

**The Third
Statistical Account
for
The Parish of Gargunnoch**

By the Rev William Turner.

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(Written during the period 1950-61)

The Physical Basis. The parish of Gargunnoch lies to the west of Stirling on the southern extremity of the Carse of Forth. It is bounded on the east by a small burn, which crosses the main Stirling-Dumbarton road (A811) between the farms of West Carse and Redhall at a point four and a quarter miles from Stirling, on the north by the river. Forth, on the west and southwest by the Boquhan burn and the Backside burn, and on the southeast by the Burnfoot burn.

The parish is roughly an isosceles triangle with the river Forth as its base; the base measures four miles and the sides five miles; the apex is where the Burnfoot and Backside burns join to form the Endrick Water, just a half-mile to the west of Cringate Law. The inhabited portion of the parish is, however, nearer to a rectangle in shape, measuring four miles (east to west) by two miles (north to south). The highest point is Carleatheran (1593 feet). The low carse land lies between 30 feet and 50 feet above sea level.

The main Class I road (A.811) runs east to west, through the inhabited portion of the parish. With the exception of four farms in the extreme south-west near the Burnton road, there is no house more than a mile from this main road with its bus service. There are 9,869 acres in the parish, of which there are 1,179 acres of tillage, 2,478 acres in grasses, and 5,020 acres of rough grazing.

In addition to the main Class I road already referred to a part of the old road, which lay half a mile farther to the south, is still a public highway. This old road was superseded by the present Class I road when it was possible, through the clearing of the moss from the present carse land, to build a road on a lower level. The section of the old road which is still a public highway begins at a point due south of Mains of Gargunnoch farm and continues past the lodge of Gargunnoch House, the manse and the church and then uphill to the top of the Village. However, the portion from Gargunnoch lodge, approximately, to the church dates only from 1759, being a diversion made at that date at the instigation of the proprietor of Gargunnoch House at that time, who, for the sake of privacy, desired the road to be removed from the immediate vicinity of his residence. The original line of this portion passed close to Gargunnoch house, skirted the north side of the Gargunnoch House gardens, passing the Inn of Millthread, and then proceeded uphill across the present cow-park field (to the north-east of the manse) and across the present glebe field (to the north of the manse) to the church.

Those sections of the old road which lie between West Carse farm (passing Redhall farm on the south) and Mains of Gargunnock farm, and between Crawtree farm and the hamlet of Burnton (locally called 'the Brunton') were taken off the list of highways in 1939 under the provisions of the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act of 1878. It is, however, still possible to walk through the length of the parish along this old road from West Carse farm past Gargunnock House and the church and through the estates of Leckie and Boquhan coming out at the village of Kippen by way of Glentirranmuir.

There are fine stone bridges on this old road. Special mention must be made of the little bridge spanning the Leckie burn just upstream of the high-level road bridge. Its keystone on the upstream side is dated 1673 and bears the inscription *E Bono Volentia ob Salutem* (literally, *Out of good will for safety*). The most recent bridge in the parish is that across the Forth at Gargunnock railway station, linking this parish to the parish of Kincardine-in-Menteith. It is a reinforced concrete structure with a centre span of 40 feet and two side spans of 30 feet and was completed in 1932. Great difficulty was experienced in finding any foundation for the piles for the piers.

Passenger transport is by single-deck buses at regular intervals. From the Class I road they branch off at Dasherhead farm and the Laigh Loan to call at the village, passing Fleuchams farm, the church hall, the village 'Square,' the school and the Beild farm service road. These buses run between Stirling (Goosecroft bus station) and Glasgow (Buchanan Street bus station) by way of Gargunnock, Kippen, Buchlyvie, Killearn, Strathblane, Milngavie, Maryhill and St. George's Cross. The first bus for Stirling leaves at 7.17 a.m. and the last bus from Stirling sets off at 10.30 p.m. The return fare between Gargunnock and Stirling is 1/1d (c5p). Morning and evening buses are run in duplicate or triplicate and extra buses are run after mid-day on Saturdays.

Until a few years ago a single-track railway line ran through the parish just to the north of the Class I road. Gargunnock station (one quarter of a mile to the east of Dasherhead farm) was opened about 1856 and was closed for passenger traffic on 1 October 1934. Now the line is not in use at all. In 1900 the fares between Gargunnock and Stirling were First single, 1/- (5p); First return, 1/6d (7.5p); Third single, 6d (2.5p); Third return, 1/- (5p). The same fares in 1934 were 1/3d (6p) and 2/6d (12.5p); 9d (4p). and 1/6d (7.5p).

Local Traditions. The bridge on the old road, just east of where the Hillhead farm road joins it, is known as the Ghost Brig. It is said that, if one is at the bridge at the proper time on the proper day of the year, one will see again a carriage accident that occurred here many years ago. It has been said that, on the south side of the road at this spot, there was a burying ground for victims of the plague; if this is indeed so, one wonders whether this is the real source of the name, the Ghost Brig. A coach and horses are said to appear, sometimes, near an old tree on the closed section of the old road about one-quarter of a mile to the west of Redhall farm.

Unfortunately all trace of the ancient Peel of Gargunnock is now gone. Its stones are supposed to have been used in the construction of Byreburn farm. All trace of this farm is gone too, but it stood on the west side of the road to Meiklewood, at the corner which is about four hundred yards from the Class I road.

A curious knoll, lying between the church and the Mill farm and called Keir Hill, may have given the village its name. Some digging was done about the beginning of this century and the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments partially excavated the site in the summer of 1957. This work is recorded in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. xxi, 1957-8.

The excavation revealed that, on the crest of the hill, there had been an early human dwelling of circular shape supported by two circles of wooden posts and having a rectangular hearth. The living area had been paved by flat slabs laid directly on the ground. This dwelling had not been long occupied before it was destroyed by fire and seems to have been in use in the period 50 A.D. to 100 A.D. Some small finds made on the site will be exhibited in the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. The site itself has been so disturbed throughout the years that further excavation is unlikely to be undertaken.

The main waterfall on the hill almost due south of the village is known locally as Downie's Loup. A horseman named Downie is said to have leaped over it on horseback for a wager. Another version of the story is that he accomplished this feat twice but was killed on the third attempt. A buckle from Downie's shoe was reputed to be in the possession of a villager about seventy years ago.

Until about thirty years ago, the last ruins of the old house known as Laigh Place were still standing. Now one can record only the location of this old house which gave its name to the road leading from the Beild farm down to the main road, the Laigh Loan. The house stood a short distance to the south of Nethercarse farm, eighty yards to the west of the Nethercarse farm service road, and thirty-five yards north of the little burn.

A drum and horn remain as the relics of an old village custom. On dry mornings the watchman wakened the villagers by beating the drum; on wet mornings, he blew the horn. In the spring, the drum was beaten as a warning that people had begun to work their gardens and that, therefore, all poultry must be kept in. The house on the north side of the village street just at the top of the rise, now called Hillview, was the residence of the last person called 'the Provost.' Why he was so called, the

present writer has not been able to discover. However, it is curious to note that the house and the field on the opposite side of the Street are known as Provost Park. Across the street from Hillview there is a large stone with a hole in it in which was set the village flag. At the Glasgow Fair, the flag used to be set up and races run from the flag staff down to the foot of the village. Another old custom connected with the church may be mentioned. The church bell is still rung not only at 12 noon, the hour of the service, but also at 9.30 am. and 10.30 am. This may be a relic of the ancient 'hours' of prayer.

Historical Incidents. The principal historical associations of the parish are with Wallace and Prince Charlie. Wallace, at the request of the villagers, descended from his hiding-place in the Gargunnoch Hills (or from a small fort on the Keir Hill) to fall on the English garrison of the Peel of Gargunnoch and completely overwhelm them. The incident is recorded by Blind Harry.

Prince Charlie, having crossed the Forth at the Fords of Frew, marched through the parish on 13 September 1745. He had dinner at Leckie Old Castle and is said to have written there his demand on the Glasgow citizens to provide him with £15,000 and to surrender all arms in the city. A well to the south-west of the old Boquhan house is still called 'Prince Charlie's Well,' and just to the west of Gargunnoch House, there is still standing (with the aid of props) a very old Spanish chestnut tree under the branches of which Prince Charlie marched.

Wild Life. So far as the present writer is aware, there is nothing especially distinctive about the wild life of the parish. The capercaillie, the corn-crake and the badger are now very scarce. The grey squirrel has appeared in the parish within the last twenty years and is now fairly numerous, being seen much more often than the red.

The carse fields are a favourite winter feeding-place for geese. In Winter large flocks in V-formation can be seen (and heard) as they reconnoitre for fields sown with beans or winter wheat. Roe deer frequent the woods on the higher ground, and in severe weather descend to the lower levels in the vicinity of the village in their search for food. Of woodcock ringed in Leckie some years ago, one was found in Spain and another in France.

Population and Employment. The following are the population figures for the parish.

1801	1831	1851	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961
954	1,006	754	633	543	586	570	613	619

The population in 1831 was the highest ever recorded

The population during the past hundred years has thus been fairly static. However, with improved transport and better housing, the village may become partly residential for people working in Stirling.

Farming and sawmilling are the only industries. The forests, one should add, are well maintained, and re-planting always follows felling, although nowadays it is always conifers that are planted for their quick return.

The old Glenfoyle Distillery near Dasherhead farm (which was built originally in 1826, belonged to James Calder and Company since 1880 and ceased operations in 1926) was taken over some time after the last war by a firm which manufactured wire netting. In recent years it was for a time a depot and store of a civil engineering firm. In 1960 it was taken over by Tullibardine Distillery, whose distillery is at Blackford as a bonded store. About 1,000 casks of whisky are stored here for three years or more according to the customers' requirements

There may, in time, be development of other industries, and, in general, to hazard the forecast that the Opopulation of the village will increase may not be over-rash.

The occupation principally represented in the parish is that of work in agriculture. The sawmilling trades provide a smaller group. There is a sprinkling, men and women, of the professions. Domestic service and estate work provide employment for a few more people. Many of the young folk, of course, are employed in Stirling. There are upwards of 70 retired persons of over 65 years of age; of these, 43 are residents of the Church of Scotland Eventide Home at Leckie.

Since the *New Statistical Account* was written, the industry of basket making has come and gone. The industry was begun in 1865 by men who came from Ulverston, Bolton, Kendal and Gatehouse-of-Fleet. They came here because there was a plentiful supply of young coppice oak and the ash and hazel, which they used, in the woods of Gargunnoch and Leckie and at Gartmore and Loch Lomond. The industry ceased in 1931, largely because the supply of this wood ran out. These oak spale (spelk) baskets were used for potatoes, for coaling ships and, generally, in industry. A large customer for the 36-inch size was Messrs. Coats of Paisley.

The wood was boiled, shaped and split. The reins or 'bools' (bowls) were made of ash, hazel or oak. The broader and thicker strips of oak that went from side to side of the basket were called 'spales'; the narrower and thinner strips of oak that went lengthways were called 'the tawse.' The baskets were oval in shape, the usual size being 22 inches long. During at least part

of the period mentioned, Gargunnoch was, it is believed, the only place in Scotland where these baskets were made. Descendants of the basket-makers still proudly assert that the Gargunnoch baskets were far superior to those made in England.

The basket makers worked from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and, in the evenings, the basket shops with their large boilers and cheery fires were the gathering places for the men of the village. The larger basket shop, employing 15 men, was situated in what is now the garden of the White House in the Square. The smaller shop was situated on the north side of the village street beyond the third house from the bridge.

The earliest known post office stood on the north side of the village street at the corner of what is called 'Charlie's Loan' (*Belton Cottage*). Up this loan the post gig used to come from Thornhill. The post office in use before the present one was on the south side of the village street in the second house across the bridge. The present sub post office is the fourth house on the south side. There are two collections each day (except Saturdays and Sundays) at 9 a.m. and at 3.45 p.m. (Saturdays, 11.50 a.m. only, Sundays, 3 p.m. only). Letters can also be posted on the Stirling bus which passes through the village at 5.54 p.m. There are two deliveries each day, at approximately 8 a.m. and at 3 p.m. From Leckie estate and Dasherhead eastwards the postal service is by small postal van operating from Stirling post office. The rest of the parish is served from Kippen but has only one delivery, about 10 a.m. These postmen operate a "rural" post service, that is, collection and delivery.

Public Services. There is no resident policeman, the parish, with the exception of Meiklewood estate, being served by the constables stationed at Cambusbarron and Kippen. There was a constable in the village during the last war, but with the exception of these war years there has not been a resident policeman since 1912.

The telephone service commenced in 1928. It remained a manual exchange situated in the sub post office, until it became automatic in 1940 and was housed in a small building of its own standing on the north side of the school road just west of the Gargunnoch burn. All except local numbers are obtained through the exchange at Stirling, several places in the vicinity of Stirling and Alloa (as well as Stirling and Alloa numbers) being available when the appropriate code is dialled. There are 78 subscribers on the local exchange.

Each of the estates (Touch, Meiklewood, Gargunnoch, Leckie and Boquhan) had private water supplies serving not only the mansion houses but also the various farms. The only public water supply for many years was that serving the village and neighbourhood.

This unflinching supply was installed and given to the village in 1909 by the Rev. Dr. Robert Stevenson minister of the parish from 1888 to 1927. The gift was made by Dr. Stevenson in memory of his mother, whose nephews erected the small commemorative stone fountain which stands in the village Square at the fork of the village street and the road to the school. With the rest of the western area of the county Gargunnoch now shares in the supplies of water brought from the west end of the reservoir at Carron. This development has greatly improved the provision of water to outlying farms although one or two private supplies remain in use.

Electric power came to the village in 1938, and every farm is now supplied. All the lines are overhead. The main supply line runs alongside the railway track from the west. The first feed line to be erected brought the current across the Class I road and through the Fleuchams farm fields to a transformer between the village Square and the school. Three feed lines (with transformers) have now been installed, west of the school, at the Square and at the Quarry sawmill road. The supply is three-phase.

A pipeline, running through the parish at the foot of the hills at the 350 feet contour and carrying crude petroleum from the Clyde to the refinery at Grangemouth, was completed at the beginning of 1951. There is no gas in the parish, but many houses have cookers which burn rural' gas or butane which is delivered by van in metal cylinders. It came at first from South Wales; now it comes from Grangemouth.

Until 1957 there was no sewerage, although several meetings of the ratepayers were held for the discussion of such a scheme. Had the villagers accepted the scheme proposed in 1937 or thereabouts, they would have had sewage disposal at a much lower cost than was ultimately possible. Most houses had individual septic tanks, while the houses built by the county council had group septic tanks. In 1957, however, the county authority completed construction of a public sewage disposal system. The branch sewers meet in the Square. The main sewer then travels northwards and north-eastwards to the disposal unit situated on the southern bank of the Forth about 250 yards to the east of Gargunnoch Station.

For a few years before 1914, the village street was lit by paraffin oil lamps fixed on wall brackets or special lamp standards. The purchase of the necessary paraffin was financed from the proceeds of an annual social function which was somewhat facetiously referred to as 'The Paraffin lie Ball.' Street lighting of the village by electricity was introduced on 16 November 1949. A time switch extinguishes the lamps in winter at 11 p.m. These lamps are on brackets attached to the poles which

carry the electricity supply lines. In the village, domestic refuse is collected by a county council van once a week on Tuesday mornings.

The roads and village streets are well kept. The small terrace of houses completed in 1939 at the northeastern end of the village is called Charles Street after the late Mr. Charles Stirling of Gargunnoch. The two new streets to the south of the village main street are called Stevenson Street and Stark Street after two former ministers of the parish, the Rev. Robert Stevenson (1888 to 1929) and the Rev. John Stark (1844 to 1888). The pedestrian way, forming the frontage of three houses, between the main street and the school road (now, it is understood, to be called Leckie Road) and 80 yards west of their junction at the Square is called George Street after the late George Francis Connal Rowan of Meiklewood, a former county councillor for the parish.

The main Village Street (the old road) for long had an open sewer on the north side, which was a source of unpleasantness in dry weather. It is curious to note that the county council, in 1936, required proof that this was a public highway, before they would undertake its resurfacing and maintenance. Happily, there were those in the village who knew a little more history than the county council. This struggle to have the main village street repaired and maintained is just one aspect of what the Village has suffered through the village street's becoming a cul de sac after the erection of the new mansion house of Leckie (and the consequent closing of the old road through the village and Leckie) between 1820 and 1830.

Voluntary and Social Services. There are many religious, youth and social organisations active in the parish. Under the auspices of the Church there is a Boys' Brigade company, a group of Life Boys, a Girls' Guildry company a branch of the Church of Scotland Woman's Guild, and a badminton club. In addition to these church organisations there is a Women's Rural Institute, a branch of the British Legion, a local Unionist Association, a youth club, which meets in the church hall, and a country dance class in the school. These last two are held under education authority auspices.

During the last war, twenty-eight men and ten women served in His Majesty's Forces. Four men lost their lives on active service. Twenty-six men and women served in the Civil Defence services, including the Special Constabulary. The Gargunnoch platoon of the Home Guard numbered 118 men; the Lieutenant of the platoon received the O.B.E. for his services. Miss Stirling of Gargunnoch commanded the A.T.S. in Scotland. In the first War Weapons Week in 1941 the people of the parish invested in war savings £16,000 and received special mention in a radio broadcast. During the war, the local branch of the Red Cross gathered £1,167. Before the nationalisation of hospitals, the Stirling Royal Infirmary contributory "Treatment Scheme" received £1,247 from the parish between 1933 and 1938.

Churches. There is one church, Gargunnoch Parish Church, with 273 members. The church is in the form of a T. The cross-piece is three times as long as the stem and runs east to west and the pulpit is at the centre of the long south wall. The church seats about 390 persons. On the north gable there is a small stone belfry. The east gable is surmounted by a stone Latin cross, the west gable by a crescent, both of which were taken from the gables of the old church. There are outside stone stairs to the three galleries; these galleries were originally occupied by the principal heritors and their tenants the east by the lairds of Leckie and Touch; the north by the laird of Gargunnoch; the west by the laird of Meiklewood. The lintel of the entrance to the last gallery bears the date 1774. when the church was rebuilt. At the entrance to the churchyard there is a small separate session house. The collection is taken by means of an outside open plate at the session house door. The lintel of the gateway from the manse grounds to the churchyard bears, on the manse side, this inscription, *Hac itur ad Astra This is the way to Heaven*, presumably a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*. IX. 641, part of the congratulatory address to Julius by Apollo after Julius has slain Numanus 'surnamed Remulus.' Virgil, however, wrote *Sic*, not *Ilac*.

The former Free Church was rebuilt and opened as a church hall on 23 September 1939. This hall has been most useful, not only to the church organisations but also to those cultural and charitable organisations which have been granted its use by the Kirk Session. The former Free Church manse is now known as Mansefield and is the second last house at the western end of the village main street.

The church still occupies an important place in the life of the people. The parish population is sufficiently small for the minister to be able to keep in touch with every household. Only sixteen households have no one a member of the church. All except six families send their children to the Sunday school which numbers 48 children. All the people seem well-disposed towards the church, and help it on such an occasion as the biennial sale of work, which raises about £260. The main sources of church income are the weekly freewill offerings and deeds of covenant. The minister is readily sought out in any time of trouble or difficulty, and his help is always as readily given.

The congregation is too small for church office-bearers and workers to be easily found but in the end a suitable person gives his or her willing service. The attendance of the people at church is very variable. Excluding Communion Sundays, an estimated average attendance for the whole year is 60. The twice-yearly communion services (on the last Sunday of June and the second Sunday of December) are attended by about 140 members. There is one service at 12 noon, and a monthly evening service during the winter months in the church hall at 7.15 p.m.

The Sunday school meets at 10.30 am. Five ladies and one gentleman teach in the Sunday school, the minister acting as superintendent and teaching the junior Bible class, which meets at the same time.

Schools There were at one time three schools in the village. (The house, now called Ivydene, which is on the north side of the road half-way between the Square and the present school, was for some time at the beginning of the nineteenth century occupied by teachers but there seems to be no record of actual teaching being done there). A privately-owned kindergarten or 'dame' school met about eighty years ago in the house in the village Square now known as the White House, which faces westwards across the Square. At the southwest corner of the Square there was the old Free Church School of which only the door in the wall and the west gable now remain. The parish school (founded in 1652) was formerly in the westernmost house at the top of the village Street, now known as Carseview. There was at one time, it is believed, another school at the western end of Burnton hamlet.

In 1858, the present school was built. The small annexe on the Western side of the playground is dated 1911. There is at present a staff of three and 52 pupils. The minister, in his capacity as school chaplain, visits the school weekly to teach a scripture lesson. There has always been in this parish a most harmonious and helpful contact between church and school.

The children attend the village school until they are eleven or twelve years of age and they then proceed to one of the Stirling schools. Until 1943, those who were not proceeding to a Secondary education remained at the village school till they reached the School leaving age, which was then fourteen.

Housing. There are in the parish 177 houses of all types of which 171 are occupied. Of these, 48 have been built by the county housing authority, 24 of them under the Act of 1946. Twelve are cottages for workers. The building of a further 26 traditional houses and some lockup garages on the south side of the main street is under consideration,

Of the other houses 101 are owner occupied. The number of privately owned houses built between 1918 and 1952 was only six but since that time as many more have been erected. In addition, a few conversions have been carried out in Gargunnoch. The British Legion hall was converted from two old houses, but is still unfinished.

More building by private enterprise is planned. On Leckie estate, two large villas are under construction and two cottages for workers have been built. In the village, however, many of the old stone cottages have been allowed to deteriorate, and this gives certain parts of the village a dilapidated appearance. It is a pity that more attention to renovating these has not been paid; the village would have been improved and valuable agricultural land saved. Removal of some old houses to make way for county council houses has now begun.

There is only one licensed house in the parish – the fifth building on the north side of the main village street. It is well conducted, and drunkenness is practically unknown. There were many reputed 'inns' in the old days, but the principal ones seem to have been the White House in the Square (the iron support for the sign is still at the southwest corner of the house), the 'Guest House' on the north-cast corner of the Square (later a men's clubroom) and the eastern end of the block of buildings at the Burnton hamlet. All these are now dwelling houses.

A measure of the social changes now taking place is the recent alteration in the status of the local mansion-houses. The mansion-house of Boquhan has been dismantled by the farmer proprietor, who lives in the home farmhouse, extensively altered and enlarged. The mansion-house of Leckie was purchased by the Church of Scotland and opened on 17 July 1950 as the David Watson Eventide Home housing 43 elderly people. The present laird of Leckie lives in Stirling. But he and his heir will shortly occupy the two villas already mentioned as being under construction. He runs the policy fields as a dairy farm, the byre having been built at the former estate stables. Parts of the mansion-house of Gargunnoch are let as separate flats. The proprietrix maintains a farm consisting of the policy parks, a portion of hill land and the Laft Brae park in the village, formerly let for seasonal grazing. This last named field is now being rapidly feued in quarter-acre lots for private housing. The farm house and steading are in the old stable-yard behind the mansion-house. The only mansion-house still used exclusively as a private residence is Meiklewood but the new mansion at Boquhan, on the site of the old, will shortly be occupied.

Agriculture. The rents of carse farmland range from £2 to £3 for an acre. Rent, however, is no longer the largest outlay of the farmer the heaviest item in running expenses is the wages bill. The average weekly wage of the farm worker is about £9, in addition to free house, milk and potatoes. The normal length of a farm lease is twelve or fourteen years with a break at six or seven years. Most expiring leases are being left to run from year to year, security of tenure being ensured to the farmer by the Agriculture (Scotland) Act, 1948. There is, however, little security nowadays for the farmer's heir. Almost all the farms from Kepdarroch westwards on the north side of the Class I road are owned by the farmers, having been bought by them in recent years.

A quarter of the carse farms are engaged in milk production with tuberculin tested herds of Ayrshires, with an increasing proportion of Friesians or cross-Friesians.

On the hill land, Blackface ewes (mostly brought in from Lanark) are crossed with Leicester rams. For some years almost every farm retained one or two pairs of working horses which were able to work on the land while it was too wet and soft for tractors. Five farms bred Clydesdale horses of the highest class. Today, however, horses have almost disappeared. Recent

returns record only 19. Breeding has almost ceased. Tuberculin tested dairy cows and pedigree Wessex pigs are also bred in the parish.

The average crop rotation in the carse land is fallow, wheat, beans, oats (undersown), hay for five or six years, oats, barley. The popular hay is Timothy which revolutionised carse farming, giving the plough a rest. A fair proportion is seeded, the average price over the past thirty years being close to £100 for one ton of seed. When no seed was imported from the USA in 1950, the price rose to £200 a ton. The hay grown in the parish is of very high quality and Gargunock hay is still part of the diet of the racehorses at Newmarket.

As it is now some time since the carse land was cleared of moss and drained, the difficulty today is to keep the carse drainage system working with the necessary efficiency. There is, of course, practically no fall. Contractors have machines which drain down to a depth of two feet, but a good drainer is still very highly valued and much sought after, especially for 'finishing off.' Farmers themselves do some mole draining. A long blade has a pointed cylinder, two and a half inches in diameter at its end (the "mole,") which is drawn across the field at a depth of 20 inches. This leaves a two and a half inch bore in the clay. Such a drain lasts for about one rotation, perhaps twelve years.

The farm buildings are substantial and well maintained. The farm courts are kept tidy and clean. There are usually large hay and implement sheds. The dairy farms have large, airy byres with milking machines (mostly electrically driven) and individual drinking bowls. At Boquhan there is a modern 'milking parlour' A few dairy farms have recently installed tanks for milk storage. These are emptied by tanker-lorries daily. Careful records are kept of each cow in the herd and many scientifically conducted experiments are made with feeding and other aspects of dairy management.

All the farms are fully equipped with the most modern implements — hay-ricking machines; power-driven binders; hay-sweeps (for transporting ricks to the big stacks); horse-forks to build the 'leets' or big stacks ('leet' being a local name for the large stacks known elsewhere as sow ' stacks); unit principle hydraulic power-lift tools, plough, cultivator, harrow, ridger, weeder, potato-planter. One or two farmers have their own tractor-belt-driven balers and threshing-machines.

Little silage is made in the parish. The combine harvester has not until recently been used here except for a few small acreages of barley. Now it is employed, even, on occasion, for threshing.

Important developments have taken place at Boquhan estate since it was bought in 1960 by Mr. J. Ross Anderson. When completed the home farm will be one of the most modern dairying projects in Scotland with a pedigree Friesian herd. The emphasis is on absolute cleanliness and fully automatic feeding and mucking. Four hundred gallons of certified milk will be produced daily; some will be retailed in the surrounding districts, the remainder (together with surplus from other farms in the area) being retailed through the Barnton dairy in Stirling which is now owned by Boquhan estate. On the dairy farm three cylindrical containers store 700 tons of haylage; the barn measures ninety feet by sixty and the house for young stock ninety by seventy. Myreton farm is used for beef and sheep; Crawtree farm for cropping.

Extensive building and road making (with one road illuminated) have taken place. Two lodges have been reconditioned and nine new cottages for workers have been built (some on the site of old cottages which have been demolished). A new mansion is being constructed in Auchenlea stone and a landscape garden extending over eight acres is being created to the south of the house.

Everywhere there is evidence that the owner, an engineer of extensive experience, has introduced all possible engineering skills into his farming projects. That he is also concerned about preserving the history and amenity of the property is indicated by his restoration of 'Prince Charlie's Well' and the erection of a common television mast with underground lines, to avoid unsightly aerials on every cottage.

The labour problem gives cause for anxiety. Very few boys are at present apprentice farm-workers. There are, however, several first-class ploughmen who have been for many years on one farm. The married ploughman usually stays on, if he has a good house to live in. The tractor and general mechanisation have, of course, reduced the labour required on the farm, but the farmers and their men must now have sufficient mechanical knowledge and skill to be able to maintain all these machines and carry out minor running repairs.

The farms which have no modern cottages attached to them now draw their labour from the village. where a proportion of the county council houses is reserved for agricultural workers. An occupant of such a house may change his employer but he must remain in agriculture in order to retain his house. Farmers would generally prefer to have their men living near the farm but the men, on the whole prefer living in the village, where the parish social life is centred.

All the farmers have private cars. On Thursdays the weekly Stirling market-day, there is a constant stream of farmers' cars going into Stirling about 11 a.m. and returning homewards about 3 p.m. in time for the evening milking. The Gargunock Farmers' Club Annual Show (instituted in 1796) is still held on the first Saturday of June, but it has recently been reduced from a whole-day event to one lasting for an afternoon only. It is hoped, however, to be able to restore it to its former standing. The club has about 60 members.

Industry. There are two sawmills in the parish. The larger sawmill owes its beginning to Messrs. R. and A. McLaren, Joiners, who established in 1880 a small sawmill at Viewfield, 150 yards to the east of the manse. This sawmill was burnt down in 1915, and the present sawmill was established in 1919 at Gargunock station between the railway line and the Forth, on the west side of the approach to the Forth road bridge. Strangely enough, there had been a sawmill on this very site about 1858. Power was supplied for many years very economically by a large steam engine, which was fired by a Dutch oven burning sawdust fed in by a fan. Electricity is now the source of power. The sawmill changed hands in 1958.

A point of interest lies in the fact that at one time the whole process of making, for example, a farm wagon was carried out at this mill, from tree to finished product. The smaller sawmill is owned by the firm of Alexander Robb and lies a quarter of a mile to the south-east of the manse, 250 yards up the first road to the right past Viewfield and Shrub Cottage. This road has been since 1862 the road of access for the feuars to the quarries higher up. The sawmill is very appropriately called the Quarry sawmill. Near the sawing benches there still stands the concrete foundations of the crushing plant erected by the quarry company which, until it ceased operations in 1933, quarried stone for road metal from the foot of Gargunock hill.

One of the principal products of both sawmills is pitwood but they also handle fair quantities of hardwood for the builders of railway wagons. Numbers of heavy beams are also cut. Some of the hardwood is cut into small blocks for 'rabble heads.' These rabble heads are used for finishing newly-rolled steel plates. The steel mills have tried to find a chemical substitute for these hardwood blocks, but nothing suitable has yet been discovered. It may be noted that, when basket-'flaking was carried on in the village, the oak bark, which the basketmakers peeled off the young oaks before boiling and splitting them, was tied in bundles and sold to the steel mills for a similar purpose.

Occasionally, pearl fishers may be seen fishing for pearls from the Gargunock (or south) bank of the Forth.

The Way of Life. The general picture is of a happy, hard-working rural community living in a countryside unsurpassed for its beauty. Yet the excellent market and shopping-town of Stirling, with its frequent train and bus services, is only twenty minutes away by bus; and Glasgow or Edinburgh can be reached by public transport in well under two hours

On Saturdays, there is a general exodus from the village to Stirling, whither the women go to shop, the men to see a football match and the young people to visit a cinema, although television is proving a formidable rival to the 'pictures.' Quite a number of the village people shop in the village where two small but marvellously well-stocked grocery and general merchandise shops (together with the sub post office, which is also a stationer's and newsagent's business) can supply most household needs.

During the winter months, the village organisations run occasional concerts, whist drives or dances in support of their own funds or other charitable causes. In winter, the farmers' sons and daughters go almost every week to farmers' dances, often travelling long distances by car. The Mobile Library van visits regularly and there are many interested readers in the area. On Sunday afternoons and evenings, there is much visiting, especially among the farming families.

The people live a decent, respectable life, although there could in some cases be a much more active interest in the church and a greater concern for the deeper things of life. One is afraid, indeed, that a few are living, so far as spiritual things are concerned, on the past. Here, as elsewhere in these days, the football pool has a great hold. Some also indulge in horse betting, but seldom to excess.

The women of the parish are good wives and mothers and capable housewives. The houses are tastefully furnished and kept tidy and clean. The children are happy, well nourished and well cared for. Most of the women are skilled in baking, sewing and knitting, and, thanks to the Women's Rural Institute, some of them have become interested in such crafts as leatherwork and china painting.

The men may not be such enthusiastic gardeners as older generations were (the last Gargunock Flower Show was held in 1911 or thereabouts) but gardens generally are well tended.

On his arrival in the parish twenty-eight years ago, the writer of this account was warned by one of the villagers that he must be careful not to pass remarks about anyone, "for," said the villager, "we're a' connectit." This is still true. Many of the people in the parish are connected either by blood or marriage. Even those who have come into the parish from other parts have, in most cases, had some connection with the place in former years either personally or through their families.

A very pleasing feature of life in such a small community is that everyone more or less knows everyone else. Occasionally, new-comers from a town find the neighbourly interest rather overwhelming, but they soon realise that it is all kindly meant, even when most obtrusive.

Finally, the community has still enough of the old rural character to be a social unit. Laird and farmer, ploughman and villager meet with a social ease and grace that is most pleasant to see. In a parish where this is the case, there cannot be much wrong -at least nothing wrong that a continuance of Divine guidance and grace together with increasing human sympathy and understanding cannot put right.

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