

*Rambling about
Dundurn Parish*



Braehead

*From articles first published
In the Villagers 2018-2023*

*By
The Old Crock*

Part 3

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Motoring incidents are nothing new

Accident at St Fillans - driver charged with neglect.

Dundee Courier - 27th September 1898

Edward Bradshaw, Nicol Street, Kirkcaldy, was charged before Sheriff Grahame at Perth yesterday with the contravention of the Light Locomotive Act. The complaint set forth that while in charge of a motor car on the public road at St Fillans on 12th August last, being requested and signalled to by William Drummond, butcher, Birrell Street, Comrie, then in charge of a restive horse, to stop, he failed to or neglected to do so, whereby he was liable to fine or imprisonment. Mr Melville Jameson, jun., prosecutor, and Mr John A Stewart, solicitor, Tay Street, acted for the respondent.

William Drummond said that while in front of Mr Crearer's shop in St Fillans with his horse and cart about half past eleven o'clock on Friday, 12th August, he was made aware that a motor car was coming along the road by the horse beginning to jump. Leaving the back of the cart where he was serving a customer, he went to the horse's head to keep her steady. He held up his hand to the driver of the motor car and shouted to him at the top of his voice to stop. At that time, the car would be about 50 to 60 yards away. The horse continued to be restive and excited. The driver of the car stopped his machine opposite witness's horse – the worst place he could have chosen. The shafts of witness's cart were broken, and the cart overturned. The driver paid no attention to the shouts or gestures, or if he did, he did not respond.

In cross-examination witness said that there were a number of passengers in the car, so that the driver should have every interest to be careful. When the car passed the hotel, he was at his horse's head. Before that he was behind the van serving a customer. He did not hear a horn sounded. The horse gave a jump. He may have been overly excited. When he went to his horse's head, he pulled him to the pavement with the intention of getting clear, so as to let the car pass. It was passing through St Fillans from Lochearnhead, and he was on the right-hand side of the road coming from Comrie. There was plenty of room for the car to pass. As soon as he went to the horse's head, he lifted up his left hand and shouted at the pitch of his voice to stop for god's sake. When the car stopped it was only a few yards from the cart. He kept his hand up till the car was six or eight yards from him, and then had to take it down to hold the horse. He could not lead the horse and cart past the car. He did not get so excited when he saw the car that he omitted to hold up his hand. He wanted them to clear out of the way. The horse was not frisky, but quiet as a sheep. His little girl could do anything with it. Once it met with an accident owing to the bridle coming of its head. That was due to the flies in the summertime. There was no quieter horse in the world. There was no vice about it.

James Crearer, Grocer, corroborated. George Burgess, police constable, St Fillans, said that the car passed him going towards Mr Crearer's shop at the rate of 10 to 11

miles an hour. He went forwards to give assistance, but by the time he got up the car had gone off.

John Graham, waiter, Drummond Arms Hotel, St Fillans, saw the motor car pass the hotel going towards Comrie. Mr Drummond signalled to the driver to stop but he did not hear him shout. It stopped for a few seconds when it was opposite the van. In



The Village Shop 1911

cross-examination witness said he heard a horn sound; Drummond took down his hand when, the car was 40 or 50 yards off. The hand was just up for a moment.

Evidence was then led for the defence. John Wilson, proprietor of the Edinburgh Evening News, said that he and his family were having a tour in a motor car last month. He remembered of the incident on 12th August. The driver was as experienced a man as could be got for motor cars. Sitting in the front seat with the driver, he first saw the butcher's cart after passing a slight bend in the road. They had slowed down to pass a number of horses in the front of the hotel. The cart was on the car's side of the road unattended. There were only houses on that side. When they saw it first it would be 80 to 100 yards off. They sounded the horn before coming to the hotel, and after turning the corner. They always sounded it, according to the regulations, whenever they saw anything on the road. He could not say how often they sounded the horn after noticing the cart, but they stopped doing so when they saw the horse beginning to be restive. They were watching intently for a signal whither they were to stop or not, and they came to the conclusion that they were not to be asked to stop. When they came in sight the man was behind the cart, and immediately on hearing the car he came to the front. As there was no signal to stop the driver let the brake go, and they began to go faster with the expectation of getting clear past. When the man found the horse getting more restive, he signalled, and they pulled up at once. By that time, they were within two car's length of the cart. Their right car wheels were off the road on the grass. It was their duty to stop when the man held up his hands, whither it was a wise thing or not. Witness had studied the instructions of the Secretary for Scotland and carried them out to the

best of his ability. If the man had not stopped them, they would have been passed in a second, or if he had stopped them earlier nothing would have been wrong. The mistake was in allowing them to get so far up before they were stopped. Witness heard no shouting, but the noise of the car might have prevented that. Drummond looked overly excited. The horse continued restive, kicking, and going forward at the same time. He saw it kick one of the trams out. Whenever it passed, they drove off the car. At Crieff he said to the inspector that without admitting liability, he would pay for any damage. He had travelled from Berwick-on-Tweed to Strathpeffer, visiting the various counties, and travelling probably 1500 miles and that was the only accident they had.

Miss Elspeth Wilson, daughter of the previous witness, corroborated.

The Sheriff said that this was not a case of great difficulty. It was not for him to consider whether the regulations issued were sufficient to secure safety against what was certainly a danger to travellers along the roads. Up to a short time ago it was a very great danger, and accidents happened all over the country. Several serious cases had been before him. The only question was whether or not the regulation was sufficient, but whether the man attended to it and stopped the machine when a hand was put up. The evidence did not authorise him to say that there was any wilful neglect on the part of the respondent to obey the regulations. The only question was whether in point of fact he did not address the regulations and was therefore to be held as careless or negligent, so negligent as to have incurred the penalty. There was very conflicting evidence as to what took place, and in that case the accused was always entitled to the benefit of the doubt. The distinct evidence of Mr Wilson and his daughter, who were with the respondent, was to the effect that he at once attended to the signal. On the other hand, they had evidence that although a hand was held up the car proceeded on its way and was not drawn up till opposite the butcher's cart. He could not hold from the evidence that there had been a distinct act of disobedience to the regulations by the respondent.

The old Crock – February 2021

Feuing at St Fillans and Crieff

Dundee Advertiser 12 Sept 1881

New Feuing plans for ground at St Fillans and Crieff, on the Drummond Estate, have recently been prepared by Mr George T Ewing, architect, Muthill. The ground at St Fillans extends about a mile to the westward of the village, on the north side of Loch Earn. It is beautifully wooded, and it rises with a gentle ascent from the side of the loch, it commands a magnificent view of the whole extent of the water, and also of the hills and glens in the distance. The Feu's range from a quarter to an acre and a half in extent, and we learn that one of them has already been secured and that a handsome Villa 'Earnholm' is about to be erected. A piece of ground at the south-east side of the loch, opposite St Fillans is also to be feued, and the plan shows that two large spaces are to be reserved for recreation. For the benefit of bathers, it is intended to erect a stage round the little island on the lake. St Fillans advantages as a health resort are testified by the yearly increasing number of visitors. The drawback hitherto has been the want of accommodation, and many will be glad to learn that there is every prospect of this demand being speedily supplied. During the spring of this year Mr Davie had his hotel at St Fillans enlarged to meet the increasing demand for rooms. By this addition, the height has been raised to four storeys, and the number of rooms increased to thirty. The external appearance of the new building was designed to suit the existing portion. The principal feature being the porch, and the fine Italian tower, rising to a height of 52 feet. All the rooms are spacious and well ventilated, and the prospect from the view room at the top of the tower can scarcely be surpassed. New stables and coach houses have been erected at some distance back from the hotel, the whole work being carried out to designs by Mr Ewing, architect, Muthill.

Feu Charters

On the 23rd of July 1878, The Court of Session found in favour of Dr George Murray Porteous in a case against Willoughby and Carmichael, with regard to the St Fillans Feus, this resulted in a number of feu holders, seeking feu charters to confirm their rights under the law. Dr Porteous was the Provost of Crieff, and built a number of properties in the village, including Neish Villa, Ancaster House Braehead and the Village Shop.

St Fillans Hotel Extensions

Dundee Courier 3rd March 1898

Important additions are being made to the Drummond Arms Hotel by Mr Carmichael, the tenant. The extensions are being undertaken in view of the increased traffic, which is anticipated from the construction of the new

Lochearnhead line from Comrie. The additions comprise some 40 to 50 new bedrooms and a large new dining room.

The hotel itself will be entirely reconstructed; large oriel windows being placed on the ground floor at each end of the front elevation. It is intended that the extension will be available for the Easter visitors. Another addition was made to the Drummond Arms in 1908 when a second floor was added to the east wing of the hotel adding just three bedrooms.

New Buildings at St Fillans - 1905

Village Advancing

That the Advent of the railway to St Fillans has greatly added to its popularity as one of the most charming of resorts in Scotland admits of no doubt. It is now apparent, that the village and its immediate district along the north side of Loch Earn are becoming popular with visitors and others, as shown by the number of new Villas which have been recently erected, and are in the course of being built, all indicating that St Fillans will boom. To east and west of the hotel – which may be taken as the centre of the village – villas are springing up. One of the largest of them is a commodious residence on Lochearnside, about a mile to the west of the hotel 'Ault-an-Fhionn' and which has been erected for Mr P J Stirling Boyd of Edinburgh. Beautifully situated and artistically designed, this new house is one of the most commodious in the neighbourhood.



Fortrenn

Another Villa hard by, 'Auchendoune,' strikingly placed above the roadway, and commanding an exquisite view, is already occupied by Mr Duncan A Stewart, the owner. The Picturesquely situated Villa 'Fortrenn' erected by the owner of Ancaster House Mr Alexander Porteous is now complete. Like a miniature castle on the Rhine, it stands high above the water, and, with uninterrupted outlook towards Ardvorlich and Lochearnhead, it will form a most attractive summer residence. In the village the hand of the builder is evident. Not only are new houses arising, but old ones are being added to, and in some cases transformed out of recognition of their former selves. Near the Established Church, the cottage long associated with the figure of the late Peter Carmichael has disappeared, and in its place is a neat house 'Kirklea'

with a pretty outlook on the main road and the loch. The late Peter McIntyre's cottage has also made way for a handsome house 'Inverearn,' which promises to add to the appearance of the main road. On the knoll behind Mr Crearer's shop a commodious house is in the course of erection 'The bungalow now named Ardshean' by Mr George T Ewing, A number of cottages adjoining the Schoolhouse have been erected: while Mr McClure is building a nice villa to the east of The Oaks 'Clach-na-Ba.' At the Post Office, 'Cairndhu,' considerable improvements have been affected in brightening up the premises.

St Fillans is looking forward to a busy season. Houses are letting well, and what are perhaps the highest testimonials to the charms of this delightful resort, many visitors of former years intend to return to their old haunts. The roads in the vicinity are much favoured by motorists, and their appearance on cars of all sorts and sizes is extremely frequent. Today (Saturday) the cars competing in the reliability trial will pass through the district, and it is safe to say that on no part of the route will the drivers find a firmer road surface than by Lochearnside.



('Elmbank' Station Road demolished about 1945)

Dundee Courier 18th July 1907 – There and There

The most noteworthy fruit shop window in Scotland is the Wee Window of the Fruit Store at St Fillans. The shop is part of a tiny cottage at the foot of station road. On the other side of the road the Earn begins its winding road to the Tay. The Wee Window is about the size of half of this page of the "Telegraph and Post," but it is as tastefully set out as the table of Queen Alexandria. In reality there is no window in the Wee Window, for in the summertime the casement is out. The sill is covered with moss, and the fruit is arranged with artistic skill that compels the admiration of visitors from London and other great centres. I give this note on the Wee Window at St Fillans in order that shopkeepers here, there, and everywhere may realize that any shop window may be made beautifully attractive.

The old Crock – March 2021

Opening of a Golf Course at St Fillans

Strathearn Herald 8th September 1894

The addition of a golf course, which is situated on the grounds of Wester Dundurn Farm, belonging to Messer's McAra, and kindly granted by them. The course, a six hole one, lies in the midst of classic ground, under the shadow of the gigantic Biron., and smiled upon by the lesser hill of the patron saint, who may in bygone days have enjoyed "ye ancient game" after his severe devotions. Though a little rough at present, the course promises to be a good one in the opinion of experts, and will no doubt add another to the many natural and social attractions for which St Fillans is deservedly popular.

On Wednesday afternoon, a large and fashionable gathering took place in celebration of the opening of the course. In the absence of Colonel Stewart of Ardvorlich, President of the St Fillans Golf Club, the course was opened by Mr Radcliffe, shooting tenant of the Lochearnside moors, Vice-President of the club. In presenting him with a club and ball to make the first drive off, the secretary of the club Rev Mr Armstrong – announced that Colonel Stewart had presented a medal to be played for annually by members of the club, and to be called the "Ardvorlich Medal." The first ball was then driven off in excellent style by Mr Radcliffe, and several foursomes were immediately started, and play was engaged in with much zest, promising well for the popularity and success of the course. The pleasure of the meeting was in no small measure due to the ladies of St Fillans who graced the occasion by their presence, and who showed their interest in the new undertaking by providing a sumptuous tea for the large company present, and by other kindly offices greatly appreciated.

'Perthshire Advertiser 10th July 1895 - St Fillans'

The Golf course at Wester Dundurn is being abandoned and a new one formed on the grounds opposite, belonging to the hotel.

A Promising nine-hole course

Dundee Evening Post 18th August 1903

Golf has had no small share in the opening up and development of many remote highland districts. St Fillans until last year could be reached only by stagecoach, and its visitors were mostly of the day-to-day tourist order. The extension of the railway from Comrie has already given stimulus to the building trade, and the opening of a new Golf Course a week ago will still further popularise this delightful small town. Situated at the east end of Loch Earn in upper Strathearn, St Fillans can lay claim to the patronage of many sportsmen, for here is not only provided golfing but boating, angling, cycling on fine roads, and hill climbing almost at the doorstep. There was for

some little time, a decade since, a six-hole golf course at St Fillans, but the movement recently consummated was from the first intended to provide as good golfing facilities as the district can supply.

At Lord Willoughby's expense

To Lord Willoughby de Eresby, MP, is due the successful establishment of St Fillans Golf Club. At his own expense he had the ground cleared and Willie Auchterlonie, the ex-open champion, was commissioned to lay out nine holes. The course is on the farm of Wester Dundurn and is practically within the confines of the town. Generally speaking, the turf is old and, but for the inevitable undergrowth and prolific whins and heather, not to mention outcropping stones in undesirable profusion, the promoters had a course ready to hand. At only one point does the course necessitate climbing, and that is to reach the short hole at the Kennels – a climb of about one hundred yards, repaid by a very pretty view along the Strath. Auchterlonie made the very best use of the ground. The first three holes are played along the margin of the River Earn, and a turn is then taken over the valley to ground almost uniformly flat.

Round the Course

The first hole is over a stone dyke, which intersects the first and ninth holes. The tee stroke is somewhat risky with an east wind. Many good strokes fall just short of the dyke and at any time the carry-over is not at all certain. By placing the tee further back the hole would be much more sporting in a golfing sense. Once over the green is easily approached, and a four registered. The second hole is approached at an acute angle to the first. A very long shot may get home, but it is more likely to be short, and not very well treated. The green is close to the river, which would receive a wild approach shot. A four is good enough play here. The third hole is the most difficult in the county. It runs along the side of the river, which can easily be reached by the slightest pull of the ball. This hole cost Auchterlonie a niblick shaft and eight strokes; but he was pleased with a six on the second attempt. The club officials are clearing the way to this hole, which is about four hundred yards long. A six is the value at present. The fourth hole is a fine one, requiring only an iron shot straight up the hill to the green behind a rocky corner. If the shot is faulty short play is better treated than is strong play, for the green is small, and the field behind it receives – and will probably keep until the crop is cut – any contribution of gutta.

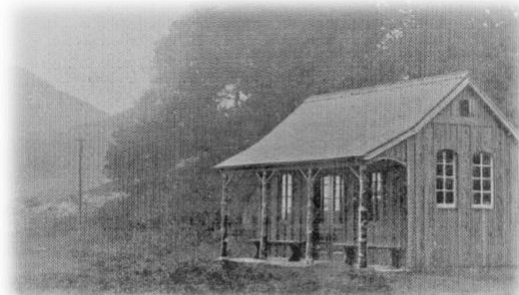
Ugly, Marshy Ground

Turning westward, the fifth tee shot has some ugly marsh ground to cross, but if the fence is passed a good lie is found on the course. A bunker intervenes here, the first artificial hazard to be met on the course. A four is good play. A track has been cut for the succeeding three holes, which are all set on the flat. The sixth is an easy four for a straight ball, and the seventh can be had at 3 for a particularly sweet tee

stroke. A sliced drive will be obstructed by another bunker of a remarkably unique type, the common turf dyke being in this case substituted by alternative layers of stone and turf. It is not only an eyesore, but perhaps dangerous, for a ball played against the stones may recoil too quickly. This matter is also being attended to. The eighth hole is a plain one, guarded only by bunkers on either side of the green. A 3 may be depended on here. The last hole has only the dyke in the way, and like the two preceding holes, it may be reached from the tee with a long ball. All three, however, are fair 4's, and a round of 36 or 37 will make exceptionally fine play for this season.

Membership Fees

The St Fillans Golf Club is to sit rent free this year, afterwards paying £12 per annum of rent. Lord Willoughby generously provided all the equipment for the green keeper. The membership fee is £1, and monthly tickets will be issued at 7s 6d; weekly 5s; and daily 1s. The weekly ticket is a stiff price, and ought to be lowered. Crieff and Comrie can have a season ticket for 5s. The club have elected Lord Willoughby de Eresby as first President, Colonel Stewart of Ardvorlich, Vice President, Rev T Armstrong & Mr George Elder, joint secretaries, and Mr D Thompson as Treasurer.



The original Clubhouse

Countess of Ancaster Lord Willoughby de Eresby would perform the opening ceremony, but he was unavoidably prevented from coming at the last moment, and his mother the Countess of Ancaster, most kindly consented to become his substitute. The weather proved unpropitious, heavy showers of rain falling during the afternoon. There was notwithstanding a large attendance of Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Rev T Armstrong in opening the proceedings said that the members of the club owed Lord Willoughby gratitude for the liberal terms he set for the course, and everything necessary for golfing was there readymade at Lord Willoughby's own expense. The course was situated, as regards its natural surroundings, by a prospect hardly equalled in the country. He then asked Lady Ancaster to accept for her son a silver-mounted driver (black's roller sole patent) and requested her to make the first drive off.

The countess said – it is rather more in my way to make a speech than play golf. I have never played the game, and I do hope that if I miss the ball the gentlemen won't laugh. I am sorry my son has not been able to come, but I know he takes a great interest in this golf club, and it is an immense pleasure to me to be here as his substitute. I now declare this golf club open, and I trust the club will be highly successful. Her Ladyship then hit the ball down the course; a burst of applause greeted her success.

Interesting Match

A match was then played between Willie Auchterlonie, ex-champion golfer, and Dr Temple, the well-known Comrie golfer. The doctor was playing somewhat below his usual game and was well into the second round when he began to hold his own with the St Andrews professional. Auchterlonie played excellently in consideration of the lies through the green, the third hole being long and in a bad state owing to the wheel traffic. Playing for a score record Auchterlonie did the first round in thirty-nine an eight spoiled his card. He succeeded in taking one stroke from this in the second round. The two rounds were as follows.

1st – 4 4 8 5 4 4 2 4 - 39

2nd – 4 4 6 3 5 4 4 3 5 – 38

Sadly, the good Doctor's score was not recorded.

Strathearn Herald Saturday 25th June 1927

An exhibition game commencing at 2pm, between Willie Auchterlonie and R W Peattie from Cupar, the seventeen year old boy amateur golf champion, was played at St. Fillans – they were partnered by two local members James Hutchison and Peter Kay, Hutchison paired with Peattie who went round in 36 and 34 for a total of 70, while the best of the other pairing was Kay who's score was 37 and 35 for a total of 72. The game was played in a steady downpour of rain which was hardly conducive to good scoring. Afterwards a collection to defray expenses was taken.

Strathearn Herald Saturday 15th August 1953

Willie Auchterlonie sends greetings - St Fillans Golf Course Jubilee

A telegram of good wishes from that grand old man of golf Willie Auchterlonie, who 'laid' the course 50 years ago, set the seal on the celebrations of the St Fillans Golf Course Jubilee. Mr J. G. Pearson, 'The Shieling,' captain of the club, presided over a large attendance of members and friends at the clubhouse, including Mrs W. N. Hunter, 'Lake Cottage' a juvenile member of the original club and a keen present-day golfer.

The Old Crock – April 2021

Moaning Minnie

There are a number of things that really annoy me, mainly when someone writes or speaks with authority advising me that they have just taken a walk up to the old village; my normal response is 'what old village?' To which the reply usually is 'you know - Moral - old St Fillans!' When I try to explain that Moral was a settlement near Tynreoch that vanished off the face of the earth during the clearances in 1832 and what they actually walked to was Easter Glentarken, a prosperous settlement in its own right, which once commanded a higher rent than Littleport or Wester Dundurn. All I get is a shrug and 'does it matter?' well it matters to me! And no doubt to the descendants of all the families forced off their lands to make way for sheep.

The Commissioners for the Annexed Estates

Campbell of Barcaldine, the factor on the estate of Perth, wrote to the commissioners early in 1760, that several Perthshire men who had served in America with the Highland regiment had lately returned home wounded and unfit for further service. They had applied to him for small holdings for themselves and their families and he thought they were quite able to manage a small farm. A further advantage in his eyes was that their pensions would enable them to pay their rents punctually. The board approved and he was ordered to take several soldiers and divide the farm of Moral. Barcaldine had been 'pretty positive' that the soldiers would set an example of industry to their neighbours, but this notion was never proved. In January, 1763, he had to report that though he tried to divide a farm (Drumlaken not Moral, in the event for a variety of reasons) among the Chelsea Pensioners, when they forgathered for this purpose and found one without an arm, the other without a leg, and no doubt some with other handicaps, they 'took some aversion to being brought together' and he had to give up the scheme.

The local Schoolmaster Samuel McLaren, writing in 1841 commented that - 'As I am not furnished with any data to compare the increase or decrease of the districts with the population of former times, all I can say is that there is a deduction of rather more than 60% on the whole as compared with that of 1831. Since then, a considerable number have emigrated both to the Canada's and Australia – within the last six months however only one family has gone to America, and one individual (a mason) to Australia – another cause of the decrease in the rural population is the enlargement of the farms. The ejected tenants generally go abroad. Also, from the low wages of the cotton handloom weavers, a number of them with their families left within the last three years southward, where there is a greater demand for woollen handloom weavers.'

Unfortunately, the rents for Easter Glentarken kept being increased until it was no longer sustainable and in 1857 when the McWhannell's left Littleport, William McIntyre from Glentarken took it over and it became part of the Littleport Feu.

Another attempt to clear the Tenants.

Perthshire Advertiser 29th September 1814; Part of the Morrel & Cachladow, situated on the east end of Lochearn, is to be feued for building and garden ground, and the remainder thereof appropriated to the use of the villagers. Another village is to be feud at Blair-in-Roar and arable ground allotted to the use of the inhabitants.

Perthshire Advertiser 23 Nov 1815; Changed to that part of the lands of Little & Meikle Port, exclusive of the arable land to be given to the villagers as marked out. A Similar advert to the one dated September 1814. However, it now appears to have been.

When in 1832 Robert Stewart's family immigrated to Upper Canada, Morel was taken into the Littleport Feu. Robert Stewart and his wife Catherine McNaughton had eleven children of those who had children themselves, probably have now more than two thousand descendants each having an affiliation to Dundurn.



Dundurn Parish Map

In 1872 following the death of Jane McLaren, Cachladow was added to the Littleport feu, and the farm buildings removed to make way for sheep.



Youth Fellowship at the Crocodile 1968

Another moan:

Regarding our famous St Fillans Crocodile - for the better part of 150 years it has been recorded as such in print, and in the early 1900s a local family adopted it and for three generations it received a bi-annual coat of paint courtesy of the Gibson family. Now for some reason unknown I find it referred to as a serpent or monster-

mainly by newcomers! Please, please shed no tears, no need to smile, it's a crocodile. It has a friend who only appeared a brief time ago, namely a petrified frog

afraid to cross the road to get to its spawning grounds. Her arrival coincided with the Drama Groups production of The Terrible Tarken Toad.

The Sandison Library Hall Opened 6th July 1895

It was built on a parcel of land known as the Bulls feu and leased from the Earl of Ancaster at a peppercorn rent of one shilling per annum. The building cost £157.10s (not a bad investment for the village).

It was recently reported that it was opened as a library and not a hall; sadly, that was not the case. I quote Sheriff Erskine Murray, (Wellandura) one of the original Trustees and long-term summer resident in the village. In the prologue to his opening address, 'Friends of St Fillans, as in this fair hall for the first time, we meet to-night to taste the mingling sweet of music, dance and song;' he concludes by saying 'The hall and library constitute a valuable acquisition to this sweet little summer resort, and is highly appreciated by both visitors and by the permanent dwellers in the district, and will serve to keep green the memory of our old townsman, who spent his closing days in this pleasant retreat.



A function in the Sandison Hall

This photograph taken in the 1970s shows one of a plethora of functions that have taken place throughout the years. The library bookcases are shown at the far end of the hall, the canvas seats were eventually disposed of in the 1980s along with the decrepit card tables. The books were donated to the A K Bell library in the 1990s and the bookcases removed.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, but for now my moans are over.

The Old Crock – May 2021

Strange happenings on Loch Earn Side



Loch Earn

The Glasgow Chronicle 15th August 1812 States – that there is a goose now living with Mr William McNaughton, farmer, at Lochearnside that is upwards of 150 years old; it is a stout animal yet and is of the male kind. It is a little like the ancient Scots, very hostile to strangers, while at the same time it shows the utmost complacency to those with whom it is acquainted. It has been handed down from generation to generation, on the mother's side, till the present day, it is as lively at this day as it was one hundred years ago.

A supposed drowning

Perthshire Courier: Thursday 30th March 1826

An occurrence of rather a mysterious nature took place on the banks of Loch Earn, last week. Some time ago five or six, ship-carpenters in the employment of Mr. Brown, shipbuilder, Perth, were sent to build a boat at St Fillans, for Lord Gwydir, and others. On Monday last week, the land steward had invited these individuals, with some others, to a merry making at his house, about five miles further up the banks of the lake. In the evening, the party set out on their return, but not in company. James Thompson, one of the carpenters, a lad of sober and industrious habit, kept up with the foremost of this party, and when about two miles to the westward of St Fillans, got considerable a-head of the whole. About half a mile further on, he was overtaken by part of his comrades, to whom he declined to answer when addressed by them, and he was left standing by the roadside. Failing to return to his lodgings that night, some alarm was excited. In the morning search was made for him; and a highland bonnet, which he had worn the night before was found about one hundred yards from the place where he was left standing; but as he has never been heard of, there is good reason to suppose that he must have fallen into the lake and been drowned. Strict search has been made for the body, by his afflicted father and others, but as yet to no purpose.

Two men drowned.

Perthshire Advertiser: Saturday 14th May 1842

On Tuesday last week, two men belonging to Callander, overseers at the peeling of wood on Loch Earn side, went that day we are informed, to St Fillans, for some provisions, and not returning, a diligent search was made, when at last their bodies were found in the Loch of Saturday last. It is said that they had indulged too freely that day in spirits at Walker's Inn and had stumbled into the water on their way

home; one of them was a married man and has left a wife and five children to deplore his loss, the other was a widower.

Northern Warder: 31st December 1846

Some time ago, Duncan Campbell, a young lad, was serving in Glenlednaig. When his days work was done, he was directed over the hill by a footpath, which made the way shorter to St Fillans. The night however, getting dark, he soon lost his way, and wandered some time on the hill, till he fell over a rock at least fourteen foot high, and severely injured his breast, and cut his head from ear to ear, part of the skull being broken. After recovering a little from the fall, and anxious to get home, he endeavoured to go on, but had not gone far when he fell a second time. Again, he recovered and travelled about five miles to his father's home. He fell about seven o'clock in the evening and reached home about four o'clock next morning. In the course of a little time, he recovered so as to come to Comrie to his work, but unfortunately, the frost, as it is supposed, affected him so much, that he fell ill again, and, after a severe illness of a few days, he died in great agony.

St Fillans Peelers Siege of Crieff Tannery

Dundee Advertiser: Thursday June 25th 1863

On the afternoon of Thursday last, the tan works of our respected citizen Mr Wright, was placed in a state of siege by above one hundred Irish. It is the custom at the wood-peeling here to pay to account during the peeling, and balances are settled when the work is over. As a general rule, good workers get a certain specified wage, and inferior hands are paid according to ability, but it often happens that the inferior workman considers himself a superior one, and such proved the case here. Mr Wright had a cutting at St Fillans, and the work being finished on Wednesday, the workers duly presented themselves at his counting-room at Crieff to receive their balances. The first who was paid demurred to the rate allowed him but took the money as part payment; a second and third followed in the same way – they of course considered themselves first-class workers. A tall fellow next presented himself, and when he realised that his wife was worth more than him a week, he stormed and flourished, and in an instant those who were keeping the door were driven into the outer room, and a regular set-to commenced for possession of the counting-room. The excitement was assuming an alarming appearance. When the police appeared on the ground and order was restored. We believe an action is to be raised at the insistence of the workers for what they consider still due.

A Melancholy Occurrence

Dundee Courier: 18th April 1866

On Friday evening a man named Thompson, belonging to Crieff, was found lying in a very exhausted state at Lochearnside, about four miles west from St Fillans. He was

carried to the nearest house where everything was done to restore him; but in a short time afterwards he expired. We understand that Thompson, who was on his way to Killin, had been getting a ride on a cart, when he fell off; but whether the accident was the cause of death or not, we have not heard.

Exodus of Irish

Perthshire Constitutional & Journal: 24th May 1866

On Thursday last the village of Comrie was overrun by one of these annual swarms of Irish who resort to this neighbourhood in quest of employment at woodcutting and oak coppice wood peeling. The cavalcade consisted of a number of carts containing bedding, baggage &c, ovetop of which sat perched and packed in the most wonderful manner old, young, and middle aged, chiefly females. The rougher sex alighted to satisfy the craving of their thirst, and by the time of starting some of the "boys" had got half seas over. We understand Lochearnside was their destination. We should think Mr Ewing will require having all his wits about him to govern such a promiscuous lot of fiery spirits. We are informed however, by one who knows the Irish character well that they generally make first-rate workers.

Effects of the Recent Drought

Thursday 12th July 1866

We understand that the ravages of the caterpillar have been very severe among the oak copse around Lochearn, and in other parts of Strathearn. So numerous were the caterpillars in the woods at Lochearnside that the labourers engaged at peeling were obliged to leave the woods when at meals, every movement of the leaves being followed by a shower of caterpillars. In many parts the trees have been entirely stripped of foliage.

Fatal Accident

Dundee Courier 16th May 1876

On Friday afternoon, while two labourers belonging to the village of Muthill were engaged pulling down an old house at St Fillans, a gable, which they were undermining, suddenly fell, and a large boulder crushed an old man named David Comrie so severely that he only survived the injuries about two hours. The other man O'Neal escaped with a few cuts and bruises. The deceased has left a widow and grown-up family.

The Old Crock – June 2021

Tales of Rustling, Highway Robbery & Wanton Destruction

Alleged sheep stealing in Perthshire - 1882

The Perthshire police have just succeeded in bringing to light a rather daring case of sheep stealing. It would appear that about a month ago a lot of thirty-two blackface sheep were put on turnips on a farm in the Methven district by a young man of respectable appearance, who said he was a dealer and well known at the Perth sales. In the course of a few days, some suspicious circumstances were noticed. In particular it was seen that the sheep were bleeding from the ears, and on further examination it was noticed that they had been remarked. While some attempt had been made to have the horn, burn scraped and obliterated. The matter reached the ears of the police, who made enquiries, and having satisfied themselves that something must be wrong, at once made a thorough examination of the 'County Book of sheep marks.' Notes were taken of all sheep stock whose marks closely resembles those of the suspected lot, and notice was sent to the selected stock owners, they and their shepherds had a quiet look at the suspicious looking lot. The result was that Mr Davie and his shepherds on seeing the sheep, at once identified the whole lot to be part of their stock, most of them being actually known to them by 'head mark,' and without making any reference to marks.

This being the case the police took possession of the lot, and at once apprehended the would-be owner, whom they found in lodgings in Crieff. He was conveyed to Perth, where he gave his name as William Chisholm, 28 years of age, a shepherd, a native of Loch Arkaig, Inverness-shire. The farm of Ardrostan being on the western district of the county, Chisholm was removed to Dunblane in the afternoon, and after being judicially examined as to the charge before Sheriff Grahame, he was in the meantime committed to prison pending further investigation.



Ardrostan Farmhouse from the road

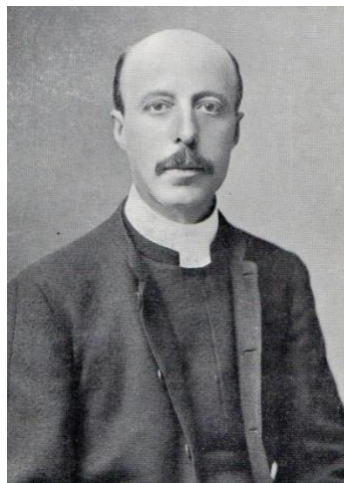
The Crofter and the Minister's Bees - 1898

In the sheriff Court on Saturday Peter Carmichael, Crofter, Ivecote, St Fillans, was charged with having on the 25th of July last in the garden of the Established Church manse maliciously knocked down a beehive, whereby a number of bees and a

quantity of honey was destroyed. It was stated for the defence that Carmichael's Garden was at the back of the manse, in the garden of which there were twelve hives of bees. On several occasions when Carmichael was working in his garden the bees tormented him and stung him. On the present occasion the accused was working in the garden, and the bees from the hives were tormenting him, he became greatly annoyed and pushed over a hive. The accused's daughter had offered to pay for the damage that had been done to prevent the case coming into court, but the minister said that he would make Carmichael suffer the utmost punishment of the law could inflict. A fine of ten shillings was imposed.

The Minister's version of the affair

Strathearn Herald:-



The parish minister the Rev Thomas Armstrong

St Fillans writes us with regard to the above notice, in which he says – “My conduct in the matter is much misrepresented. The Agent for Carmichael charged me with lack of charity, and insinuated vindictiveness on my part. On the 25th of July the offender, working on his croft, pushed over a large double hive, standing about two feet of the ground, not only to bring that judgement on himself, to which the medical certificate produced in court testified, but to the peril of my whole household. A lady relative, not very strong, and present on the occasion received a serious shock. My domestic was stung in several places, though inside the house at the time (all the windows being open), and other persons only escaped because absent from the premises. In self defence, I may mention what ‘charity’ has been shown the culprit. When he complained of my bees annoying him, I placed at his disposal my bee veil and smoker for his protection. When a swarm went amongst his potatoes I made him a present of it, in order to interest him in beekeeping, and in order that we might be on friendly terms. He accepted the gift most readily. He swarmed the bees himself in the heat of the day; he took possession of them; they did not sting him; only the ones on my side of the fence are obnoxious. In spite of my

friendly overtures, he, in my absence from home, committed an act whose gravity I consider did not consist merely in the destruction of a splendid hive and the fruits of it, but in the injury it did to the persons of the unoffending and unprotected. I am further compelled to repudiate the insinuation that in beekeeping, a pecuniary advantage is my only consideration, it is with reluctance that I have to make public the fact that last year the Perth and Edinburgh Infirmaries, Barnardo's Homes, the societies for the incurables, and the society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reaped each some small benefit from the proceeds of my apiary. I own however, that it would be a mistaken philanthropy to indulge even this pleasure, if it can be proved that a neighbour is subjected thereby to annoyance which by reasonable conduct on his part, he could not himself avoid."

Highway Robbery at St Fillans – sharp sentence at Perth – 1902

At Perth yesterday, before Sheriff Sym and a jury, John Reynolds and John Hetherington, prisoners from Perth Prison, were charged with having on 18th April on the public road leading between Comrie and St Fillans, robbed John Henderson, Navvy, Blackwood's Hut, Glentarken, of a Purse and 14s of money, a pocketknife, a comb, and a belt. They denied the charge and were represented by C H Gordon, solicitor, Perth.

John Henderson, in the course of evidence, said he was proceeding home to Comrie on the night in question, when he met the two accused about a mile from the village of St Fillans. They were on the way to Comrie. One of the men struck him a severe blow on the face and caught him by the throat. Witness was knocked down and stupefied. When he regained himself, he was lying on the road with no one near him. On getting up he discovered his purse and money was missing, along with his knife and belt. The result of the assault on him was that a number of his teeth were loosened, and the blood was springing from his throat, while his lips were very much swollen. As he was knocked senseless, he could not say exactly whether these were the men who robbed him.



Tynreoch

Peter Cameron, ploughman, Drummond Arms Hotel, said that on the night in question, he was standing outside the hotel with another man named McLaren, when the two accused came up to him and offered him a pipe for sale at 6d. Witness

and his friend refused the pipe, and the accused went away in the direction of Comrie.

Ladies as Detectives

Miss Ferguson, late postmistress at St Fillans, said she remember an elderly man coming to the door of the Post Office and complaining that he had been robbed and asked where he could get a police officer. Shortly afterwards that witness, along with a few friends, resolved to cycle to Comrie, and while on the road they passed the two accused. Again, a few moments later, they heard the accused coming up behind them, and resolved to conceal themselves till they had passed. While in hiding they heard one of the accused saying to the other that “they would have to run for it.” The accused then took to their heels and made off along the road.

In cross examination, Mr Gordon asked – “did you not think when the men commenced to run that they were anxious to reach St Fillans in order t get a drink before closing time? (Laughter) Witness I couldn’t say. Q – if you saw me on the public road between St Fillans and Comrie would you suspect me of robbery? A – I don’t know, sir (great laughter).

Witness said she could not be quite sure that the accused were the men she saw on the road. One of the jurors suggested that both the prisoners out on their caps and on this being done the witness at once identified the men. The Sheriff asked if it were the caps or the men she identified; the witness replied that she knew the men better with their caps on.

The jury unanimously found accused guilty, and the Sheriff passed sentence of six months on Hetherington and three months on Reynolds.

Theft of a Pup – 1903

A young man named Norman Laurie, having no fixed place of abode, admitted before Hon Sheriff Substitute Martin at Perth Court on Monday – having at Station Road Cottage, St Fillans, stolen a collie pup. He was sent to prison for seven days.

Bring back the days when justice was justice.

The Old Crock – August 2021

The St Fillans Highland Society

The St Fillans Highland Society was set up in 1819 by Peter Robert Burrell a great Dandy of his day, who married Clementine Sarah Drummond the only surviving child of James Drummond, 11th Earl of Perth. On their marriage in 1807 and at his fathers-in-law insistence he joined his wife's family name with his. He then succeeded to his father's title of Lord Gwydir in 1820. His mother was Lady Willoughby de Eresby in her own right, and in 1828 he succeeded to that title as well.

Although he and his family had no money to speak of, Clementine had inherited a vast fortune along with the Estates of Perth, and no doubt to impress the Perthshire gentry and promote his recently renamed village Lord Gwydir thought the games would ingratiate him with both his contemporise and tenants alike.

Perthshire Courier 14th October 1819

On the 22nd last, under the patronage of the neighbouring gentlemen, a great many Highlanders in their proper garb, met at St. Fillans near Comrie, Perthshire, in order to establish a Highland Society, for the annual distribution of prizes :- to the best piper that may appear at their competitions on the fourth Tuesday of August annually – to him that writes the best essay, in Gaelic, on such subject as may be given out by the Society – to the best four untaught dancers of Highland reels – to the best, and truest set of clan tartan that may be produced; and to him that sings the best Gaelic song, &c;- and also to support aged and distressed members, members widows, orphans and funerals; all of which met the approbation of those present, and a regular authority from one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace being produced, agreeably to the acts of parliament passed in the 39th and 52nd year of his present Majesty, a set of office bearers, was elected, and the meeting being duly constituted, a scroll of laws and regulations was produced, which was unanimously approved of; thereafter a procession through the village of St.Fillans took place, in which the members were honoured with the company of neighbouring Gentlemen in full tartan dress. On their return to St. Fillans Inn, they were counted of by fours, when to the Scotch Highland bagpipes; they all joined in dancing the reel of houlichan. Afterwards the members partook of an excellent dinner in the St. Fillans Inn, and the evening was spent with that harmony and conviviality which caricaturises the clans of Caledonia; when many loyal and patriotic toasts were given from the chair and drank with great applause.



St Fillans Highland Society

Society Regulations: -

- Those who intend to compete for prizes will lodge their names with the secretary at Crieff, and state what they intend to compete for; also meet with the committee on the day of the games at 8am attired fully in highland dress (except for boat rowers who may appear in plain clothes) any competitor not adhering to this rule will be debarred from competing.
- Pipers will lodge, along with their names, the names of five Pibrochs in Gaelic and English, any of which they may be required to play, and neither of which they have previously played on the boards at St Fillans. Those to compete for Reel playing, in like manner, shall lodge five old Highland Reels. The whole pipers to be present and play at the procession; and the successful candidates to play the time of dinner, and during the evening when required, or their prizes will be withdrawn. All unsuccessful pipe candidates will receive the usual allowance from the funds.
- Dancers to dance the proper steps and no other. Five throws to be allowed each competitor for putting the stone, and three for throwing the hammer, or tossing the bar, the best to determine the prizes. Two targets will be put up; the rifle and plain gun competitors to be allowed one shot each, and those who hit within the second circle to be allowed two. Baskets to be provided for the broad sword exercise, the first who obtains five cuts of his opponent, to determine the prizes.
- Those who compete for the boat races, to furnish themselves with boats, and the boats to be rowed by Scotsmen. The boats of the first race to be rowed by two men with one oar each, and the second race, each boat by one man with two oars. Candidates will be informed on the morning of the meeting, as to the distance and times they have to row round the buoy. If only one boat starts for each race the prizes will be withheld.
- There must be more competitors than prizes for each of the games (excepting only the boat race) or part of the prizes offered will be withdrawn. If any additional prizes are offered for any of the games the present may become secondary, according to the value of these that may be offered. (Excepting the pipe and boat prizes, which are to remain without alteration.)
- No member will be allowed to compete, who does not produce a certificate, signed by the Secretary, as being clear of all arrears. Those entering to compete will pay 8s and 6d (pipers and boatmen excepted) the boatmen to satisfy the judges that they are Scots. Those who gain a first prize cannot obtain another prize that day; and person who previously gained a first or second prize at St Fillans cannot compete for a likewise prize, or an inferior one of that denomination.

A ballot for members, will take place at St Fillans on the day of the meeting. Members or strangers intending to dine will leave their names at St Fillans Inn, before 1pm of that day

By order: David Tainsh; Secretary

The Old Crock – September 2021

1821 Foot Bridge built over the river

To gain better access to the games field at 'Crochk Mhat' on the south side of the river a bridge was built over the Earn from the Inn to the opposite bank. Until as recently as the 1950s the responsibility of repairs to this bridge fell to the Drummond Arms Hotel.

*Extract from a letter to the Honourable (Clementine Elphinstone) Lady Perth
From Alexander Baxley Dated Monzieveird 14th September 1821*

'For this purpose, I went soon after my arrival to the Castle to consult by good acquaintance Peter McArthur and obtained from him a minute and technical account of the various joining's of the platform prepared for the dancers, 35feet x 20 and of the wooden bridge of 65 foot, both of which had with a celerity unprecedented been erected by him in the course of two days. The bridge is thrown over the Earn exactly at the place where it opens from its present lake.'

The 1822 games took place on Friday 30th August, the day after King George VI finished his visit to Scotland. The chieftain for that year William Stewart of Ardvorlich awarded a silver chanter mount, as first prize in the Pibrochs to Alexander Dewar, piper to Sir John MacGregor.



The Ardvorlich Chanter Mount

That same chanter mount was entered into an auction sale on the 14th of August 2012 at Lyon & Turnbull and sold for £188.

Writing in 1823 the local teacher John Brown advises that the Society Hall was newly erected close by the Inn and that it was a well-planned, two-story commodious building, with a flat, projecting roof, after the French fashion. The large room, properly styled the hall, will dine one hundred and forty gentlemen.

In 1824 a young Edwin Landseer on his first visit to Scotland along with his friend and mentor Charles Leslie arranged a short visit into the highlands. J. R. Aitkin in an article in The Scotsman described their visit to Loch Earn thus: - "They visited Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, whence they walked across the hills to Loch Earn to be

present at an annual gathering of Highlanders under the patronage of Lord Gwydir. In a large rowing boat, on a morning fresh and fair, and destined to live long in their memories, they left Lochearnhead for the other end of the loch, a distance of seven miles or so, accompanied by a number of Highlanders, men, women, and children. As they rowed down the loch, the rowers amused them with stories of the fairies that inhabited the shores, though the fairies were fearfully real and serious enough to the Celtic mind. Ever and anon, they heard the distant sound of bagpipes, and saw the hills enlivened with parties of Highlanders in costume, each headed by a piper, and all bound for the place of gathering. This little voyage gave them an entrance to the wonder-world of Highland life. 'The amusement of the games which we afterwards witnessed,' they wrote, 'was nothing to the delight of gliding gently down the clear smooth lake with such accompaniments.'

The Caledonian Mercury 11th September 1826 Reports: -

The eighth annual games were held on Wednesday 30th August, 'on this occasion it is supposed there could not be fewer than eight thousand in attendance. Fortunately, notwithstanding the gloominess of the morning, the day proved uncommonly fine.'

(I have often wondered given the large attendances, where they stabled all the horses?)



The Highland Society Games Newspaper article

Proposed School - Highland Society Meeting 28th August 1829

'In proposing "Prosperity to the St Fillans Society" the chairman stated that he was happy to inform the company, that it was the intention of the members and patrons

of this interesting institution, to render it more useful, and worthy of the patronage and support of the country, by combining with its present laudable objects, a school for the instructions of the destitute poor – which was received with great applause’

The 1830 games were held on the 1st of September, The chieftain being MacDonald of Staffa, and reports show that “the gathering” was a “spirit stirring sight”, the glens converging into the vale pouring forth their brave and hardy sons, in “plaided array” and who with elastic step, advancing from Breadalbane, the Braes of Balquhider, Vale of Menteith, Appin & Lorne contributing to swell the assemblage, which in vehicles of every description, from the splendid chariot of four to the humble farm cart, rendered comfortable by straw and pillows, accompanied by innumerable groups of pedestrians, thronged along the turnpike roads from the confines of the Lowlands, from Perth, from Stirling, from Crieff and other distant districts.

That same year a dispute arose between Duncan McNab of Comrie and the Drummond estate Gamekeeper Richards, over a handsome costly rifle given by Sir John Ogilvie, McNab having won the prize Richard’s the second-best shot declared that McNab was not equipped agreeable to the rules. It would be a further four years before this dispute was resolved. At a general meeting of the society on the 5th of April 1834, called by the secretary Robert Stewart of Ardvorlich, Duncan McNab was eventually declared the winner.

1838 Statistical Accounts Parish of Comrie

The Rev William Mackenzie notes that the Society had funds of £100 and a membership of about sixty, supporting three widows on funds.

Caledonian Mercury 14th September 1839

‘This ancient and celebrated meeting was held on the 4th of September. As the day was fine, the attendance of spectators of all ranks was exceedingly numerous and owing to the tournament at Eglinton a day or two previous, included visitors from England, Ireland, Germany and even the Americas. Altogether there could not have been fewer than five thousand in attendance.’

That was the last recorded Society games at St Fillans; the only other record found was a reference to them made by James Logan, enumerator for the Highland Scottish Society in 1848.

The Old Crock – October 2021

Unveiling of St. Fillans War Memorial 24th September 1921

Most of us walk past this memorial daily walking our dogs or perambulating round the Loch side. Paying, little, or no attention to it. Other than on remembrance Sunday.

The memorial in the form of an obelisk and drinking fountain was erected to the local men who fell in the war at a cost of £240. The design and execution of the memorial was by Messrs. D Beveridge & Son, monumental sculptors, Perth.

The memorial was unveiled on Saturday 24th September 1921, when fine weather prevailed, and there was a large attendance of villagers and others in the district.



St Fillans War Memorial

The inscription reads.

“Erected by the inhabitants of the district.

In commemoration of those who fell in the War, 1914-1918”

“Their names liveth for ever-more”

Then follows seven names.



Captain & Adjutant Andrew Currie Begg - 7th Battalion Black Watch: Son of the Rev. Doctor Bruce Begg, (Fox Knowe), and late Of Abbotshall, Kirkcaldy, and Husband of Mrs. Kate Smith Barber, Woodlands Ware, who with six children, survive. He was 36 years of age, and before the War, was on the home staff of the National Bank of India, Ltd., Bishopgate, London, where he was highly esteemed.

(In pre-war days he served as a volunteer in the Black Watch, enlisting in the same regiment in November 1914. In the following March he received his commission as second Lieutenant in the 7th Battalion of that regiment. In November 1915 he was made Adjutant with the rank of Lieutenant, serving as Adjutant with the 2nd Enniskillen Fusiliers for the month of December. By one of the ironies of fate he was gazetted Captain four days after his death, dating from the previous June. He was killed at High Wood on 30th July 1916.)



Private Peter Campbell Ferguson - 9th Battalion Black Watch

Born 13th August 1895 at Glenogle, Son of Alexander Ferguson and his wife Catherine Niven Campbell, (Ardrostan Cottage), St. Fillans. 20 years of age.

(Previous to joining the army he was employed at the Drummond Arms Hotel and enlisted into the 9th Battalion of the Black Watch (Kitchener's Army) on 10th October 1916. He went to France in February 1917: wounded 23rd April 1917, he returned home, going back to France July 1917, he was posted to the 7th Black Watch, and saw much hard fighting while serving with that regiment. He was killed in the push of 21st March 1918)



Private Alexander James Johnston - 6th Battalion Black Watch

Born 26th June 1895 at St. Fillans, youngest son of William Johnston and his wife Betsy Neish, (Holly), St. Fillans he was 22 years of age. *(He was employed as a green keeper on the golf course before he enlisted, He joined the army on 20th June 1915, receiving his training at Bridge of Earn and Ripon, and was on recruiting duty for some time before proceeding overseas on 26th December 1916. He was killed in the fighting in a raid on the German trenches at Vimy Ridge on 31st March 1917.)*



Private John Duncan McFarlane - 6th Battalion Black Watch

Born 28th November 1893, at Crieff, eldest son of Duncan McFarlane and his wife Jane Morrison, (Corranour), St. Fillans. He was 22 years of age. *(Prior to the outbreak of war, he was employed by Messrs Harley & Watt, Chemists, Crieff. He enlisted September 1916 at Perth and received his training at Ripon, and*

when completed was sent with a draft of his regiment to India, being for a time stationed at Bangalore. He then proceeded to Mesopotamia, where he remained for over a year, he went to Palestine in 1918, where as a result of shrapnel wounds, died on 3rd June.

Guardsman Donald Nicholson - Scots Guards



Born 18th August 1893 at St. Fillans, eldest son of Murdoch Nicholson and his wife Helen Dewar, (Ardrostan Farm), St. Fillans. He was 22 years of age. *(Previous to enlisting he was employed on the staff of The Birnam Hotel, Dunkeld. He enlisted 30th September 1914 and was stationed for a time at Wellington Barracks. He went to France in March 1915 and was killed in the battle of Festubert on 16th of March in the same year.)*

Corporal Hugh Dewar Nicolson - 6th Battalion Black Watch



Born 5th October 1894 at St. Fillans youngest son of Murdoch Nicholson and his wife Helen Dewar, of (Ardrostan Farm), St. Fillans, and was employed with his father before joining the army. *(He enlisted 22nd June 1915, and his capability soon gained him promotion, for some time he was engaged at Ripon as an Instructor in the reserve Battalion of his regiment. He went to France in December 1916, and on 23rd April 1917, at Rocklin Court aged 22 years he was killed by the bursting of a shell.)*



Captain William Debnam McLaren Stewart - 1st Battalion Black Watch; Eldest son of Major William Stewart, (Bengal Lancers) and his wife Sarah Lily Mary McLaren, of (Ardvorlich). He was 23 years of age Born 15th April 1893. Educated at Wellington, where he played in the Collage XV.

(He joined the Black Watch at Aldershot in 1914, and soon afterwards was posted to the 2nd Battalion in India. On the declaration of War, he left with his regiment for France, reaching the western front in October 1914. He took part in various actions including Neuve Chapelle and Richbourg l'Avone, where he was wounded. He returned to the front in October 1915, when he got his own company and transferred to the 1st Battalion. He was killed in action at the battle of

the Somme near Fleurs 25th Sept 1916. He was mentioned in dispatches by Sir Douglas Haig 9th April 1916.)

The following two casualties from the Great War appear on the Brass plaque within the Church but not on the War memorial.



Captain Archibald Randolph Davidson - 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial

Only son of Major G. H. Davidson D.S. O - (late Royal Scots) and his wife Ethel Maud Fairbairn – (Craigdarroch), St. Fillans. He was born 23rd November 1895.

(Educated at Ardvreck, & Glenalmond - While at Glenalmond, he was a member of the shooting eight, representing the school at Bisley, also a member of the cricket team and football fifteen, doing excellent service for his school on all occasions. He attended Sandhurst preparatory for a military career.

In November 1914, he received a commission in the 1st Gordon Highlanders, and was attached for a brief time to the 3rd Battalion of that regiment, proceeding with a draft on 8th February 1915, to the western front to join his battalion there. He saw much fighting, and in the battle of Loos of 25th September 1915, was badly wounded. Returning home, after his recovery he was stationed in Ireland, going back to France in May 1917, and aged 21 years He was killed in action 4th June of the same year. He was twice mentioned in dispatches.)



Captain Percy W Thomas McGregor-Whitton - 1st Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial

Youngest son of Colonel James McGregor Whitton (late of the Royal Scots Fusiliers) and his wife Eva Dora Harvey, (Ardchoille), St. Fillans

(He joined his regiment at Gosport, on 24th February 1914 and went to France in the early days of the war. He was promoted Lieutenant on 15th November 1914. In March 1915 he was severely wounded in the head, returning home and after convalescence returned to France in September 1915. He re-joined his regiment at Loos, taking part in that memorable engagement; also at Givenchy, La Bassée, Auchy

Railway Triangle, and Hohenzollern Redoubt. He was promoted Captain in the same year, and in July of 1916 as Senior Captain of his Battalion led the attack capturing Montauban and surrounding woods, being twice wounded, He remained at duty losing three of his four subalterns and 65 per cent of his men. He led the attack on Maltby Horn Farm, capturing this and Maltby Horn Trench along with sixty prisoners. He was killed at Trone Wood aged 21 years on 9th July 1918, and buried close to where he fell.)

Given their families standing and the fact that St Fillans was - and still is a close-knit community I find this a bit strange.

The unveiling ceremony was performed by the Earl of Ancaster, accompanied by his two daughters Lady Katherine H Drummond Willoughby and Lady Priscilla Drummond Willoughby and his son the Hon. John Willoughby.



Earl of Ancaster

The Rev. Adam W.H. Scott, parish minister, presided at the ceremony, assisted in a devotional service by the Rev. William Hall, East United Free Church, Comrie, Rev. John Martin St. Fillans and the Rev. J. McCracken, Burntisland, then officiating in the St. Fillans United Free Mission Church. After the singing of the 23rd Psalm by the company, led by Mr Henry McKinstry, Comrie, Lord Ancaster performed the unveiling ceremony and gave a stirring speech.

Lord Ancaster's appropriate remarks were followed by Piper Duncan McFarlane, Comrie, playing most sympathetically "The Flowers of the Forest," the proceedings terminated with the Benediction and singing of the National Anthem. A number of beautiful wreaths were afterwards placed at the base of the memorial, and the ceremony having been appropriately concluded, the gathering slowly dispersed.

Sunday the 23rd of November 1947,

Following the Second World War the community decided to erect a granite panel on the existing memorial. To commemorate two young men who had made the supreme sacrifice in the war. After the afternoon service, the congregation and many others gathered for the unveiling ceremony. The 23rd Psalm was sung, and the Rev David J McLaren called on Mrs Catherine Macintosh (Station Road) whose son is commemorated to unveil the tablet. A prayer of dedication and a short address by the Rev David J McLaren followed, and the proceedings finished with the singing of the 2nd Paraphrase and the National Anthem.

Flight Sgt George Albert Kitchener Hunter of 108 squadron RAF volunteer reserve

Presumed dead over Egypt 28th June 1942

Private Duncan McIntosh of the King's Own Scottish Borderers

Killed in action Burma 20th April 1945

The Old Crock – November 2021

The Village Committee

I was recently asked about life in the village before the advent of the Community Council having to navigate the never ending big-brother bureaucratic approach provided by Perth & Kinross, the National Park and Bear Scotland, who all appear to delight in evading all responsibilities or passing the buck and fudging their responsibilities.

In 1902 on Thursday 25th September at a public meeting in the library hall it was resolved to form a Village Committee to arrange for the erection of lamps in the village and generally to concern itself with attending to the amenities of this popular resort. The Committee consisted of the Rev T Armstrong (*The Birran*), Messer's David Thompson (*Station House*) John Robertson (*Braehead*), John Kay (*Earngrove*) and the Convenor George Elder (*School House*)

Then in 1927 the villagers appointed an Amenities Committee to fundraise initially for improvements to the Library Hall, which up until then lacked a kitchen, toilets and a heating supply, and over the following three years they held amongst other events an annual regatta on the loch, raising sufficient funds for this and other village improvements to be carried out.



Mr Burtinshaw, Mrs Edmonston, Mr McFarlane & Major Gibson

Fairy Scene on Loch Earn - Parade of Illuminated Boats

27th August 1928 -

A motley band held up visitors to the picturesque village of St Fillans in Fanciful costumes disguised the identity of a score of students, who had served their apprenticeship in highway robbery on the charity days run in their various university towns, St Andrews, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh.- and their methods were none the less compelling when money was to be extracted on behalf of the amenity schemes of St Fillans. But no one resented the hold-up, and before the day was done, St Fillans had provided her crowds of visitors with more enjoyment than could easily be repaid.



Carnival Collectors

St Fillans is always beautiful. It could not be otherwise, situated as it is on the narrow strip between the heather mountains and the dark waters of the loch which lies under the shadow of Ben Vorlich. But on Saturday, as a result of the preparations for the illuminated water carnival in the evening, which was the glorious finale to a programme of original functions promoted by the Amenities Committee, St Fillans was fantastically gay.

Three Thousand Lanterns

Coming from the direction of Crieff in the late afternoon, the first intimation we had that something unusual was astir was conveyed by the famous St Fillans Crocodile, that gigantic rock couched at the foot of the mountains just before you enter the village, and which for the occasion was gaily bedecked and hung with Japanese lanterns. These were the first of 3000 lanterns which had been employed to decorate St Fillans, and which dangling in an unbroken line from tree to tree along the roadside, swinging in strings from rooftop and window, from garden gate and fence, interspersed with fairy lights of every hue, with gay streamers of coloured paper, and with strings of flags and pennants.



Gala Day

During the early evening, the swelling crowds of visitors either visited the fun fair or watched the exhibition motorboat racing on the loch. Enjoyable as this was, it was a mere preliminary to what was still to come. In the early twilight, about eight o'clock, the commodore boat left the jetty and cut swiftly through the waters to cast anchor midway to Neish's Island. Here we waited while the shadows gathered and came stealing down the purple hills. We listened to the broadcast music from the shore – a dance band, playing in some distant town, who could not guess that their music would reach us over the dark mysterious waters of a highland loch, so sweet and beautifully modulated in that vast stretch enclosed by mountain and sky.

Again, pipe music, stirring and gay and sounding as only pipe music can sound when it goes skirling through its native glens, would reach our ears. The Queen of Loch Earn, her decks crowded with passengers, went past us like a white phantom, and was lost to view among the shadows of the far end of the loch.

A Fairy Scene

When night deepened at St Fillans it was a signal for the lanterns to be lit. One by one they stole out from among the trees, more and more of them with every minute, their shy colourful radiance growing more luminous with the deepening dusk. Every moment afforded new wonders. Now the rustic bridge was a crescent in the darkness, defined by countless fairy lights, which continued in an unbroken chain from tree to tree along the eastern shore. Where the hotel had disappeared into the shadows what looked like a fairy palace appeared suddenly, tiny globes of rainbow hue etching out porch and gable and the lines of the façade a tiny chalet twinkled from the hillside, and it was fairyland in every garden along the waterfront.

Right in the middle of the loch a starry girdle suddenly blazed round Neish's Island, and while our eyes were still turned in this direction the Queen of Loch Earn, with a chain of lights strung from bow to mast, from mast to stern, came up on her return journey.

At every jetty on the loch tiny fairy craft were preparing to put out into the starless night with "a lantern for their star." A striking contrast was provided with Lochearnhead, dark and mysterious, on the one hand, and on the other St Fillans, alive with twinkling lanterns.

Nor was the comedy touch lacking. Mrs Bolster had christened her trim little motor launch the "Perlice Flying Squad," and it justified its name with its miniature man in blue directing traffic from the bow and with a detachment of comedy police officers poised along its gunwales. This boat performed valuable service patrolling the loch and carrying messages between the various boats.

Illuminated Boats

A bugle call from the Commodore's boat sounded clearly over the calm waters, and stealing in from every direction the illuminated and decorated taking part in the competition came, dipping their oars never making a sound. Forming a wide ring, some eighteen in number, they circled round the brightly decorated judge's boat. There was something of a quality of a dream about the spectacle now, as one watched each boat trail the rainbow, formed by the reflection of its lights, across the smooth surface of the slumbering waters.

The Judges boat bore down on us to announce the following decisions.

1st - No 9 boat: (*Tigh-na-Craig Cottage*), Mr R Hutton (*youngest competitor*) and Miss Inglis

2nd - No 7 boat: (*The Grove*), Misses Conacher

3rd - No 5 boat: (*Ardchatta*), Colonel Campbell Preston and Miss Margaret Preston

4th - No 15 boat: (*Rose Cottage*), Miss McKay

5th - No 11 boat: (*Hotel*), Miss Mary and Mr Leonard Reid

Most original boat

1st No 1 boat (*The Lady of the Lake*) Misses Aida and Sybil Lawrence

2nd - No 2 boat (*AA Telephone Box*) Mr & Mrs Channel(*Heathcote*)

Again, the bugle sounded, and the illuminated craft, like fireflies winding a mysterious measure, circled again, passing down in twos, in fours, and back again in a long line up the loch. Each boat claimed one of the gay ribbons fluttering from the flagship and joined in a maypole dance, winding in and out until the mast was laced with a gay pattern.

Following on from the Amenities committees' excellent work it was decided in 1929 to extend its remit, and on the 3rd of October a new St Fillans Village Committee was formed to deal with the various matters of public interest that arose from time to time.

The first Chairman was - Mr N S Russell (*The Post Office*)

Hon Secretary - Miss Cameron (*Fernside*)

Hon Treasurer – Major L Gibson (*Glenalbyn*)

This committee became the voice of St Fillans right up until 1965 when a resident's association was formed to take over with a similar remit. On the 29th of August 1977, a special meeting was held to wind up the association and transfer its assets and funds of £124.40 to the newly formed St Fillans Community Council.

The last Chairman was - Mr W J McIntyre (*Wellandura*)

Hon Secretary - Mr D Thomson (*Stonegate*)

Hon Treasurer - Mr A Turnbull

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