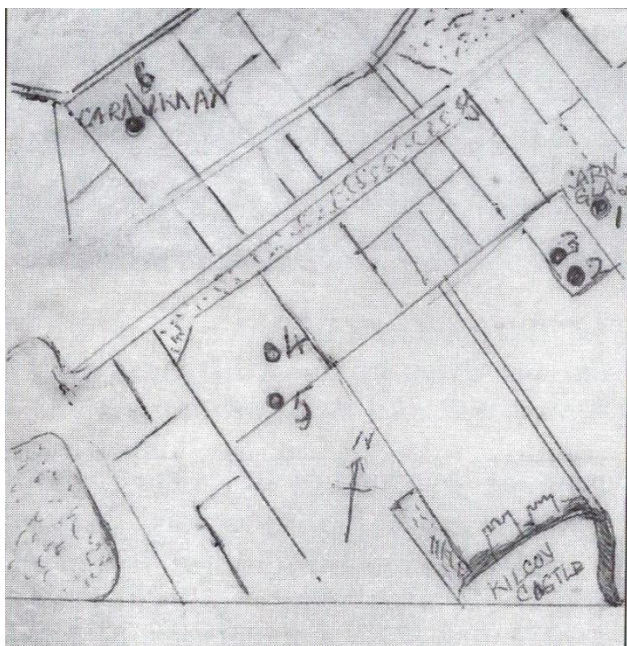
In his book, dated 1861, Dr Kennedy of Dingwall – (known as “the prince of Preachers” in Gaelic and English) – writes, that according to tradition, Killearnan

derives its name from the grave of “Iernan, a Danish prince, who fell in battle where Cairniernan (now Carnurnan) still exists”. So, as in the Black Isle, we have a choice of two meanings for Killearnan.

At Carnurnan the remains of burial cairns still stand today. This district abounds in Pictish stones, burial cairns, etc, especially one field on the farm of Croftcrunie – (“croft or farm of the crowner, or forest watcher”); and at Artafallie (“the high place of the sods” – used in building). On one eminence in a field at Croftcrunie stands an ancient mound, encircled by trees called “The Temple”. It was always known as a burial place, and had at one time been surrounded by a dyke. This had gradually disappeared but the spot still holds its mysterious name. It is though that this might be one burial place after a terrible battle which took place in 1340 between the great MacDonald Clan from the west and clans from Inverness. The battle raged north of Arpafeelie and Artafallie, to the district then known as Drumnamarg, on to Munloch. Drumnamarg, which was made up of Croftcrunie, present-day Tore, Ryefield and Tighnahuig, was thought by some to mean “the ridge of the dead”, but a more likely meaning is “the ridge of the merklands” – a rental term. The battle was called “the Battle of Blar-na-Coo” because the chief weapon appears to have been a plough-yoke; hence “the battle of the Yoke”. Of the beaten side only one man survived, and he took refuge under and overturned ‘carnloban’, a kind of farm cart. After he told of his survival, he was nick named ‘Loban’, and so we find the origin of as north country name, its other form being Logan.

Further west are the farm and hill of Drumderfit. Before the battle it was known as

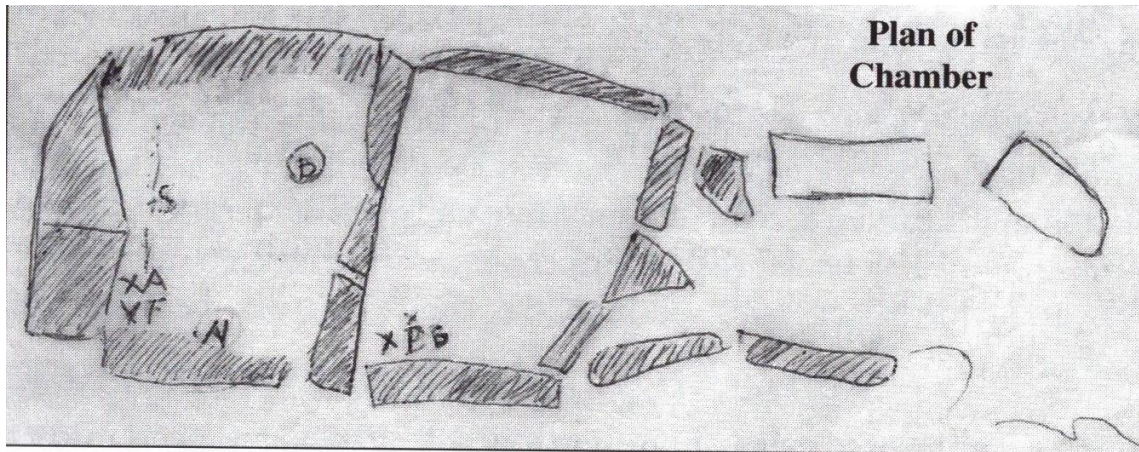
Drumdubh – “the black ridge”, but afterwards it was spoken of as Drumderfit – “the ridge of tears”.



To return to prehistoric remains – those at Carnurnan, near the western parish boundary, have been of great interest to famous archaeologists and the following detailed description is given, as it may be of interest to anyone wishing to study the archaeology of this locality. It is said that in the Black Isle and in a remote spot in Fife, were the last two “pockets” of Pictish life in our country.

To the north of Kilcoy castle lie six chambered cairns, all within the space of one mile. Belonging to different groups, they have been of great interest to archaeologists, who

claim it most exceptional to find different types of burial chambers in the same region. To the west of the group is the grave of Carnurnan, and immediately south east a ruined, rounded cairn. Near this is a horned, or kidney shaped chamber, the only one to be found in the Black Isle. Further east are three rounded cairns, all within 200 yards of each other. One of these, when excavated in 1908, yielded a food vessel. The most easterly of these, Car Glas, was excavated in 1906 and produced a small barbed flint arrowhead.



B - Beaker Sherds
S - Shaft

N - Neolithic Sherds
F - Flake

A - Arrowhead
BB - Burnt Bone

In the summers of 1955 and 1956 Dr A. A. Woodeham, B.Sc., Ph.D., F.S.A. SCOT>, and Mrs Woodham, F.S.A., SCOT., re-excavated Carn Glas, and made some further interesting finds. Their excavations were made doubly difficult, as the chamber had been utilised over the years for the disposal of sheep carcasses, and the space beyond what was thought to be the original entrance, had been brought under cultivation.

They discovered a passage way, facing east, which led to an anti-chamber, and then to the chamber proper, which was about 4 feet square/ The walls were of large slabs set on edge, and dominated by a massive headstone with pointed top. This is a common feature of most cairns of this group. The floor was of clay, covered with a layer of fine sand, to a uniform depth of 2 inches.

Relics discovered included 4 Beaker Sherds, some Neolithic shards, a flint flake, leaf shaped flint arrow head, a carbonised rod approximately ¼ inch x 18 inches, (this suggested and arrow shaft), piece of charcoal and a framnet of burnt bone.

The Beaker Sherds, part of a single vessel, were of a dull reddish sandy clay, decorated with fine serrated impressions. The Neolithis pieces, also appeared to belong to one single pot, made of coarse clay, very friable, wit paired fingernail markings, and irregular jabs, as if made by the end of a broken twig.

From these relics, they found it impossible to draw a definite conclusion as to the period during which the tomb was in use, or whether burial was by inhumation or cremation. The leaf shaped flint arrowhead is associated with Neolithic culture, and it is probable it was deposited, along with the Neolithic pot, at the original burial, while the Beaker sherds and barbed arrowheads suggest the bronze age, and they may have accompanied a later burial.

Despite careful riddling no traces of teeth were found, just one small burnt bone. Unburnt could not have survived. Though the quantity of charcoal found was not sufficient to suggest ritual fires, they may be justified in concluding that burial was by cremation, as evidence of cremation had been found in similar Caithness tombs.

SITUATION

The parish of Killearnan, with its lovely woods and finely cultivated farms, is pleasantly situated along the northern shore of the Beaully Firth. It extends five miles along the shore, and stretches back two miles to the north, till it reaches the "brow" of the Black Isle, which, because of its covering furze, bears the Gaelic name Maelbuie – now Millbuie.

REDCASTLE

On a height near the shore and overlooking the Beaully Firth stands Redcastle, which owing to its traditional history, covered the whole parish with its name. To control the warlike northern clans and to withstand invasion from the sea, William the Lion, King of Scotland, in the late 12th century, ordered a stronghold or "fortalice" to be built, naming it Edirdovar meaning "between two waters". He had another stronghold built in the northeast, overlooking the Sutors of Cromarty. This was named "Dunsgath" (now Dunskeath), meaning "the fort of dread".

After putting down a rebellion, William gave the keeping of Edirdovar with the surrounding lands to one of the Bysets. For many years it belonged to some member of the Royal family, also serving as a hunting lodge and was believed to have been visited by Mary Queen of Scots on a trip in 1562. In the 17th century it eventually passed into the hands of a Mackenzie of Kintail, descended from Roderick Mackenzie, younger son of the 10th earl of Seaforth. He ordered the rebuilding and extension of

the old "keep". The prevailing formation of the Black Isle is said by geologists to be the old red or Devonian Sandstone, and at nearby shore, a huge deposit was quarried to build the new fortified castle. What a vast army of men must have worked to quarry and hew this stone by hand, transport it to the site and carry out such splendid architecture! As the great castle arose, shining reddish-gold, it became known as Redcastle, and the family, the MacKenzies' of Redcastle became a powerful branch of the Seaforth's. As time passed, fortunes rose and fell but the occupants always upheld the Royal House of Stuart.

During the civil War against Charles I, Redcastle was the last place in Scotland to hold out and fight Cromwell's troops for the deposed King. An old manuscript told that, later, Montrose encamped nearby on his flight from his enemies, and at Redcastle he heard the news, with deep sorrow, of the execution of Charles I in January 1649. He himself was later betrayed and taken captive to Edinburgh, where, for his loyalty to his King, he was executed in May 1650.

Redcastle was burnt down by the invaders, but, as some portions of the building still remained, it was inhabited for some time, until, early in the 18th century, it was rebuilt and extended, in a gracious manner befitting the more modern times.

It is said that in 1745, prince Charles Edward Stuart (Prince Charlie) visited Redcastle where it was arranged, he would sleep in a room with two exits, one of which communicated with a small turret staircase leading out of the house. Fortunately, there was no need for the prince, to use this exit as a means of escape from any danger.

There is a tradition in the MacKenzie family, that, during breakfast, the prince nearly succeeded in persuading the laird, with his retainers, to join him in his bid for the throne; but the Laird's wife, being a strong Hanoverian, was so angry that she deliberately upset the tea-kettle, full of boiling water, over her husband's foot, thus making it impossible for him to "take the field" with the prince.

Soon afterwards, Redcastle was sold to the Grants of Shewglie, but the owner, having quarrelled with his eldest son, left it to Fettes College in Edinburgh; (hence how Fettes farm, Killearnan, got its name). The castle was later sold to Col. H.D. Baillie who had inherited the adjoining Tarradale Estates. His son, Henry Baillie of Redcastle, had three sons, all of whom died before him, and thereafter Redcastle passed to the Dochfour branch of the family.

The foregoing information has been faithfully recorded by his daughter, Philippa, of the above Henry Baillie, in her interesting book, "Fragments of Auld lang Syne".

Redcastle had the unique distinction of being the oldest inhabited castle in Scotland and amongst the guests throughout the years was the Prince of Wales who stayed for one night in 1923. It was constantly occupied until 1939 when it was requisitioned for billeting Army and then R.A.F. personnel who were there for the duration of the war. Ammunition was stored in the woods nearby and taken, as required, to Redcastle Station from whence it was taken to the “bomber” aerodrome at Fearn in Easter Ross.

When post-war repairs were carried out on the castle, architects discovered dry-rot had destroyed the roof to such an extent that it had to be removed, and now the grand old house stands desolate.

We recall with delight that wonderful day in June 1953, when all the folk of the parish gathered in the beautifully kept grounds of the castle to celebrate the Coronation of our Queen Elizabeth. There we carried out such a splendid sports programme, the outstanding item probably being the Men’s Tug-of-War – all thrill and spills! At the end we gathered before the grand old “fortalice”, the lady of the castle, the late Baroness Burton, in our midst, to sing the National Anthem. It was probably the last, and certainly the happiest, gathering ever held there, never dreamed of, when the first Edirdovar was built.

MILTON

With the necessity for a meal mill and with the burn running by, a “town” arose, busy, self-supporting with its regular market day held on the market stance. Nearby, there were bust scenes and constant employment at Redcastle Quarry, where the hewn stone was loaded on horse drawn carts, running on rails, out to the long pier where it was shipped on board boats to be taken across the Firth. After 1715, the stone went to the building of Fort George, and later, many public and private buildings (constructed of this red sandstone) lent dignity and beauty to Inverness. This place was Milton of Redcastle, now resting quietly after the stir of olden times.

It is a delightful experience, when motoring west along the low shore road from North Kessock and Charleston, to negotiate the bend rising upwards and inland, to be confronted suddenly with this exquisitely beautiful group of houses and gardens. Further on we come to Chapeltown of Redcastle, another old-world group of cottages. A heap of stones in a field is all that remains of St Andrews Chapel which

gave the hamlet its name; the householders still draw water from ancient St Andrew's Well. Here was born in 1694, the noted Eneas Sage, who was minister of Lochcarron from 1726 to 1774, a man of great physical strength which he frequently used to get his reluctantly parishioners to church when moral persuasion failed! His life story, with a wealth of historical background, is given in "Memorabilia Domestica" written by his grandson, Donald Sage, a former minister of Resolis.

Continuing north on the old, once important route from Redcastle, we come to a crossing of routes with the newer, and now main road from Muir of Ord and the South. We are passing through the fine farm of Fettes, where at one point stands its well-designed farm workers' houses; at the opposite point we see the handsome Free Church of Killearnan; and at a third point is the beautifully simple war memorial for the young men of Killearnan who lost their lives in the two World Wars.

Our old road, still bearing north past the crossroads, meets the main road from Conon bridge in the west. Lying between those two thoroughfares we observe the tower of Kilcoy Castle. "Kilcoy" has the Gaelic meaning of "the nook in the hazel wood", and this meaning seems appropriate, considering the setting of beautiful trees and woods. Kilcoy castle was built by James Stuart of Atholl and the Stuart coat of arms dated 1580 can still be seen on the castle wall. His widow, formerly Jean Fraser, married Alexander Mackenzie and thus the castle came into Mackenzie possession. It is an excellent example of Scottish baronial architecture with its round towers and overhanging angle turrets. While the family enjoyed prosperity, its estates stretched to the eastern parish boundaries and it is said there were at least four large houses (with farm lands attached) along the "back road" – then the main road – to the great house of Belmaduthy which was the Kilcoy hunting seat. Each of these was occupied by a member of the Mackenzie family of Kilcoy.

Tore "Big House" was said to be a tall, white building on an eminence commanding an uninterrupted view over the country from east to west. It was so important, that six seven sets of high stone pillars were set on the various roads leading to the house, to guide travellers to it. One pair to the north and one to the south west still stand in "Forestry" land; one pair on the road near Colinton and one pair near the school were demolished a few years ago when the road was repaired and widened. Nothing remains of this house but the outlines of its foundations and some very ancient apple trees, growing beside the burn running through ground still called "the orchard". East of Tore Mains was Colinton, named after Sir Colin Mackenzie. The house which had a superb view- one of the finest in Ross-shire – was demolished when unsafe, and the

land included Muirton. This name is thought to be derived from “Mordun” (from the Gaelic for “big fort”) and it is thought that an ancient fort stood near at hand in very early times. A number of large boulders in the vicinity are of great interest to students of archaeology. The house of Muirton had been the “dower house” of the older ladies of the family when the heir married and took up occupation of Kilcoy castle. Further east we come to Balnakyle where one family has farmed from the early 19th century when the occupant was factor to the lairds of Kilcoy. Next comes Belmaduthy (“toun” or farm of Duff’s sons) where many merry gatherings were held after the hunt on the surrounding heights and moors of Kilcoy Forest. The old mansion, with irreplaceable relics and documents, was destroyed by fire in 1938.

Such was the estate of Kilcoy. Misfortune came upon the family and the old castle passed through a period of neglect, to be restored and occupied by the family once more during the 19th century. Beside the castle, arose the farm of Kilcoy mains, with its fine old farmhouse and beautiful garden. Those later owners took deep interest in the welfare of the parish and the country, one member becoming Provost of Dingwall. Ill fortune struck once again and with the death of the owner, most of the estate was sold. The present owner of the castle lives in California. In the days of the prosperity of the MacKenzies of Redcastle and the MacKenzies of Kilcoy in the 17th century, the Brahan Seer was said to have foretold the misfortunes of the families because of each laird, at the time, being indirectly implicated in a murder. At the present time, Kilcoy castle, like Redcastle, in the words of the Seer “stands cold and empty”. Its once beautiful grounds and walled garden completely overgrown, and the private burial grounds neglected.

KILLEARNAN CHURCH (probably known in earlier times as Redcastle Church)

A church was built near Redcastle in the 13th century and on this spot stands today a lovely old structure, one of the few pre-Reformation Churches in use in Scotland. The church, which contains a small medieval effigy, is of the usual cruciform pattern, lying east and west, with the old oak pulpit at the corner of the one “arm” and the Communion table where the altar table used to be. The Communion cups were bought for the parish in 1784 and the very old bell, dating back to the reign of Charles II, is rung only on special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter and the “bring in” of the New Year. The church was Scottish Episcopal until the introduction of the Presbyterian form of worship after the English Revolution on 1688. There was such obstruction from the Episcopal Lairds and their tenantry that each Presbyterian

preacher lost heart and left. One minister and his family had to flee from the manse – a humble dwelling – which was razed to the ground.

The church remained without a minister for seven years until the Rev. John Kennedy came from Assynt in 1813 to take up charge. His stipend from the “heritor’s” was very meagre as they refused to countenance the new form of worship or to come to church. By his wonderful kindness and devotion to their needs, Mr Kennedy won the hearts of the people of the parish so that the neglected church of Killearnan could not hold the huge congregations which used to attend, some people coming from neighbouring parishes.

During the annual August Communion season, nearly 10,000 worshippers, some coming from places as far apart as Sutherland and Nairn, met on the sabbath and about 2,000 communicants partook of the Sacrament. Large assemblies had to be held in the open air, the place of meeting being “the Quarry”. The minister’s pulpit or “tent” was erected towards the open part with thirty long tables, covered with white cloths, in front. The congregation sat, tier upon tier, around the sides of the quarry, the most venturesome sitting on the very edge of the high cliff. The services were taken all weekend, and three times on the sabbath, alternately in Gaelic and English; and all were able to hear the voice of the preacher as it echoed around the great natural auditorium.

Two years before his death in 1841, the old minister’s heart was greatly warmed when his congregation, of its own accord, repaired and re-roofed the neglected church. Mr Kennedy’s grave is notable in the churchyard where there are many ancient gravestones with indecipherable epitaphs. In 1843, two years after Mr Kennedy’s death, the Disruption of the established Church of Scotland took place when a number of ministers, with their congregations, came apart from the national church, calling themselves the Free Church of Scotland. This dissention affected Killearnan, the result being the building of the Free Church at Fettes. The old church continued quietly in the old ways, its numbers diminishing gradually after the quarry closed and the lack of employment forced people to go to distant places. Today there is a very fine, happy congregation under the ministry of Rev. Mr R. Bolster.

The Free church at Killearnan is one of the landmarks of the parish, standing at the crossroads at Fettes. It was built (in one year), soon after the Disruption in 1843 – the site being obtained from the Baillie family of Redcastle. It is a majestic building hewn in stone from the Tarradale quarry. In architecture it closely resembles many of the post-Disruption churches of the Highlands. The minister at that time was Rev. Donald Kennedy, brother of the famous Dr Kennedy of Dingwall.

These were the great spiritual days of Killearnan but, strangely enough, there were no Session records kept from 1850-1870. Rev. D. Kennedy died in 1871 when Rev. Mr Gillies took over the charge. In 1900 the church property (church and manse) was taken over by the United Free Church. There were stormy scenes between Free Church and U.F. supporters until 1904 when, by decision of the House of Lords, the property was restored to the Free Church. Mr Gillies joined the U.F. Church. Then followed a long vacancy until 1920, when Rev. Mr MacDonald became pastor.

During this period, the local miller looked after the church affairs and frequently conducted services. He was a very strong personality with very decided views. He objected to lay preachers, who were not ordained ministers, preaching from the pulpit. He thought this arrogance and pride, and considered that they should preach from the lectern. On one occasion the Service was being taken by a student. On arriving at the church, he asked the miller to show him to the pulpit. The miller accompanied him up the pulpit steps, settled him in the pulpit, walked down into the lectern and proceeded to conduct the service himself, leaving the poor student sitting watching from the pulpit.

After Mr MacDonald's death, Rev R.J. Murray, M.A. Was minister until his retiral in 1964, and the present minister is Rev. H.G. MacKay, B.D. The congregation numbers about 100. One of its members, Dr Anne Urquhart, is serving in the Mission Field in India. Anne, who graduated M.B. Ch.B. at Edinburgh University, is the youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs A. C. Urquhart, Newlyn, Killearnan.

ARPAFEELIE CHURCH

By the middle of the 19th century the majority of the people of Killearnan attended either the Established Church or the latter Free Church. However, there was still one band of people who had refused to follow the Presbyterian form of worship and had remained loyal to the original Episcopal form in spite of Cromwell's oppression, and later, the occupation of the Highlands, by the English Government troops. This congregation was composed mainly of the Lairds and their families, with their servants and estate workers and families. They worshipped at the Church of Arpafeelie, in the Allangrange district, midway between Redcastle and Kilcoy Castle, with the Gallow Hill behind. The first church probably arose on, or near, the place where St Iturnan had his "cill" or chapel and there has been a place of worship on that site ever since those early times. One chapel replaced another during the centuries until 1783, when a new church was built on the present site. The old church became the schoolhouse, having, like most buildings of that date, an earthen floor

and thatched roof. During the religious oppression of the 18th century the new church fell into such a state of decay that it had to be rebuilt, the work commencing in 1863, and the rectory was completed in 1875. The church is known as the Church of St John the Evangelist and was once part of a triple charge, that of Fortrose, Arpafeelie and Ord, the latter now known as Highfield. A story is told of the times when the old schoolhouse was still a church. A service was held on the eve of the battle of Culloden. Government troops were billeted in the Black Isle, so at a circular window, high up in the east gable of the church, a man stood on a ladder to keep watch for the possible approach of the "Red Coats". The Government troops did, in fact appear, coming up the road which is, nowadays, a right of way through the field from Redfield Farm to a point just south of the Rectory gate. Warned of this hostile approach, the congregation escaped to the Gallow Hill woods, to the north of Arpafeelie, taking with them the clergyman's robes and the Communion vessels. The clergyman and his warden remained behind. Disguised as peasants, they were able to convince the officer, in charge of the troops, of their innocent intent. The circular window where the watch used to be kept still exists today.

When religious oppression was at its height in 1770, the priest in charge, the Rev. Alan Cameron, led 553 candidates for confirmation from Fortrose, Arpafeelie and Ord to Strathnairn where they were confirmed at a secret open-air meeting and services.

Although the interior of the present church building is sombre, relieved only by a beautiful altar, on which the inscription is in Gaelic, and by a stained glass window to the Rev. Farquhar Smith, the exterior is quite beautiful and the church has been recommended as a building worthy of preservation.

The Rev. Farquhar Smith was the incumbent of the church from 1861 until he retired full of years. He was followed by Rev. D. MacColl who had a "stormy passage" with the school master, one Donald MacIntyre, a man of strong character and stronger principles. The congregation was torn by their dissension, but at last, differences were settled and the church prospered with nearly 200 of a congregation.

From the records of births, deaths and marriages, it is apparent that there was a comparatively large population, following many trades, in the Allangrange area. The Statistical Account of two hundred years ago states that in the parish of Killearnan there were 61 farmers, 14 shoemakers, 21 weavers, 14 tailors, 7 blacksmiths, 9 carpenters, 5 millers and 8 masons, not counting the workmen and apprentices that each employed. The decline of Episcopalianism within the area was due to (1) the "clearances", when small crofts were united to make farms while the unfortunate people were moved from their homes; and (2) to marriage with partners of other denominations. Membership declined rapidly until today there are not more than 15

practicing Episcopalians in the district. We find in the district too, a few families whose ancestors' names are in those old records so that they must have been here for many generations in unbroken line.

The church ground was originally given by the Fraser Mackenzie family of Allangrange, to be held in trust for the church. This grant has been continued by Major Allan Cameron of Allangrange; he is the lay representative of the church. Thanks to the encouragement of the Bishop, Right Rev. D. MacInnes, M.B.E., M.C., and of the Cameron family, services continue to be taken at Arpafeelie although, of course, there is not a resident clergyman.

There are sometimes visitors who wish to see the church and they are gladly shown round by Major and Mrs Anderson who occupy the Rectory. Last summer a young Australian lady called and was delighted to see the records with the names of her forebears, and also the window commemorating her great grandfather, the Rev. Farquhar Smith. His son had emigrated to Australia, in due course, when the latter's first daughter was born, the bonds with "home" were so strong that the baby was named Arpafeelie Farquhar Smith. She became the mother of the young lady who came from Australia to visit the lovely little church among the trees.

THE CLEARANCES

The clearances are still spoken of as a comparatively recent event, by the older generation of residents in Killearnan. Some can still tell of the deprivations suffered by once prosperous families turned out of Strathconon, of their ill-made and hastily erected tents on the Millbuie, and of their battle with cold hunger and illness. In 1831 the population of Killearnan given in the statistical statement, was 1479 but with the coming of the people of Strathconon it had increased in 1841 to 1643 people; and in 1851, to 1794 people. Some broke in the harsh heathland of the Millbuie while others found shelter at Kilcoy and Allangrange. However, evictions later started in Killearnan, great numbers being turned wholesale off the land, for the Strathconon settlers a double blow – second eviction. Thus by 1881, the population of Killearnan had fallen to 1059 and by 1911 it was 741; in eighty years it had been halved!

(see "History of the Highland Clearances").

ARPAFEELIE SCHOOL

The Church School, repaired and modernised, continued until taken over by the local School Board after which time, children of all denominations were admitted to the school roll. This school was noted for the excellence of its teaching and the high standard reached by the pupils. The last teacher, the late Mrs Holloway, was a delightful lady of wide interests, who studied and wrote splendid articles on local history. She was, for 36 years, schoolmistress at Arpafeelie. After her retiral, the reduced number of children was transferred by car to Tore School. The schoolhouse is now a gamekeeper's cottage and the schoolroom is his store.

It may be of interest to note that in the files of the "Ross-shire Journal" there is an account of a Rugby match which was played in the Rectory field. Arpafeelie, between teams representing, of all unlikely places, Drumsmittal School and Arpafeelie. Arpafeelie was well beaten. This game was played sometime during the period 1924/26.

KILLEARNAN SCHOOL

For many years there had existed a small one storey church school on the spot where Killearnan schoolhouse now stands. A storey was added so that the school was on the ground floor and the home of the school master and his family above. After the Disruption of 1843, the children of the Free Church followers were compelled to leave the Established Church School. The new congregation got permission to build a school at "the quarry"; its ruins can still be seen a short distance from the house still termed "The Manager's House". Those early schools usually had very little accommodation for the large numbers of children who sat on backless benches. Lighting was poor, ventilation bad and heating in winter very inadequate, sometimes non-existent. In some schools' children brought so many peats each; at Killearnan "Colin of the Peats", a very old man, came with his little cart at regular intervals. We do not know who paid for the loads; probably the Laird. Water was brought in a bucket (for 128 pupils) from the Grey Well. Often there were not enough books, slates or desks for all the children, nor equipment, such as blackboards, for the teachers.

By 1875 local School Boards had taken over the schools and it was ordered that a new school should be built at Killearnan. The older children from Tore had also been attending this school, and it had become so overcrowded that the pupils were moved to Killearnan Church. The work deteriorated somewhat for lack of proper desks but

the extra room was greatly appreciated! The building of the new school at Killearnan began on 26th May, 1876 and was finished on 4th June 1877 – a beautiful building with arched windows and airy, well-proportioned rooms. Water was to be pumped from a well. The old school building was repaired and put in order as a fitting schoolhouse.

At Tore the school had been a one-storey building of two rooms, and having one entrance. On one side dwelt the master while on the other was a schoolroom, so small that fourteen of the older pupils walked daily to Killearnan.

The new school was opened at Tore, under the auspices of the School Board, on 27th October 1879. At first the roll was very low, but in 1881 it was 34 and ten years later, it rose to 70. Frequent alterations and additions were made to the schools and the school houses; the present school at Tore is of so modern a type that it can bear little resemblance to the original.

Each school had its “master” and if married, his wife usually taught the infant class and needlework to the girls. The boys’ subject at that time was mensuration. When there was a large roll of pupils, they would be assisted by a qualified teacher and one or two “pupil-teachers”. The latter were the most “promising” pupils who, instead of leaving school at the age of 13-14 years, remained to train as teachers – a three years’ course.

During that time they taught the younger children, under supervision, while the rest of the day was devoted to an intensive study of their own advanced subjects. These were English literature and grammar, Dictation, History, Geography, Euclid (Geometry), Latin, Needlework for the girls, Mensuration for the boys; later to be followed by Physiology, Agriculture and Singing. The pupil teachers had to go each year with their headmaster to Fortrose to sit their annual examination set by Her Majesty’s Inspectors. The school was left in charge of the lady teachers and “Monitors” who correspond to present-day “Prefects”.

The salaries of the teaching staff were dependent on Government grants which were based on (1) the number of pupils presented for the School Examination in July each year, and (2) on the proficiency of the pupils in passing the examination. It was a time of great worry for the teachers, especially as the attendance figure was often very low indeed in July. Practically all the older pupils were kept home, from early May, to work on the crofts and farms so that the year’s teaching was often wasted as far as examination and grants were concerned. Potatoes had to be planted, turnips hoed, hay “coiled” and cattle had to be herded constantly on waste land and roadsides to save “in-by” grazing for the later months. There was a little or no fencing so the cattle had to be kept from straying on to growing crops. For this, boys were eager to earn from 6d to 1/- per week, to contribute to the family income for boots and winter

clothing. The headmasters drew attention to this necessary absence on the part of the pupils and the School Board fixed, with the Inspectors, more suitable dates for examinations. A "Compulsory Officer" was appointed to track down absentees and truants; and teachers' salaries were gradually increased from the pittance they used to receive.

The "pupil teachers" system was replaced by the Teachers' Training College at the beginning of the present century. Many regretted its passing as the young teachers were so advanced, usually, in their studies that they were often at university entrance level and, with the constant teaching practice, they were usually excellent teachers by the age of 17-18 years. Because of the lack of employment locally, Killearnan roll has gradually decreased to 18 pupils with one lady teacher and the usual visiting specialist teachers.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Holiday dates differed a great deal from present day dates. Christmas Day was not a holiday, yet "Christmas holidays" were from the last days of December until 9th-10th January. Many pupils, however, did not return until "Old New Year's Day" – 12th January – had been observed. Easter holidays were not observed but in mid-March school was closed all Thursday so that the community could take part in a wonderful soiree with tea and eatables that evening. The following day was also a holiday so that the school could be cleaned thoroughly and put in order after the festivities! School was closed for one week in February and one in July for the Communion seasons, and Thanksgiving for the harvest was held in mid-December. Six weeks' holidays came in mid-August but when school reassembled in early October, there was usually poor attendance until potatoes and grain crops were safely harvested.

Highlights of the school year were "half days" granted so that the pupils could return in the evening to see the wonders of the "magic lantern", or go on a summer afternoon to see the menagerie newly arrived at Muir of Ord; or even more wonderful, to observe the annual Inspection of the Highland Militia on the Market Stance at Muir of Ord. The headmaster, James Davidson, who took up duties in 1876, granted a day's holiday in an endeavour to circumvent truancy! The year 1884 saw the first of the annual school treats given to the children, at Redcastle, by Miss Baillie.

Small prizes were now being given for regular attendance at schools and for attention to studies so that attendances rose, and work improved.

Joy was brought to children's hearts throughout Scotland in 1910 when fine strong schoolbags – the type to be carried on the back, for the boys and one to be carried by a leather handle for the girls – were presented to each child by James Coats, Esq, of Ferguslie House, Paisley. Sixty two large and sixty- two small bags were received at Killearnan.

The first Easter holidays were given in 1919. Thereafter the school year was, more or less, of the same pattern as we know it today.

Conditions, attitudes and expectations existing nearly a hundred years ago are brought to life by the Reverend Jack Stables in an account of his schooldays recalled in old age. It also tells of a child's experience in the community and was written in a letter belonging to Miss M. Buchanan, Conon Bridge, which she kindly offered for inclusion. (Miss Buchanan herself, a former teacher at Tore School). *See Appendix 1.*

BONE-SETTER

People of an older generation still remember Mr William MacIntosh who was headmaster of Killearnan School from 1889 until 1912. He was an admirable teacher with wide interests. Apart from the usual lessons, he taught his pupils how to play various musical instruments, the flute being the favourite, and he formed a school orchestra. Mr MacIntosh was famous as a herbalist and bone setter, his skill bringing patients from as far south as Glasgow. One woman was heard to say that lame people went into see him leaning on crutches and came out with them in their hands! A cure of the schoolmasters for a festering wound was an ointment made up of sulphur, butter and dandelion leaves made into a paste, and applied to the wound on a clean rag. Mr MacIntosh was still teaching at Killearnan School and practicing bone setting in the late 1920's and probably early 1930's. When he retired from Killearnan School he went to live at Rivulet Cottage, Milton.

CURES

There are not many 'old cures' used nowadays. A popular cure for a bad cough and cold, especially among children was to put alternate layers of brown sugar and chopped raw onion in a bowl. When the juice began to gather, then it would be given to the patient. A string of corks put in one's bed was said to prevent cramp! On the

farms and crofts, a strong infusion of tormentil tea, made from the roots of tormentil, was found to be an efficacious cure for “scour” in calves.

The womenfolk laid sprigs of bog myrtle or southern wood, wrapped in a clean handkerchief, in the drawers or chest which held the line and blankets, to give a pleasant perfume and to keep away moths.

TRADITIONAL DISHES

Until the beginning of the first World War, Killearnan in common with neighbouring communities, was practically self-supporting. The oats grown on the croft and farm supplied oatcakes, porridge, brose and other ‘oatmeal’ dishes. It provided food for cattle, horses and poultry and bedding for livestock. When the meal was ground at the nearest mill- (Kilcoy, Redcastle, Charleston or Munloch, now all closed), the “shellings” – “sids” or husks of the oats were also taken home. These were left to soak, for a short time, in a tub with water to make a healthful drink called “sowens”, greatly appreciated when doing “thirsty” work on a hot day.

Meat was obtained by the killing of a pig, sheep or “stirk” (a young steer), often two neighbours dividing one animal between their respective households. This meat was salted for winter, the pork wrapped in muslin and hung from the rafters, the beef and mutton left in the pickling tub. One man in the district was very skilful as a butcher, and his visits were carefully arranged for each croft and farm.

There followed wonderfully satisfying meals of “potted head” or potted “hough”, black puddings, mealy puddings and delicious soup made of “black pudding bree”. There was fried pork with plenty dripping, often accompanied by boiled salt cod or ling, which had been previously soaked to remove the salt. There was salt pork, usually accompanied by delicious chunks of cabbage, both boiled in one pot, each lending flavour to the other. Scotch broth often had a “dumpling” in a white cloth, cooked in it. This dumpling was unsweetened, much like the present day “dough boy” mixture, but with a quantity of raisins added. This method of cooking gave rise to the old joke which appealed to children of a past generation. It told of a little boy who had been left at home to kind the Sunday dinner while the rest of the family attended church. During the service he burst into church, calling to his mother to come home, as the Sheep’s head was boxing the dumpling out of the broth pot!

Each house had its barrel of salted Kessock herrings; sometime, also a barrel of large, rich Loch Fyne herrings, each bought at Avoch. Here, too, were the cod and ling,

salted and dried in the sunshine, to be bought in bulk and taken home by horse and cart, as were the barrels.

Hares and rabbits were caught on the land around; stews and soups made a welcome change from the diet of salted fish and meat. There was fresh fish too, when one or two sturdy fishwives from Avoch called regularly, on their own special customers at the isolated cottages and farms, with fresh fish in the “creels” on their backs. They were welcomed as friends of the family, and at some houses, they cleaned the fish. For this service they usually carried home a fresh roll of butter or crowdy, wrapped in “butterpaper” and many layers of Rhubarb or v=cabbage leaves, to keep it cool, and uncontaminated by the fish. After a ‘quick cup of tea’ they went on their way, thinking little of the miles.

The favourite Sunday dessert in cold weather was ‘a clootie dumpling’, “warm-reekin rich”. Because of the shortage of dried fruit and other ingredients, it became almost unknown during the two World Wars, but it has come into its own again, thanks to the popularity it has gained as an item for competition at W.R.I. meetings. In summer a simple dessert was “yirned milk” – fresh milk set with rennet – and served with cream; and another popular dish on a hot day was a bowl of ‘thick’ milk with a little dry oatmeal sprinkled on top.

Every croft at least one milking cow so that there was milk to drink, although ‘the first cream’ was usually skimmed off to make butter for home use and for sale. Crowdy was made from skimmed milk, and cheese usually from ‘whole’ milk, and often a small quantity of caraway seeds or “carvy”, was added to both, imparting delicious flavour. It is thought in this district that the use of caraway seeds in cheese, etc., owes its origin to the early Norse settlers in this area, as it is found to be greatly used in Norway. The crowdy and cheese were delicious served with oatcakes, baked on the girdle, then toasted, in the round circles, around a low, glowing peat fire. The cakes were served whole in the centre of the table, each person breaking off a portion as required. No one ever thought of cutting the complete round of oatcakes with a knife; it would cut the deep bond of friendship which held together the company seated there.

White loaves of bread were first introduced as a luxury; then flour scones, first baked on a “brander”, and later on a girdle, followed. Early this century, horse vans brought bread once a week to Tore and a butcher left wrapped orders of butcher meat at the shoemaker’s shop! When the railway line was being laid near Tore, the grocer confided to his neighbour, the smith, that business was so brisk that, of butter alone, he sold three and one half Cwts. per week, all supplied by the farms and crofts nearby.

Such, then, was the pattern of catering in our farming community until the first World war, when there came great changes. The killing of farm animals was forbidden by law. And meat was scarce. In modern times meat and fruit in bulk are kept in many homes in “deep freeze” cabinets; the refrigerator and tinned goods are considered a great boon. In spite of changes, porridge and brose are still very popular for breakfast with farm workers and farmers alike, and home baked scones and “pancakes” (dropped scones) are firm favourites.

The coming of motor vans, with a wide variety of goods, spelt disaster for the rural shopkeeper. In the 1930’s there were three carpenters, two grocers, one shoemaker and one tailor in Tore, but now there is only one small shop which has been kept by a local lady for many years. It is also the “tuck shop” for the school children, and the local folk would miss Mrs Kirk if her shop were no longer there.

Our local branch of S.W.R.I. meet at Tore Hall, but, as there is no village at Tore in the accepted sense of the word, we made our small parish our “oyster” and called out institute ‘Killearnan W.R.I.’ It is said that a place cannot be called a village unless it arises around a church. There is no church at Tore, the old churches at Redcastle, Fettes and Arpafeelie, some distance away, still serving as places of worship; and somehow, one misses this focal point in Tore.

The name Tore is derived from the Gaelic – ‘an Tobhar’, “the bleaching place”, probably from the springs found in this spot. The surrounding bare hillocks, however, led to its being called, in Gaelic, by the cattle drovers of the past “Cnoc-an-acrais” – “the hungry hill”. There is an old tale which says that this name was first given by a weary cattle drover who was refused a drink of water at one of the houses. Later he had difficulty in finding any grazing for the cattle in his charge because of the thistles and gorse, and when at last he lay down, wrapped in his plaid, there was no rest for him because of the pricking thistles. Hence, on his journeyings, he told all whom he met about “the hungry hill” at Tore!

Our oldest resident, Mrs Bain, a lady of keen intellect and retentive memory, tells us that in 1890 there were, apart from the inn, only four houses in Tore. These belonged to the carpenter, the grocer, the blacksmith and the tailor, each standing in its own small croft. All the water drawn from a well at the inn but later, each had its own well. Tore is “an oasis of beautiful springs”.

TRANSPORT

In 1893, work began on laying the Black Isle railway line from Muir of Ord to Fortrose. Incidentally, the Brahan Seer foresaw the coming of this railway line, when he prophesied that iron horses would travel along the Black Isle. This work proved a boon to all, giving much needed employment and trade to the district. Two more shops and a Post office were opened in Tore and prosperity came to the countryside with wages above the normal rate. The railway was in operation in 1894, and coming from Muir of Ord, the first “stop” in Killearnan was Redcastle Station. The second was Allangrange Station on the outskirts of Tore, the next, less than three miles east, at Munloch. Until this date, mails from the south had been taken by ferry boat from South Kessock to North Kessock. From that point it was taken by the postman, on foot, to Charleston, Redcastle and on to Tore, but now it was arranged that mails should go by train. A Post Office was opened at Redcastle Station, and the one at Tore closed, and moved to Allangrange Station. With the cessation of work on the railway line, the prosperity around Tore diminished somewhat, and the removal of its Post office to the outskirts was a severe blow. A few years later, its fortunes rose again when the largest timber – trading firm in Inverness contracted to buy the timber of Linnie Wood which stretched for a considerable distance south of Tore. Tree felling equipment was moved in, and for some years there was steady employment, even for young boys just leaving school.

The railway was greatly appreciated in the Black Isle. One lady, in reminiscent mood, recalled the happy Saturday afternoon the train from Fortrose arrived so crowded with passengers that there was “standing room only” by the time Muir of Ord was reached. She said, “The fare from Allangrange Station to Inverness was 1/- return; a cup of tea and a hot pie could be bought in the Market for 4d, and we still had twopence of our 6d to spend!” The porters, guard and engine drivers were all well known to all passengers who enjoyed a cheerful word with them. The younger generation had nicknames for some of the staff, one of whom rejoiced in the delightful, “Heart of Bruce”!

The local station platform became the hub of the countryside. Farmers left on the early morning train in time to attend the weekly Cattle Sales in Aberdeen, transact their business, and be home in good time that night. Scholars, bound for Dingwall Academy travelled daily, where as they formerly lodged with friends in town during the school week. Those who attended Fortrose Academy still cycled seven miles as there was not a train going at a convenient time in that direction. Huge consignments of potatoes and grain were skilfully and swiftly loaded on “goods wagons” by efficient

staff. This trade boom on the railway led to the end of the shipping trade from Beauly, and the piers and slipways along the Beauly Firth.

With the arrival of motor buses, the peak period of passenger traffic passed, until for economic reasons, the passenger service on the Black Isle line closed in 1951. The "goods" staff and service continued to be most efficient in despatching great quantities of farm produce but, to the regret of the community, the line was closed completely in 1960. The beautifully kept buildings at Allangrange Station were dismantled and those at Killearnan Station serves as a sack depot.

The first passenger 'bus passing through Tore was a private one, known as Hastie's bus; this was followed by "Archie's bus", run by Mr A. McRae whose courtesy and kindly attention made him an outstanding figure until his retirement in 1964. Later all the 'bus services in the Black Isle were run by the Highland Bus Company.

The 'buses are still very popular but they are not patronized as well as they used to be. Because of the thrift and increased prosperity of the local population, many families have their own motor cars, and young folk go to work on their c=scooters and motor bicycles. Buses still prove a great boon in taking the children of the parish, who have finished their studies at primary Schools, to the Junior Secondary School at Avoch, or to the Senior Secondary at Fortrose or Dingwall. They are most convenient also, for a number of young people travelling to work daily in Dingwall.

Earlier in this century people walked to Kessock to reach Inverness. In the 19th century, students walked from all over the north to attend the University at Aberdeen until stage coaches came into use. In the farming community the horse and cart served as transport near home, and then came the horse and "trap"; while the bicycle was hailed with delight.

Most of the transport for the south side of the Black Isle passes through Tore, for it stands at the crossing of four routes, and has done so from ancient times. Now wide, modern roads cross at the same point. One comes from Conon Bridge in the west, continuing east to Munloch, Avoch, Fortrose, Rosemarkie and Cromarty. The "long" road, around the "head" of the Beauly Firth from the south, and the shorter route from the south, via Kessock Ferry and the road from North Kessock, converge at Tore. Here has arisen a beautiful group of houses, each in its own well kept garden, which indeed could be the nucleus of a village. Slightly apart to the east, can be seen the old inn under tall trees. Mrs Bain already mentioned, can remember clearly when Tore Market, called "feill Cnoc-an-acrais" was held regularly on the market green in front of the busy inn. There horses, cattle, sheep and pigs were sold to buyers by the crofters and farmers of the surrounding districts. Stalls were laid out with clothes, boots, shies, food and sweets which could be bought, or exchanged for farm produce.

Early this century markets ceased to be held. It was planned to build a new hotel, but a “cnoc” or hillock, on the market stance, which gave Tore its other Gaelic name, had to be removed first. This was levelled, and on the site, a final hotel was erected in 1901. The old inn is still used as stores and a stable. The Kilcoy Arms Hotel is today a bright, attractive building, surrounded by smooth lawns and dainty flowerbeds, which replace the old market stance.

On the embankment above Tore stands four places of business, the oldest being the smithy directly overlooking the road junction. Here Mr Donald MacKenzie is the third generation of his family in the blacksmith’s business, his grandfather having taken over the smithy from a former smith about a hundred years ago. When horses were replaced by tractors on the farms, many “smithies” were compelled to close because of lack of trade. Thus, Mr MacKenzie is now the only smith serving a very wide area. He carries out repairs on various farm implements, being much helped by acetylene welding. He also goes long distances across Ross-shire to shoe “garrons” used to carry stags and hinds from “the hill” during the shooting season. This, and the work entailed in attending to ponies at pony trekking centres, has brought the fine old trade of horse shoeing to the forefront once again.

To the west stand the modern premises and bungalow of William MacKenzie, the carpenter who employs three young journeymen and four apprentices. In addition to carrying out all kinds of household and farmsteading contracts and repairs, the staff are fully employed in the erection of numerous bungalows and private houses over a wide area. To the east stands the capacious garage and office of “Black Isle Motors” where Mr A.D. MacFarquhar and an obliging staff carry out the necessary service to the public of car maintenance, repairs and sales, as well as maintenance of modern farm implements. Across the way stand the home and premises of Mr Donald Bain, building contractor, who, with his son and staff, are also fully employed in the present day building boom in the country. Here can be seen Tore’s ancient first Inn, a long low building, now used for agricultural purposes.

Because of the difficulty envisaged in carrying out a sewage scheme on a large scale, there have been no “council houses” built in Tore although there had been an urgent demand for them. In spite of this drawback, along the roadsides leading out of Tore, stand neatly kept older houses and modern bungalows, all in their own lovely gardens, each testifying to the hard work, enterprise and artistic taste of its occupants. The sewage problem has been adequately dealt with, by the installation of septic tanks at a considerable distance from dwellings, thus complying with Board of health regulations. A few years ago Ross and Cromarty County Council erected two well designed groups of houses, one on the western and one on the eastern border

of Killearnan for houseless families. On the old main road, which is now the safer “back road” behind Tore, stands the big airy modern Hall with the usual offices and anterooms, erected by public subscription and kept in a splendid state of repair. Its welfare is in the hands of a committee of local residents, its chairman being Mr Donald MacLean, Allangrange Mains. Here all the social gatherings, meetings and concerts are held; badminton was played in the winter evenings for a number of years but membership decreased to such an extent that the Club came to an end two years ago.

Across the way are the very attractive building of Tore School and Schoolhouse, the playground surrounded by flowering trees and shrubs. The playground always seems full of bright happy children at Play-time, and the roll has increased lately to about seventy pupils. Mr MacDonald, the headmaster has a staff of two teachers as well as visiting specialist teachers.

The children still play the games their parents played long ago, the girls enjoying singing games, such as, “I sent a letter to my love”, ball games, skipping, rounders and a simplified form of tennis, all in their different seasons. Rounders, marbles, cricket and football are very popular with the boys, each game also in its season.

There are no children’s organisations in Tore as it is such a widely scattered district, but there is a great interest in the welfare of the children by the local churches and Sunday Schools.

POPULAR GAMES

Football and curling are extremely popular with the menfolk of the district, football especially appealing to all ages. Tore Football Club is very appreciative of the football pitch, given to Tore by Major Allan Cameron of Allangrange, and many exciting matches have been played there.

FOOTBALL

The Club entered the Dingwall and District Amateur league when it was founded in 1949. Their first honour was in 1954 when they won the Larchfield Cup, defeating Muir of Ord Rovers 2-1 in the “final” at Avoch. No further honours were won until 1959 when the club had one of its most successful seasons, winning the League Championship and two cups – the league Cup and the J. Fowler Cup. The team again

won two cups and the League Championship in 1963. Since then, they have usually won an average of one cup per season. At the moment the Club is in fourth position in the League.

It is a matter of great interest that one of our local players Mr Jeff Mackay, Kilcoy Mains, Killearnan, was chosen to play for Ross County some years ago. He showed such prowess on the football field, that he gave up farm work to become a professional football player in England, playing for Bury.

CURLING

Killearnan Curling Club was first constituted in 1902 and joined the famous senior club of Scotland, the Caledonian Curling Club in 1904. The pond and surroundings, in the immediate vicinity of Tore, were given, free, by the proprietor of Allangrange Estate to the Club, who arranged that the erection of the club house and fences, and work on the pond, be executed by subscription. The Club fell into abeyance during the first World War but was reconstituted in 1929 under the presidency of Captain Evan Burton MacKenzie of Kilcoy. The working committee consisted of Messrs. Jas. Kirk, D. MacKenzie, (blacksmith), Charles MacKinnon and Hugh Clark. The club re-joined the R.C.C.C. for the season 1930-31. Dr John Anderson of Fortrose, who joined the Killearnan Club in 1935, was president from 1945 until his lamented death in 1964. Mr John MacIver, Kilcoy Mains, Killearnan now presides. Last season Major Allan Cameron of Allangrange, had the unique honour of being elected president of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club, a distinctive office which his father had held also in former years. (He is a member of the Allangrange Curling Club).

In 1936 a similar Curling Club was formed nearer Munloch at a pond east of Broomhill Tore. It was named the Allangrange Curling Club and has twenty members under the presidency of Mr Hamish Sutherland, veterinary surgeon. They scored their latest victory when in Easter Ross, they won the Ross-shire Provincial Cup for the season 1965-66.

There is nothing more heart-warming and reassuring than to hear the enthusiastic shouts of the "curlers" on a frosty winter's night as their voices carry through the clear air to the quiet farms and cottages, far from the animated scene at the brightly-lit pond.

For the womenfolk the monthly W.R.I. meetings held at Tore Hall have a great appeal, and a highly appreciated dressmaking class has been held in the school every winter for many years. The Woman's Guild at Killearnan Church is also well attended.

There are two very active Young Farmer's Clubs in the Black Isle. On the north side is the C.R.U. Club, its name being formed from the initials of the three parishes – Cromarty, Resolis and Urquhart, while the parishes on the south side, including Killearnan are affiliated with "Mid-Ross". The latter were the winners of the Young Farmers Clubs' Speech-making Contest for Scotland in 1965.

A short distance east of the school there stands a wooden erection which was part of a former school. This had been built about fifty years ago by a former retired schoolmaster of the public school, Mr Forrest, who taught privately fee-paying pupils drawn from one of the farming families and the children of the butler, etc. at Kilcoy Castle.

Further east lies Tore Park where little Heather Stewart is the sixth generation of her family to be born there. Her grandmother, Mrs Stewart, has many tales to tell of olden times. The story goes that a man was accidentally killed during the building of "Tore Big House" and that his spirit haunts the area. On Tore Park are nine or ten mounds, the remains of the homes of unfortunate families turned out during the Clearances; and in the woods on the heights above, the exact spot, in a deep gully, can be pointed out, where some local men had their illicit still for making whisky, undiscovered by the "gaugers".

It is told too, that, at a place near the western parish boundary, called Adam's Wall, a tinker took his wife's life. This was the last public hanging to take place at the Longman, Inverness.

At the side of Tore Schoolhouse is the right of way, once a main road, leading direct north over the heights above Tore and the high stretch of wasteland called "the Moss", This has now been taken over and planted with trees by the Forestry Commission. From this point the land slopes gently downhill until the road reaches Alcaig Ferry where a rowing boat was used to take passengers to and from Dingwall. The country folk took their farm produce to sell there, and some can still remember wading over, when the tide was out, in preference to waiting for the boat!

All over Killearnan electricity has been installed. There have been private installations in Ross-shire for many years, the earliest supply having been introduced to Strathpeffer in 1894 by the Earl of Cromartie. From 1926 onwards, the Strathpeffer and Dingwall Electric Company extended private installations to the Black Isle, to be followed by the public Grampian scheme in 1945. From 1950-52 the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board carried out most of its installations in the Killearnan area. It is a great pleasure to have electric light and power, and most homes have some useful electrical appliances. We used to take a pride in our handsome paraffin

lamps bur, instead of being preserved as “antiques” they have taken on a new lease of life by being adapted to electricity.

There is a dearth of local poems and songs in Killearnan although one hears vague rumours of various people, past and present, who have written poems. Upon enquiry, however, no rhymes could be found – which is very frustrating! This had been a Gaelic speaking area but once English was enforced in schools, Gaelic was kept for the home, and not spoken much there eventually. Probably the old songs died as the language died. There are few Gaelic speakers left on Killearnan, and they are of the older generation. One of two Gaelic words creep into English conversation: “bourach” – a state of confusion; “bronach” – sad or downcast; “fioun” – very weary and rather hungry; “dourcans” - fir cones; “cranie” – little finger (used all over the Highlands); “bouchanach” – an evil spell; “bodach” – an old man; “caileach” – an old woman.

A peculiarity of speech in the district is the use of the words “east” and “west” applied in a much wider sense than geographical. Some years ago, an old lady who had been used to “pince-nez” spectacles gripping her nose, was heard to complain that she did not like “glasses” that went west her ears! Otherwise, English is spoken very properly and grammatically although with older people, sentences are often based on Gaelic idiom.

The road leading out of Tore, south east to Kessock, passes through the interesting district of Allangrange and Arpafeelie. At one time the whole estate of Allangrange belonged to the Fraser-MacKenzie family, but now, only a small part is retained. Here stands the existing part of Old Allangrange House, dated 1760, which had been the home of the Fraser-MacKenzie family and has the Fraser coat of arms above the moulded door piece. The original consisted of a central part with a large “wing” to right and left. When the present Allangrange House (at first known as Allanbank), was being built, those two “wings” of the older house were taken down and their masonry was used in the new building. Nearby is the ruined medieval St John’s Chapel with its triple lancet window. Both the chapel and the private burial ground are tended by the residents of Old Allangrange House. In the Fraser-MacKenzie burial ground was laid to rest, some years ago, Murdoch Ross of Allangrange Estate, a man of great integrity and upright character, who is still spoken of, in Killearnan, with affection and respect.

The chapel is an old Church of the Knights Templars, and the farm of Allangrange Mains was once church land. The field in front of the farmhouse is still referred to as “the temple field” and the field behind it, “the priest field”. In olden times the

produce from the former was sold for the upkeep of the chapel while the produce of the latter maintained the priest.

Major and Mrs Cameron came to stay at Allangrange House in 1950 and after adapting and modernising some adjoining buildings such as coach houses, etc., they launched the project so well known as Black Isle Frozen Foods Ltd, or "B.I.F.F." for short. Here, in well proportioned, white, airy buildings with a beautiful outlook, sixteen of a staff prepare various foods for "deep freezing". The women and girls are recruited from an area of four miles around, and are driven to and from work by the estate car.

Fish, meat, poultry, vegetable and fruit in bulk, are suitably prepared, weighed and packed in small quantities and frozen. The only local specialties frozen are fresh "scampi" and lobsters, fetched by van from Lossiemouth, and raspberries from estate gardens. In May, June and September extra hands are required and demand increases during the tourist season. The firm's van travels over a wide area; from Skye and Ullapool in the west to Dornoch and Golspie in the north and to Fort William in the south west. The firm sells a wide range of most delectable foodstuffs, their regular orders to London also containing packs of macaroni and cheese, and packs of Black Isle porridge. Those goods are sent to one main distributor who re-distributes to retail shops there. This modern "break-through" business, entailing a great deal of hand work and planning, has brought a brighter outlook to the district, and much appreciated employment to a number of the community.

It can be seen that there is a certain amount of employment in Killearnan for young folk but the great majority have to go outwith the parish to work, or have to leave the district altogether. Most of them leave school at fifteen years. In farming families, one son usually "follows in his father's footsteps" on the farm, usually having a very good knowledge of farm work and implements long before leaving school. A number of boys become apprenticed to a trade while the Forestry Commission has been a boon in giving employment. One or two, keen on seeing the world have joined the Services. Some of the girls have become efficient salesgirls in shops in Dingwall and Inverness, while a number, after taking a sound commercial course at Dingwall Academy, have held responsible positions in legal and business firms. We note that, between 1963 and 1965, of the girls who are former pupils of Tore School, then two-teacher – one has become a newspaper reporter, one has joined the W.R.N.S., two have taken their M.A. degree at Aberdeen University, and one the Primary Teacher's Certificate at Moray House, Edinburgh; on the Diploma of Art at Glasgow School of Art, while in 1966 one took the degree of bachelor of Music at Glasgow University.

Of the present generation there come to mind, two young sisters who left to become nursemaids. We remember the elder today as Miss Margaret MacDonald, who was nurse to our present Queen Elizabeth, from her babyhood, and is still her trusted personal maid. Her younger sister, Miss Ruby MacDonald (Mrs Gordon) was nurse to Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon as a child, and was her personal maid for many years. The mother of those two ladies, the late Mrs MacDonald, was a member of Killearnan W.R.I. and all three are remembered with affection.

We remember, too, General Sir Hector MacDonald, whose memorial stands near his birthplace at Milbuie while another dominates Dingwall from Mitchell Hill. Sir Hector MacDonald who served his apprenticeship as a draper in Dingwall, later became a much-feted hero of the Battle of Omdurman, and one of the great generals of the Boer War.

Just west of Tore in the district of Linnie (meaning, in Gaelic "the pool") although the wider area used to be known as Lower Muckernich ("the swine place"). Here are various well-run small farms, and from one of those, Linnie Farm, came the two brothers Fraser. They had no secondary education as we know it, yet after working for a short time on the farm, each was accepted for the Police Force. Both brothers showed such all-round ability and excellence of character, that one became Chief Constable of Dumbarton and the other Deputy Chief Constable of Dunbartonshire.

There was one remarkable family who came to Killearnan from Resolis in 1844, although their original home had been Strathconnon. Mrs and Mrs Duncan MacLennan had a family of eight sons and one daughter, the youngest son, John, being born at Kilcoy, Killearnan. For generations the MacLennan family had been famous as pipers, and the mother of the family also came of musical forebears. The only daughter, Anne MacLennan, who had been educated at Killearnan School, later became a "Bible Woman", tending the poor and sick in Argyll. In 1884 she had published in Edinburgh a book of poems 'deeply evangelical and surprisingly enlightened giving a sharp picture of a wonderfully cultured woman'.

Many descendants of that family have brought lustre to their name by their outstanding artistic talent, mainly shown in wonderful piping, but also in literature, art, singing, Highland dancing and ballet dancing. One, whose father had gone to America during "the Clearances", came to London to sing in Convent Gardens Opera Company from 1889 to 1893. When ten years old, George S. MacLennan won the two most outstanding national championships for piping against experienced pipers. He was requested to play before Queen Victoria who expressed the wish to hear the piping of "the marvellous boy", Captain Hamish MacLennan became the first manager of Edinburgh festival. There are still talented MacLennan's in Britain and the

Commonwealth, but the last to remain in Killearnan was the well known piper, Alexander MacLennan of Tore, who passed away a few years ago. Mrs MacLennan still stays at the old home.

Mrs Duncan MacLennan (of last century) had three brothers, two noted singers but the third, Farquhar MacLennan, became noted in a different way. Before fencing of fields was introduced on farms, the cattle put out to graze, had to be constantly herded to prevent them destroying the growing crops during summer. When, as a boy at Kilcoy,

The Piping MacLennans

*Left,
Pipe-Major G. S. MacLennan
(1884-1929)*

*Below left,
the Munlochy Piper
Murdoch MacLennan
(1826-1914)*

*Below Right
Pipe-Major D. R. MacLennan*



Farquhar got work “at the herding” at Croftcrunie, Tore, he fell asleep in the sunshine and the cattle strayed into the nearby cornfield. His master a man named Gray, discovered the sleeping Farquhar and was soon angry that in his rage, he struck the youth so violently with the spade he had been carrying that his collarbone was broken and his face gashed, Farquhar recovered physically from the assault, but mentally he was never the same again. Later his favourite brother was killed in an accident with the “gaugers” and his old father apprehended. Farquhar was so upset



“Fearchair-a-Ghunna”
The Ross-shire Wanderer

that he left home and began a nomadic existence. Because of those clashes with authority, Farquhar armed himself for further eventualities with an array of weapons which included a sword, a pair of old pistols, several chains and an immense gun with six barrels constructed by himself. This gave a dreadfully loud report when fired by Farquhar with the gunpowder he lit with a burning peat, always carried in a small pan. Thus, he got the name of Fearchair -- Ghunna (Farquhar of the Gun) – the Ross-shire Wanderer. The Black Isle was his favourite haunt and all were kind to him. He possessed a shrewd wit and often spoke with biting sarcasm which few could equal. Many tales are still told about him.

One day in Munloch, Farquhar approached the minister who was talking to some friends. The minister waved Farquhar away, saying testily that he ‘smelt’. Farquhar, with seeming flattery, said in Gaelic, “Indeed sir, you have a wonderful sense of smell” They say the deer has a great sense of smell but your sense of smell is greater than that of the deer”. His curiosity getting the better of his annoyance, the minister enquired how that could be. Farquhar replied “Well, Sir, sometime ago you went over the ocean to America. When you were there, thousands of miles away, you were able to sniff out the vacant charge at Suddie here. You came home and had possession of it before one minister in Ross-shire got wind of it.” With that sally, Farquhar marched away, weapons clunking, leaving a very embarrassed minister.

At that time the parish of Suddie (in Gaelic “the see” or seat of a bishop) had arisen from ancient church lands. In early times, Killearnan, Suddie and Kilmuir were

separate ecclesiastical charges of the cathedral at Fortrose, and each had its own resident priest. Today we can still see, at the two latter places, the ruins of the ancient chapels standing in their churchyards, neither of which is yet closed. Suddie was the seat of the Chancellor of Fortrose Cathedral while Killearnan was the seat of the Arch-dean. These divisions remained until the 19th Century when the Presbyterian Commissioners took over Church affairs. Killearnan parish was made much smaller, the eastern part being united with Suddie and Kilmuir, to form the new, large parish of Knockbain.

Munlochry (Gaelic for “the bay at the head of the loch”) became very important as pilgrims, travellers and goods destined for the ‘see’ at Suddie, were landed by boat. The monks built a large, strong store house near the shore, and it stood until recent times where it was demolished and its stones used elsewhere – much to the disappointment of those interested in local history. The 17th century meal-mill, famous for its excellent oatmeal has closed its doors for the last time with the passing of the greatly esteemed miller, Mr Henderson. The picturesque mill-dam, in the centre of the village has been filled in and will probably become a housing site. Modern Munlochry is a beautiful village, combining the old world and the new. In the main street are fine old houses and modern ones, and bright shops display the latest goods. Here too, is the pretty cottage of Nurse MacInnes, who has been the bust District Nurse of Killearnan and Knockbain for a number of years. On the braes above, well planned rows of council houses, Forestry workers houses and large private houses and bungalows overlook the bay. At Munlochry School, Mr A.U. MacKenzie and two teachers have a roll of 60-70 children, which will probably increase with the new housing scheme to be carried out shortly. There is a fine modern canteen where one cook, two full-time (and on part-time) assistants prepare and cook midday meals, which are delivered in special containers, by motor van at Drumsittal, Knockbain and Killen Schools on Knockbain parish; and at Killearnan and Tore Schools in Killearnan.

Honour was brought to the village when Sergeant Forbes of Munlochry was the Champion Marksman of Great Britain at the famous National Rifle Association meetings at Bisley; it is thought this event took place in 1899.

Munlochry has always been associated with music-making, one famous piper, Donald Bain MacKenzie, having composed, among others, the pipe tune, “Munlochry Bridge”. Here too lived Murdoch MacLennan of the famous Killearnan and Knockbain piping family, who was champion of piping for Scotland at the Northern Meetings at Inverness in 1862. At the present day, Mr Duncan MacLeod, who is a talented violinist, has become famous as the composer of a number of very popular Scottish

dance tunes, with heart-warming familiar names, which have featured in Scottish dance band radio programmes.

ROSEHAUGH HOUSE

Beyond Munloch and distant above the woods stood Rosehaugh House, striking in its graceful architecture. This lovely lace was built late last century by James D. Fletcher who had returned from abroad to live in the countryside of his forefathers. The interior was the epitome of elegance and grandeur, one feature being its marble swimming pool, while its gardens, its racing stables and the pedigreed stock of its home-farm were famous throughout Scotland. Thus, fine estate gave employment and prosperity to a great number of local people – but now all has disappeared! A few years ago, the ‘cream’ of Rosehaugh’s art treasures were sent to a famous auctioneering firm in London to be sold. The rest of the ‘objets d’art’ and furnishings took almost a week to sell, attracting buyers from all parts of the country. The beautiful house was demolished and there is little left to remind us of that opulent period.

Beyond are Avoch, our interesting fishing village, delightful to visit; Fortrose of the ancient Cathedral and bright gardens; Rosemarkie, with its old-world narrow streets sloping down to its curving bay; and Cromarty, our quiet port on the tip of the Black Isle.

FARMING

The Black Isle has always been an agricultural community, with much good, fertile land kept in a high state of cultivation. Killearnan parish is typical of the whole district. There is a number of large farms, each a self-contained unit, employing a full staff with modern housing. There are also many smaller family farms, expertly worked with little or no outside labour. Each farm, large and small, is outstanding in the layout of its dwelling-houses and commodious well-placed steadings. Some farms have installed their own grain drying and handling equipment – a great asset. Thus, the farms in Killearnan compare most favourably with farms in any part of the country.

The accompanying table will show that, for years 1870-1962, there has been a decided shift of emphasis in the pattern of farming in the Black Isle, made necessary

by changing economic circumstances. From 1962 to 1966 there have been even more drastic changes, mainly due to changes in Government policy.

	<u>1870</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1922</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1962</u>
Wheat (acres)	826	110	16	58	151	129	444
Barley (acres)	2258	3110	2840	957	2152	2044	3428
Oats (acres)	6776	6541	6779	7400	9127	7257	4647
Potatoes (acres)	1369	837	808	783	1334	1025	1005
Turnips and swedes (acres)	4710	4353	4097	3594	3486	3289	2377
Rotational grass (acres)	8856	10670	12756	13620	10685	12001	16763
Working horses	1396	1595	1481	1126	942	387	—
Dairy cattle (including dairy cows)	—	—	—	—	1433	880	594
Beef cattle (including suckler cows)	4678*	6202*	5407*	6179*	5437	8214	11549
Breeding ewes	†	5540	5163	8669	5609	5914	12021
Total pigs	1408	1074	773	873	880	2759	1987
Total poultry	†	†	19100	25867	23130	43761	24416

* *Figure also includes all ages of dairy stock*
† *Figure not known*

Less oats are sown because oatmeal is no longer the staple food of the population, and with the disappearance of horses, there is not the same demand for oats. Barley is becoming an increasingly large crop, most of it going south to manufacturing centres to be ground into food mixtures for cattle, poultry etc. Only a small percentage, especially after a wet year, is bought by local distillers. They say that the barley ripened by stronger sunshine in England and in Australia, and maize from Canada are more suitable for their purpose.

Turnip crops which demand a great deal of manual labour are being replaced to some extent by “self-feed silage” – great crops of sweet grass cut during the summer and stored in “silos” for winter feed for cattle.

Potato crops are becoming generally smaller as the cost of employing labour for lifting the potatoes leaves only a small margin of profit. It has been discovered by the farming community that neither poultry-keeping nor dairying in modern times can pay their way unless each is carried on as a specialised branch of farming.

Killearnan has always been noted for its livestock. Cart horses are seldom seen, but Kilcoy Mains still sends annually one or two fine 'Clydesdales' to the Black Isle Show, handsome in the ornamentation and polished harness of former times. In spite of the use of tractors, a few crofters still remain faithful to the old ways, having their horse and cart for the occasional short "trip" and it is fine to see the horse drawing the harrows once again, on some lonely croft.

Some farms excel in breeding Shorthorn cattle while others take a pride in Aberdeen-Angus. Most farms carry a stock of North Country Cheviot Sheep, but some favour Suffolk Crosses, South Country Cheviots and a few "Blackfaces". One of the main enterprises, especially on smaller farms, is the keeping of ewe hoggs, taken down from the high hills of the west to winter from October to March.

The labour force has become smaller as labour-saving techniques are being continually introduced. Indeed, the young men on the farms nowadays have to be 'all-round' mechanics to cope with the latest implements.

One or two of our oldest farmers can remember when, as small boys, they were left in charge of boxes, holding young pigs for sale at the Muir of Ord Markets; therefore, it may not become amiss to remark on the passing of the old markets.

MUIR OF ORD MARKET

Muir of Ord market was held once almost every week, but on two concurrent days in the month of May. It stretched over a great, flat plain or "muir" – probably once being the swampland which lay between the Black Isle and Ross proper. After Falkirk, this was the principal livestock market in Scotland and was such a huge hub of traffic and business that it was said a man could spend a whole day, making his way from one end of it to the other! Herds of cattle were moved from one part of Scotland to another by drovers who knew every short route with adequate grazing, through all the difficult mountain passes. These routes are still known as "drove roads".

Besides horses and cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry change hands with much bargaining, as each crofter and farmer sold privately to dealers and farmers from afar. The participants went on their way, but their purchases, soe on 'tether' or halter, had to be tended until claimed. Here the school boys came into their own. They absented themselves 'en masse' from school for the day, knowing that they were sure to earn some money as "the Muir". This weekly absence at the market was

a constant source of worry to the headmasters of the local schools until 'compulsory officers' were introduced!

At the beginning of the 19th century, "auction marts" were being introduced in England and in 1871 the first auction mart in Scotland was opened at Hawick. A Mr Hamilton opened the first auction mart in the north at the Riverside, Inverness in January 1859. This was followed by MacDonald and Fraser's Mart opened in 1884 and it too, still flourishes. They had opened a mart at Perth in 1858, A Mrs MacKintosh with Mr McCorquodale opened the first mart in Dingwall in 1890, to be followed by another set up by the MacCallum Brothers. From that time forward, farmers and crofters did less business as the old markets and sent their herds, with drovers, into the marts, at Dingwall and Inverness. There the Auctioneers sold to the highest bidders, charging a commission for doing so. With the coming of the railway, the cattle were dispatched in special cattle trucks and later still, they were conveyed by huge motor "cattle floats". As a consequence, the long-distance cattle drovers, that hardy breed of men, disappeared from the land.

Thus, the great Muir of Ord market gradually fell into abeyance, and with it the small markets held in the hamlets of our parish. Today the Muir stance has become an excellent golf-course, with the southern part a permanent site for the Black Isle Agricultural Show.

The last to accept the changes were the horse dealers and tinkers who continued to take their horses to the old stances on the special annual Market Days. After their deals were completed, they repaired to the inns where they created disturbances, still remembered by the older generation. The inn at Chapelton was taken down, and at Tore, as stated the old inn was closed and a modern hotel built on the market site.

Mr Dalgety of Bogroy, Killearnan, can tell of the days, last century, before the invention of reaping machines. Large groups of girls left the district, (they even came from Caithness in the north, and Skye in the west), wending their way south through the mountains, to find work in the harvest fields of the Lowlands. They worked in long rows, bunding the grain sheaves, following the long row of men cutting the grain with their scythes. Some girls married and stayed in the lowlands, but Mr Dalgetty's grandmother returned with her husband from the south; hence the Lowland name of Dalgetty, well known in the Black Isle, and much respected in farming circles.

The Black Isle Farmer's Society was formed in 1836, and it used to hold its annual show on a suitable field on a different farm in the Black Isle every year. Tore Mains, Killearnan was the last place at which a Show was held before it moved permanently to its fixed site at Muir of Ord.

On 25th June, 1954, the Queen and Prince Philip, in their tour around the north of Scotland on their yacht, "Britannia", put in at the ancient port and former important naval station of Cromarty, at the eastern tip of the Black Isle. Among the party introduced to the Royal visitors were the president of the Black Isle branch of the Ross-shire farmer's Union and the president of the Black Isle Farmer's Union, who, that year, both happened to be Killearnan farmers. They were Mr Martin of Garguston and Mr Oag, Tore Mains. The Queen and Prince Philip drove through the Black Isle to lunch with Major and Mrs Cameron at their lovely home, Allangrange House. They then motored slowly in the sunshine to Kessock Ferry, where cheering crowds waved farewell when they boarded their launch to take them out to the "Britannia". It was a royal day indeed for Killearnan and the Black Isle!

BIRDS

There is scarcely a house in Killearnan which does not have in its vicinity bushes and hedges sheltering many wild flowers and song birds. In spite of the destruction of bird life said to be caused by the use of chemical sprays as weed-killers, there are still some mornings in early May when we are awakened by the ineffable beauty of the "dan chorus"; then the loveliness of bird-life around us comes very near our hearts.

In common with similar neighbouring areas our daily companions are great numbers of fearless brown sparrows and speckled starlings; lower numbers of fluting blackbirds and bright chaffinches, thrushes with their exuberant songs, and small blue tits, during their ceaseless acrobatic feats among the bushes. We are delighted to see at times the dainty wren, the unassuming tree-creeper with its mouse-like darting movements, the neat, dipping walk of the pied wagtail and the handsome bullfinch in his blue, black and rose-pink plumage. Along the "back roads" or lanes yellow-hammers fly timidly from bush to bush ahead of us while linnets, and the rare greenfinches, take cover among the broom or whins, until we go by. In the eastern parts of Killearnan the plaintive call of the cuckoo is seldom heard nowadays, and the discordant "crek" of the corncrake has not been heard and the corncrake was heard last year, but not, so far, this summer. Blue-black swallows, darting and skimming over the fields, do not seem to be as numerous as in previous years. How we enjoy hearing the song of the soaring lark in bright spring sunshine, and the sweet singing of robins around our homes on bleak, wintry days!

From the fields come the raucous cries of pheasants and of 'green crested lapwings' (green plovers or 'peewits'); the croaking of black crows and grey or 'hoody' crows, and the high, shrill piping of brightly coloured oyster-catchers as they predict rain.

Wood pigeons or ring-doves, becoming more numerous, are the farmers' enemy along with the crow family, yet their beauty, and their gentle "coo-ing" among the trees, touch the heart. The stillness of the night is often broken by the sudden loud calling of the owls. At a rare time, we have seen the kestrel hawk hanging motionless in space before swooping on its prey; also, the buzzard, although it has become very scarce since myxomatosis removed so many of the rabbit population – its chief source of food. The capercaillie, a large handsome bird, has also been seen, but it is very rare now, as it has withdrawn to the high, remote woods where it can find and eat the tips of the pine-branches.

On nearby pools we are delighted to come across water-hens (or moor-hens), startled snipe, lovely mallard ducks and, occasionally, the stately heron; while beside the sea at Redcastle and Charleston, congregate hundreds of wading birds and different varieties of gulls, the largest being the black-backed gull. Of those, many fly inland to nest, among them, black-headed gulls and red shanks, and the oyster-catchers already mentioned. At Kessock Ferry among other sea-birds we see cormorants on the sea-wall at the pier, flapping their great, black wings, in the sunshine; and dignified swans swimming near the shore on the alert for titbits thrown by passengers boarding the ferry-boat, "Eilean Dhu".

Many a winter's day is brightened by the sudden descent upon our garden of a flock of hungry waxwings, or fieldfares flying from the cold north of Europe and attracted by glistening rose-hips or holly berries. Overheard too we hear the loud, hooking cries of the wild geese they fly south in their beautiful wedge shaped flocks.

These are the birds most common to our district but there are many more, both migratory and resident, the study of which would bring rich reward to the expert ornithologist or bird-watcher.

ANIMALS

On our farms rats and mice are not as numerous as they used to be, thanks to the use of chemicals, although farmyard cats do keep them in check. Yet a huge number sometimes comes inexplicably, once in a cycle of years, possessed of a fearful hunger which compels them to attack every kind of foodstuff. When this happens, they are a real menace because of the destruction they cause to stacks and bags of grain, and are a source of worry until overcome, usually by poisoning. A small variety of bat is also very common around over farm buildings, flitting silently overhead in the dark. Rabbits are scarce, being kept in check by the rabbit-trappers employed by the Black

Isle Rabbit Clearance Society. Hares are becoming increasingly numerous, as are moles, now in flowerbeds as well as in fields. Foxes are said to be very common on the higher ground around Killearnan and Knockbain, four foxes having been caught recently in the vicinity of Belmaduthy. The last fox to be found on low ground, was caught near Redcastle nine years ago. Deer have been seen quite often lately both on high ground and near the farms in Killearnan. It was delightful, some time ago, to watch a lovely roe deer in the early morning sunlight, making its graceful and leisurely way along the verge of a field golden with corn, before it disappeared silently into the neighbouring woods. It is said to be a very lucky omen for the future to have a deer coming to the farm, especially if the farmer has just become a new tenant.

FLORA

The very popular Field clubs of former times looked upon the Black Isle as a botanist's 'paradise'. Killearnan is especially so, as its flora, is so rich, ranging from the moor and forest of the high 'mid-rib' of the peninsula through deep woods and arable land facing 'the warm south' and growing lush and green, almost to the water's edge.

After Winter is past, we find near our homes, the coltsfoot ushering in the Spring. Soon it is followed by the marsh-marigold and the greater celandine growing in sheltered marshy ground while fragile, white anemones grow in lacy clusters on the dry banks of ditches. Nearer home we are delighted to see "the crimson-tipped" flower of the daisy and the buttercup "the little children's dower", but we look with dismay upon the spraying contraptions to rid us of what our menfolk call "weeds". Bishop-weed is our worst enemy in the garden but we hasten to gather our 4-quart measure of dandelion flowers to make our delicately-flavoured golden dandelion wine. Often it becomes a losing battle before the relentless spray"

As summer approaches, we find in marshland lady's smock, lady's slipper, globe buttercups and forget-me nots, followed by ragged robin, spotted orchids, cotton grass and varieties of rushes and tall silky grasses. On the open moorland grow different Scottish heathers, blaeberrys, mosses, and on boggy ground our wonderful bog myrtle, all gradually giving way before the ploughing and draining of the soil prior to tree-planting. On lower ground, in wooded areas, we find alders, hazels and birch; near them violets peer from under last year's bracken and ferns while the new year's growth uncurls its fronds. Drifts of bluebells (or wild hyacinths), spread like water pools under the birches but we look in vain for primroses which seem to be very scarce in some parts of Killearnan.

With the coming of high Summer, a versatile garden of Nature is laid out before our eyes. As far as the eye can see there are often great stretches of creamy hemlock interspersed with giant hogweed bordering 'side-roads'; others show towering banks of yellow broom and gorse which perfume the summer winds. Honeysuckle, in some places, entwines itself around tree-boles and occasionally we find patches of blue meadow-cranesbill and a few plants of Himalayan balsam, probably self-sown from nearby gardens. Where jungles of undergrowth have been cut away, bells of ink willow-herb flourish, growing lustily on every available patch of wasteland. Of rarer plants we found a number of great mulleins growing near Tore, and tall clumps of common comfrey on the roadside near Arpafeelie. Around the edges of cultivated fields wild pansies, marguerites and corn-marigolds flourish. On roadside banks there is 'Nature in all her array'. We find reddish-purple foxgloves and rarer white ones, red and white clover, delicate harebells, yellow and purple vetches, trefoils, tormentil, ox-eyed daisies and lady's bedstraw; crowning them all, our lovely wild roses, deep pink and pale pink, delicately scented, and rare still, 'the little white rose of Scotland, that smells sharp and sweet – and breaks the heart'.

Autumn brings the bramble and the raspberry, once abundant on the 'side-roads', yielding a rich harvest for the store cupboard, until the County Council introduced mowers to tidy the verges. This has been done so thoroughly that we have to go far afield to fill our berry baskets. An occasional wild gooseberry bush is found in the woods and, in various unexpected places, we find the 'gean' or wild cherry in the glory of its white blossom. In the same habitat grow great clumps of ancient hawthorn trees, and the lovely rowan or mountain ash.

The higher reaches of Killearnan have been taken over by the Forestry Commission. As the tree-planting of Killearnan can be studied only in conjunction with the entire work on the Black Isle, we give a detailed study of this important factor in our economy.

FORESTRY IN THE BLACK ISLE

Since the middle of the 18th century the Black Isle has always had a high percentage of its area covered by trees. Prior to 1750, tree crops consisted mainly of scrub Oak, Birch and Hazel, but after that date, the planting of conifers was embarked upon by the main estates namely – Redcastle, Kilcoy, Belmaduthy, Rosehaugh, Drynie, Newhall and Cromarty. These early plantings were allowed to grow to maturity and were clear-felled about the middle of the 19th century. Much of the land clear-felled was not replanted. The rearing of sheep had become an important aspect of farming

in the north of Scotland by that time, and the clear-felled areas were largely given over to sheep grazing. Nevertheless, some planting of trees continued, resulting in the creation as crops of good commercial timber, shelter belts, game coverts and trees of high amenity value, grown singly and in clumps by the various estate proprietors. These estate proprietors also created their own policy plantations, of shrubs, broad leaved trees, and exotic conifers. We of the present generation, owe a great deal to them for the beauty they created by their silvicultural foresight.

The 1914 and 1939 world wars, made heavy national demands on our forests, and those in the Black Isle suffered the same fate as elsewhere throughout the country. Extensive areas of forest in the Black Isle were felled in the period 1914-1918, and because of the high costs of replacement, and increasing taxation, many of these areas were not replanted, and of course further heavy fellings took place in the period 1939-1945, with the same result. It was realised after the 1914 war, that large areas of denuded forest would not be replanted by the estate owners, and the Forestry Commission was set up in 1919, to deal with the restocking of these felled areas, and to create new forest areas, in an effort to build up national reserves of timber. In 1925 the Forestry Commission acquired land at Kessock, and Findon, and planting to a fixed programme commenced. The annual programme was a modest 10 to 80 acres. Further acquisitions of land followed at Kilcoy, Belmaduthy and Newhall, and after the 1939 world war, more land was acquired at Rosehaugh and Cromarty. With these further acquisitions the planting rate per annum was increased from 70 acres to 700 acres, so that by 1965 all the bare land acquired, had been planted up. Altogether, the Forestry Commission has planted approximately 14,000 acres of trees in the Black Isle in the period 1925 to 1965.

While the land quality in the Black Isle is acknowledged to be good for farming, it is not particularly good for forestry. The soil which overlies Old Red Sandstone, is shallow generally, with a very hard compacted sub-soil of low fertility. Tree roots find it difficult to penetrate the very tight sub-soil, and, as a result, a very limited supply of nutrients is available for the trees. The species of trees planted by the Forestry Commission and found to be the most suitable for the conditions met with, are; Scots Pine, Lodge pole Pine, Larches and Spruces. Very limited quantities of Broad-leaved species have been tried out. The earliest Forestry Commission plantings are now in the production stage, and some 150,000 cubic feet of timber from thinnings are sold annually, until recently, the output was absorbed mainly by the colliers as pitprops, but with the declining demand for this class of timber for coal mining, it is now disposed of to the Pulpmill at Fort William, and the Chipboard Mill at Inverness. The output will rise steeply in the next ten years, as more plantations become productive, so that the annual output will soon amount to 250,000 cubic feet.

The 14,000 acres of Forestry Commission plantations are spread over four forests – Kessock, Findon, Kilcoy and Millbuie. Each of these forests has a forester in charge and carries its own staff of workmen. The largest by far, is Millbuie, where in addition to its large quota of plantation, it also has some 100 acres of nurseries, from which 15 million trees, are sent out each year for planting in other Forestry Commission forests, out with the Black Isle. The Millbuie nurseries and other smaller nurseries at Findon and Kilcoy are in fact the main plant-rearing centres for the North Conservancy, which covers the area north of a line drawn across Scotland from Forres in Morayshire, to the island of Mull. Many groups of students and forestry societies visit Millbuie nurseries to see the methods employed in rearing the plants. There they can see the seed being extracted from the cones, sown in seed beds, transplanted in lines, and finally lifted for despatch to the receiving forests.

Labour supply has so far not presented any problem, Workmen are recruited from throughout the Black Isle generally, with rather more from the villages of Munlochy, Avoch and Cromarty making approximately 80. This figure includes a few women and boys and is subject to variation, particularly in the spring when nursery programmes frequently require the recruitment of additional labour, on a temporary basis. About one third of the labour force is housed in Forestry Commission houses. One way or another, it will be seen that the activities of the Forestry Commission have quite an important effect on the social, and economic structure of the Black Isle Community. Alongside the Forestry Commission's operations, are those of private estates, some of which continue to develop their woodlands. Government grants are available for this purpose and the Redcastle and Allangrange estates have planting programmes in operation which make a valuable contribution in building up timber reserves and in employing labour.

There is no doubt that the Black Isle is one of the most concentrated forest areas in Britain, and in any future national emergency, requiring large quantities of timber it could make a really worthwhile contribution. It has sometimes been agreed that there is a conflict of interest between agriculture and forestry, but this has never been evident in the Black Isle. Indeed, one could assert that the relationship between these two interests has been remarkably free from friction, each being concerned in the building up of a thriving and prosperous community within the compact peninsula called the Black Isle.

THE STORY OF THE WHALE

“Did I ever tell you, Iain, about the whale that came into the Beaully Firth? Sit you down a minute, and I’ll give you the story. I would have been about seven years old at the time; but I mind (remember) is fine, as if it had been yesterday. It happened on a bonny day in July 1877, and there we all were in the school at Killearnan. I was sitting on the end of a bench near the door, doing sums on my slate. Suddenly, there came a thunderous knocking on the door, and the schoolmaster through it open. There, stood Donald Robertson, the young blacksmith from Redcastle, and he was panting with running. He drew the “schoolie” outside and hurriedly told him some news about ‘a whale’ and ‘a boat’. Mr Davidson – the schoolmaster- wasn’t long in letting us out of school for dinner that day! My sister Jessie and myself didn’t go home, as it was too far off. We just took a “piece” in our pockets to school. Many a time we would eat a “piece” at ‘little playtime’ and when dinner time came, we would be picking the crumbs of oatbread out of the fluff in our pockets! This day, however, we didn’t wait for that, for all the folk of the place were running to the shore and we ran too. There, out in the shining water of the firth, a great mighty creature was rolling and basking in the sunlight and throwing great spouts of water up in the air. And what’s more, there was Donald Robertson, the smith, and Hugh Fraser, the young gardener at Redcastle, in the schoolmaster’s boat, rowing nearer and nearer it. The water was in a fearful commotion and the people said the pair of them would be drowned. However, they rested their oars, then they lifted their rifles – they were in the “Volunteers”, you see – and they took aim at the poor beast’s head. It tossed and turned angrily, and I heard “schoolie” cry out, but I don’t know whether he was distressed about the safety of the men, or the safety of his boat! The whale swam up the firth while they followed in the boat, and we trudged back to school. There were not many lessons done that day, after we heard some shots being fired. As soon as lessons were over, we raced down to the shore, and there was the mighty creature drawn up beside the pier, its life ended! Men from all over were busy measuring it, saying it was fifty feet in length and eighteen in girth.

I was sorry to see the creature dead, for it had looked so pleased with itself out in the deep water. I mind asking Jessie if it could be the great fish that had swallowed Jonah, but she said she didn’t think so as that had happened long before our time.

In a few days, the whale was towed out to sea and the next we heard of it, it was in Birmingham in England. How it landed there I know not, but it was drawn through the streets of that city in a public park where the people were charged sixpence each to see it – a sad end for a noble creature!

You are not believing me? Well, well, Iain, It was all put down in black and white in the “Inverness Courier”; and if ever you go east to Fortrose, you can see the paper in the possession of Mr Jack Fraser, who is retired there. You’ll mind him, the gardener at Redcastle, like his father and his grandfather before him. Indeed, I’m thinking that that was his grandfather, who was out in the boat with the blacksmith to catch the whale!”

Thus our tale, giving glimpses of Killearnan and its people, ends with 1966. The Highland Development Council speaks of a great drainage scheme for the shallows of the Beaully Firth. This may bring economic changes, but, so far, the even tenor of our way continues. In the past, much change had taken place. Invaders swept over the land; drama and tragedy struck high places; language died to give room to alien tongues; the embitterment of the Clearances fell upon many; wars and their consequences; poverty and prosperity, ebbed and flowed over the countryside. Yet Killearnan, “the pleasant parish” of Rev. John Kennedy, ‘the desired haven’ of those far from home, remains in essence, unchanged, girt by the everlasting hills in the distant west.

P.S.

The Institute thanks all members who helped to complete this survey by supplying facts, snapshots etc. In addition, Killearnan branch of the S.W.R.I. wish to put on record their deep gratitude to the following members of the community who contributed information and photographs which were of great assistance in compiling this brief survey:

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Major Anderson, The Rectory, Arpafeelie

Mrs Bain, Mrs D. Bain, Tore

Mrs A. Cameron of Allangrange

Miss Naomi Dalgety, Linnie

Mrs Gammie, The Bungalow, Croftcunie

Mr & Mrs Jack Fraser, Fortrose (formerly of Redcastle)

Miss Aida MacDonald, Dochfour (formerly of Redcastle)

Mrs Mackenzie Gillanders of Highfield

Rev. John MacKay, Knockbain Church of Scotland

Mrs Campbell MacKay, Tain

Mr D. MacKenzie, Blacksmith, Tore

Mrs I. Paul, Kilcoy Arms, Tore

Mrs Stewart, Senior, Tore Park, Tore

Mr William Cameron, Ridgfield

Mr MacDonald, Tore Public School

Mrs A.H. MacKenzie, Munloch Public School

Mrs MacKenzie, Killearnan Public School

BOOKS USED FOR REFERENCE:

The History of the Highland Clearances

Prophecies of the Brahan Seer; by Alexander MacKenzie FSA

The Days of the Fathers of Ross shire; by Rev. John Kennedy, Dingwall

Place name of Ross and Cromarty; Watson (taken from memory- may not be exact title)

Fortrose – a Garden City by the Sea ‘St Duthac’

Memorabilia Domestica ; by Rev. Donald Sage

Highland Doorstep; by Kenneth Macrae

The book of Ross, Sutherland and Caithness; by D. MacDonald HRJBA and A. Polson FSA

The Pocket Guide to Wild Flowers; by David McClintock TD, M, TLS

Spotting British Birds; by S. Vere Benson

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING:

The Journals of Bishop Forbes; (principal reference in 1st Journal)

Discovering the Black Isle; by Douglas William

Transactions of the Royal Highland Agricultural Society 1877 (particularly section on the Black Isle)

Napier Commission report (parts of)

Easter Ross: The Double Frontier 1750-1850; by Ian Mowat

Guide to Local History and Archaeology in the Black Isle; by Edward Meldrum

Ross and Cromarty; An Illustrated Architectural Guide; By Elizabeth Beaton

The Statistical Account of Scotland 1794; by Rev David Duncan

The new Statistical Account of Scotland 1845; by Rev John Kennedy

APPENDIX 1

13th December 1984

Tore was the only school which I ever attended and I was handicapped all my life through lack of education. Why you may ask did I not pursue my schooling? Several reason. All the children in Tore school in y day came from the homes of crofters or farm servants. We all left school at the age of fourteen. We all looked forward to working and we all got work. Our parents were poorly paid – father g ot 19 shillings a week even although he was a grieve and did all the business connected with the farm for the a=framer, a bachelor, who drank a lot. With a family of five there was no money to spare. Dingwall and Fortrose Academies were our higher education schools and the only means of getting to Dingwall was by train from Allangrange station and change at Muir of Ord. The train would not suit Fortrose, Why not a bicycle you may ask? None of the children had cycles and of course, no buses in those days.

There was no schoolhouse as you have today. The teacher lived in the west end of the school upstairs and downstairs. The present schoolhouse was then part of the playground. No village hall then and we sometimes used that ground to play football, the ball being a bundle of sacking fastened with string.

The schoolmistress was Miss MacDonald and she handled the whole school herself with over forty children. A card above the fire said capacity 66 children. The strap was always in evidence. In winter just the one open fire at the east end of the school. We knew what cold hands and feet meant.

Then Miss MacDonald was given an assistant teacher, but as far as we could see this was an intrusion on her domain and there were no signs of friendliness on the part of Miss MacDonald. The air was frigid. Miss Boyd who boarded in Tore Inn was a tall, gentle lady. She was given only one class and that was ours between 10 and 12 pupils. There was never any sign of a strap yet we became well mannered. We had an innate feeling of respect for her. She ruled us by her gentleness. Then we got a school master, down to one teacher again. It is hard to describe him, by the name of Mr Forrest! His whole manner was stilted. He had a straight back whether walking or sitting, he had a pointed beard, a double breasted jacket, his speech clipped more like

and English tongue. Back to the strap again and he could wield it, he would lose his temper and let us have it. Some boys would draw back their hand just before he struck and that made him madder than ever. We would not give him the pleasure of us crying and we never told our parents but my younger brother would say to mother, Jack got pansies today.

He put Scotsman papers over the lower part of the windows and all we could see from our seats was the sky and the tops of the trees. Long forms those days, not single desks. He mixed us all up by putting a boy between two girls and a girl between two boys and all different ages. I can remember being placed between two older big girls and they pestered me no end, keeping an eye on the dominie, one would punch my ribs and the other would do the same from the other side. They were older than I and I are not retaliate for I would get the worst of it. Then he would change again and we would find ourselves with different companions in a different part of the school.

From early May to the beginning of October we all went barefooted. I still recall one day when Tottie wore boots – an only child was the only one who wore boots – no shoes those days – all the others went barefooted. “Look at these children”, they would say today. “Poor children without shoes or stockings.” Not a bit of it – we preferred to go barefooted. If we went somewhere that required boots the first thing we did when we got home was to take off our boots.

The new schoolhouse was built before I left school, sometime before 1908. I do not regret the hard life of my youth. We lived in the country with freedom to wander where we liked amid fields and woods and heather by burns running by and the daily sight of the farm animals. There I come to the end of my story.

SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

Twice a day we walked through Tore on our way to school, running in the morning and dandering through it on the way home. We were all brought up on the farm of Croftcrunie where my father was grieve. I was born in Ryefield then part of Croftcrunie, a small house, only two rooms, one almost unusable. We all slept in the kitchen, children two at each end of the brass railed bed. Then the new houses near the farm were built – three rooms.

Tore consisted of a shop where we could buy anything from bread to tobacco, another small shop where we children could spend a halfpenny or a penny on sweets if we were rich enough. Then there was the smith where we often looked in on our way home to see the sparks flying or the smith shoeing a horse. Then there was a

cobbler a cosy place down steps with a good outlook towards the west. A carpenter Jock Bain, never called anything but Jock Chape. I presume because he was always talking about how cheap his work was. Another interest on our way home was the building of Tore Inn, hitherto alongside the farm steading – nothing but a pub.

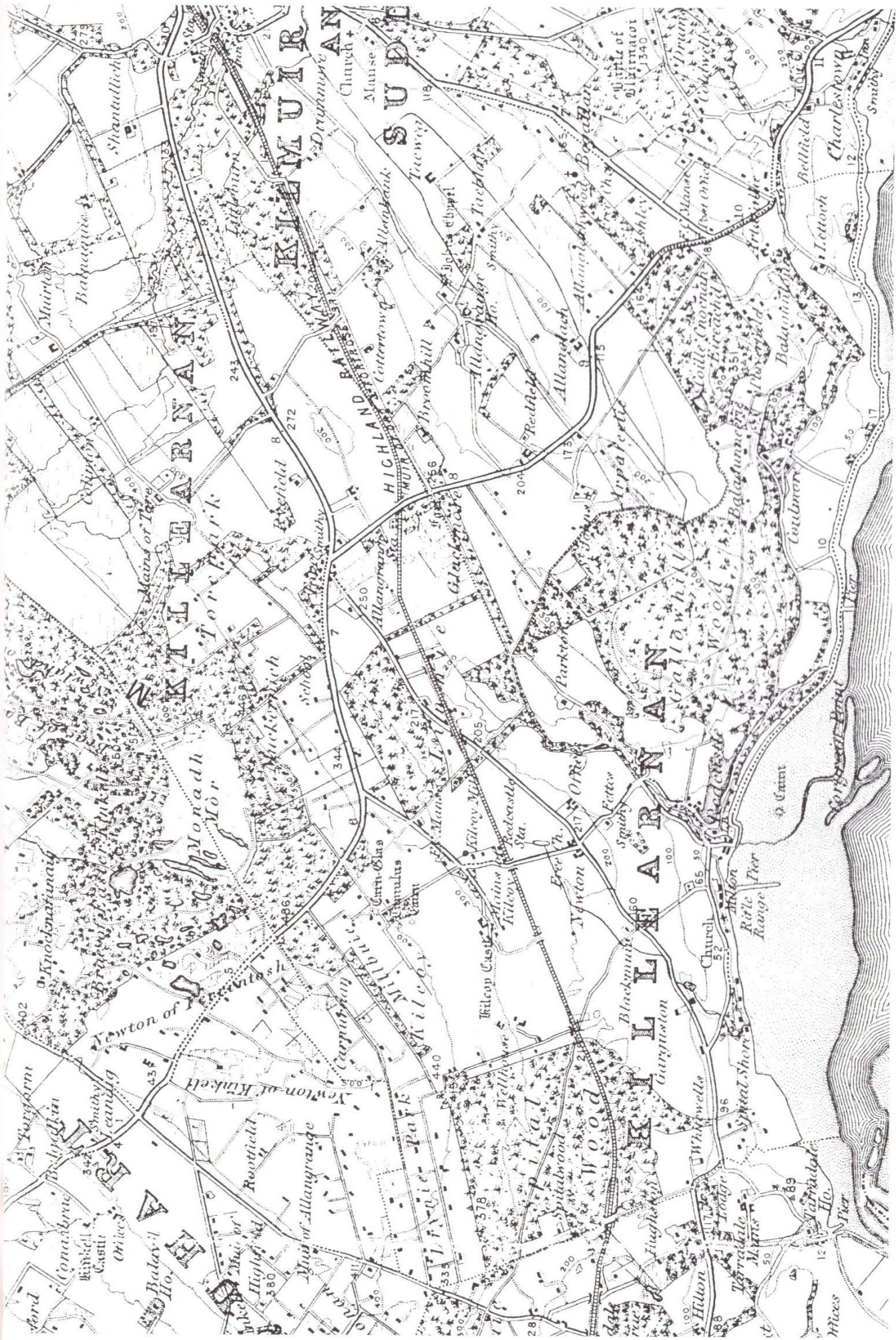
Our post was seldom called anything but Long John. He was thin and maybe 6'3" or thereabouts. He collected his mail at Allangrange Station and set out on his long walk which must have taken a few hours. At New Year time he would have to return to the station once if not twice because he had so many parcels to carry.

The new roads have spoiled my beloved old haunts. A year ago (1984) we motored from Kessock to Muir of Ord. The old road which I knew so well as far as Tore had lost all my old landmarks. I just could not make out the old farm. The old Black Isle has largely lost its glamour – the old single track roads on which it was a delight to travel will become congested by the folk from Inverness out for a run.

I have just been thinking what a lot the children of today miss travelling by bus. I was remembering the sights and sounds, the joys and the squabbles by the roadside – we were seldom in a hurry going home – there was much to interest us. Pardon my mistakes, understandable perhaps seeing as I shall be ninety years tomorrow.

Rev. Jack Stables

Died 1985



ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF KILLEARNAN

(used by kind permission)

