

THE FEUDAL DIVISIONS OF EAST STIRLINGSHIRE

The Lands and Baronies of Larbert

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Contents

[Larbert](#)

[Broomage](#)

[Woodside \(Glenbervie\)](#)

[Stenhouse](#)

[Larbert Shiells](#)

[Inches](#)

[Crownest](#)

[Kinnaird](#)

[Quarrell \(Carron Hall\)](#)

[Skaithmuir](#)

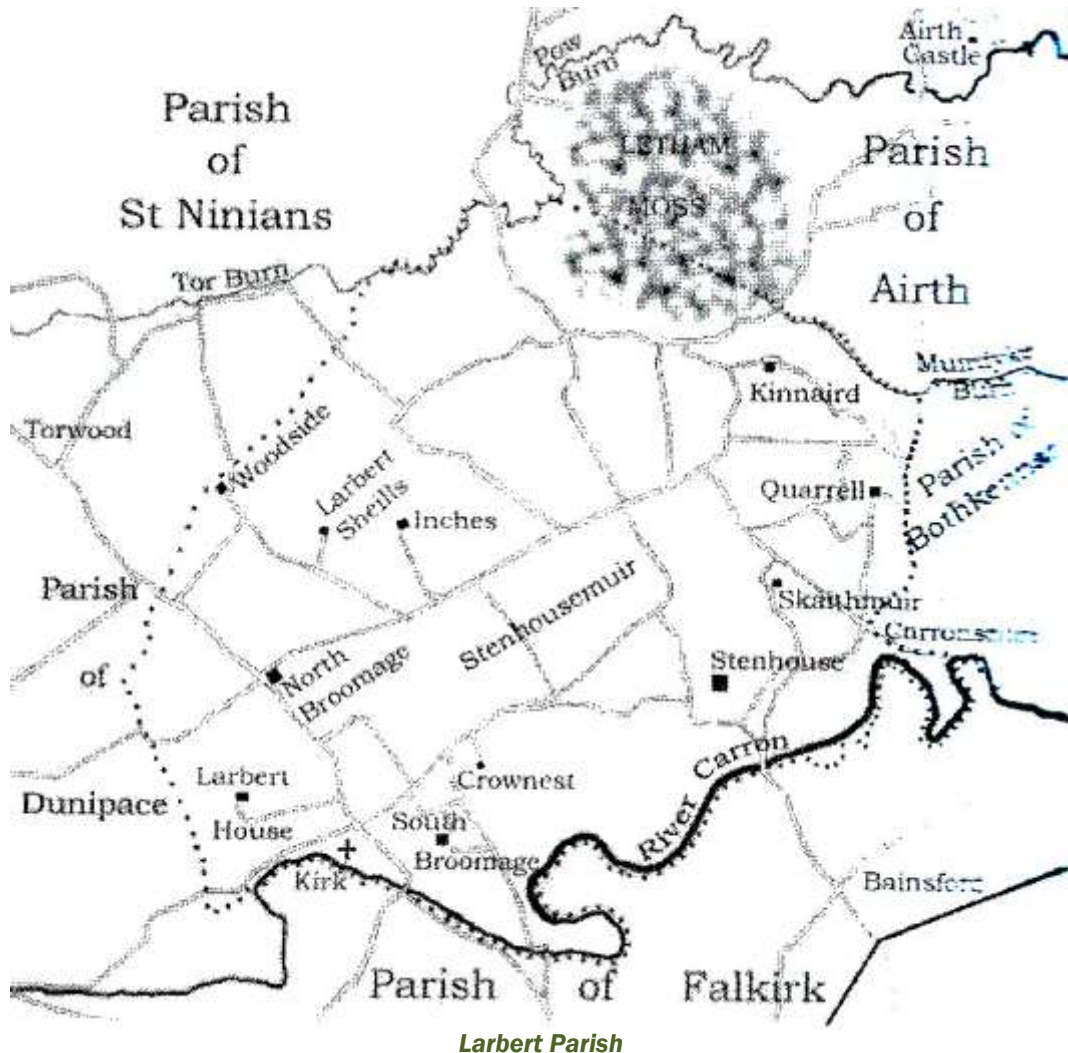
[Notes](#)

Being only 750 acres in extent, the lands of Larbert comprise a relatively small part of the whole of the mediaeval parish. However, it was the location of the church that determined the name, as the pre-reformation chapel lay within the portion of land that was to become the estate of the name. When researching the history of Larbert, it is the [church](#) that we first encounter, as in 1195 it was a dependent chapel of the church of Eccles in Stirling and at that time lay in the parish of St. Ninians.¹ Sometime between 1140 and 1158, along with its mother church of Eaglais Ninian, it was granted to the Abbey of Cambuskenneth by Robert, Bishop of St. Andrews.² Exactly when the parish came into being is unknown and the earliest overt reference to it recovered in this study comes from 1582.³ In 1615 James VI granted to John, Earl of Mar, a huge number of former monastic properties. Among these was the church of Kirkton alias *Sanct-Ninians Kirk* with its pendicles, included amongst which were the chapels or churches of *Lairbar* and *Donypace*. At that time the stipend of the minister of Larbert and Dunipace was a chalder of wheat and a chalder of oats, 200 merks as well as the vicarage, manse and glebe. The preamble of the charter states that Mar was given these for good service and assiduous labours in the king's diplomatic matters.⁴

Anciently, Larbert Parish contained the lands of [Larbert](#), [Broomage](#), [Woodside](#), [Larbertshiells](#), [Kinnaird](#), [Stenhouse](#), [Inches](#), [Crownest](#), [Quarrell](#) and [Skaithmuir](#). Unlike many of the other parishes in East Stirlingshire, these lands had a considerable diversity of feudal worship, with Larbert and Broomage held within the superiority of [Kinneil](#); Woodside and Larbertshiells being Crown Lands; Kinnaird holding the Abbey of Newbattle; Stenhouse, Inches and Crownest partly held from [Herbertshire](#) and partly from the Regality of Torphichen; Quarrell and part of Skaithmuir within the lordship of Herbertshire while the remaining part of Skaithmuir was held of the barony of Straiton in Mid-Lothian.

Kinnaird, Stenhouse, Inches, Quarrel and Skaithmuir, which together form the eastern part of the parish, were possessed anciently by people whose principal land-holdings lay in East and Mid Lothian. This is consistent with the early histories of the lands of [Airth](#)⁵ and those of Dunipace and Denny.⁶ Stenhouse parish was disjoined from Larbert in 1900.

Larbert



All early notices of the name exhibit its Celtic origins; the earliest of these being *Lethberth*. The first element appears to be *Leth-*, from the root found in modern Welsh as *llethr*, 'slope, incline, declivity'. The second is *perth*, 'wood', as is found in names such as Perth: the name probably translates as 'wood-bank' or 'wood-side'. Larbert, of course lies on the north side of the [River Carron](#) with [Torwood](#) presently being only two kilometres distant. In the distant past, it would have been of greater extent and its southern edge may have lain on or close to the banks of the river.

We first encounter the secular lands of Larbert in 1320 when Sir Walter, son of Gilbert received a charter from Robert the Bruce of all the barony of [Kinneil](#), which included the lands of *Lethberth*. These were to be held:

'in such a manner as the late Herbert the Chamberlain, lord of the barony, and his successors did and holding the said barony in the same way as in the time of Lord David, king of Scots and his heirs, our predecessors'.

This takes the estate back to the first half of the twelfth century and circumstance suggests that the origins of the village may lie in that period. Close by the church was Castlehill: apparently a feature, described as 'a *small tumulus*' was situated there until 1761, when it was demolished as part of the construction of a new road. This structure, given the name, is indicative of it having been a motte. Combined with its situation, we might infer that Larbert was an archetypal mediaeval community with church and castle more or less adjacent and having the dwelling houses in the same proximity. Initially and in all probability, this settlement took the form of a motte and bailey. A gun battery was mounted upon this eminence by the royalist Scottish army in 1651 to bombard the Cromwellian force camped on the south side of the River Carron at Carmuir causing, it would seem, a number of casualties.⁷

In 1745, part of the lands of Larbert were sold to Archibald Lamond, a shoemaker in Larbert and Janet Walker, his wife. At that time, the couple acquired a piece of land called the Miln Butts, including houses and outbuildings. The boundary on the north east corner of the land was a dwelling house situated "*in the toun of Larbert*". We can recognise Larbert in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a community having a corn miller, fuller, shoemaker and minister. In 1629 we also find a resident solicitor in the shape of "*John Broune, notary public in Larber*", who was involved as Baillie at an act of sasine performed there.⁸ Although the term 'toun' was used at that time of all kinds of communities, from fermtoons to burghs, it is apparent that Larbert existed as a 'village' in that period and had probably done so in continuity from the twelfth century settlement postulated above.

The estate of Larbert continued to be a holding of the lordship of Kinneil until at least 1801.⁹ Although not specified in that early charter, subsequent ones indicate that Broomage was also part of the barony of Kinneil and it is as the 'lands of *Bruminche* and of *Lethbert*' that they are next encountered in 1451 upon the occasion of the forfeiture of Alexander Livingston of Callendar.¹⁰ At what time the Livingstons had taken possession of these lands is not evident but following notices show that after their restoration they continued to hold them. For example, in 1476 Marian, widow of the late James, Lord Livingston had "*hir brefe of terce anent ye land of Lethbert and Brumeinche*" confirmed.¹¹ In 1478 James Inglis, bailie in Larbert for James, Lord Hamilton, read a letter giving sasine of the lands of *Lethbert* to James, Lord Livingston.¹² Their hereditary interest in the estate is further illustrated in 1488 when Sir James Livingston of *Lethbert* was designed heir apparent of James, Lord Livingston.¹³ However, despite their actual possession they only held it in property; it must be emphasised that Larbert remained within the superiority of Kinneil and never of the barony of [Callendar](#). As far as can be determined Sir James, who was a nephew of Sir James of Callendar, was the only member of the family to take the title 'of Larbert'. Nevertheless, they continued to hold the lands in property into the seventeenth century. This is apparent in 1638 when John Wyse in Kilbain, acting as procurator for James, Lord Livingston of Almont and Callander along with Alexander Livingston, portioner of Falkirk, on behalf of James, Marquis of Hamilton, gave sasine of the lands of Broomage and Larbert.¹⁴

The earliest recovered record of tenants in these lands comes from the acts of the Lords of Council in 1478. Part of the entry reads:

*"decretis and deliveris yat John Makkesoun, John Walker, Robert Cok, William Wricht, Johne Anderson, Walter Cok, Alexander McKesoun, William Myllar, Nichole McKeson, Megy the wedo, Marioun Wricht and Johne Henrysoun, tennantis of ye landis of Lethbert and Brome Inch sall content to pay to James Lord Hamilton ye mailis of ye said land of ye Witsunday terme last past extendand to xij merkis and a chalder of mele of ye ferme of ye mylne".*¹⁵

At that time there was a form of hereditary possession known as "kindly tenancy" but, due to the fact that such tenants held their land without any form of writ or charter, this was open to abuse. From the sixteenth century, feuing of land gained favour and, evidently, by the

seventeenth century the lands of Larbert had been set in feu to tenants. It was normal practice for land holdings to be owned by several feuars, each of whom was designed 'portioner' but in the instance of Larbert there were only two portions. One was possessed by a family named Mackie, given variously in the records as McKie, Makie or Makkie. Remarking on this surname, Black states, "*The name is of considerable antiquity in Stirlingshire*".¹⁶ The earliest explicit record of one in the Larbert context comes in 1632 when John Mackie and his wife, Mariot Ure, received a charter of half the lands of Larbert from Alexander, Earl of Callendar.¹⁷ In 1648 he appeared at the Baron Court of Falkirk and Callendar in attendance at the Head Court as part of his feudal obligations. Two years earlier, he granted part of his lands to his son John and daughter-in-law, Janet Baird, probably as part of their marriage settlement.¹⁸ It is almost certainly the younger John who appears in 1682 as "*John McKie portioner of Lairbert*".¹⁹ Other Makkies are recorded in Larbert but John is the only to appear as a portioner of the lands of Larbert. Among the others was "*John Makie, walker in Lairbert*", that is the miller at the fulling mill of Larbert, who was prosecuted for fishing on the Water of Carron in 1684.²⁰ Several also lived and held property in the lands of Broomage. In the same year that we learn that the Burns family held half of the lands of Larbert, it becomes apparent that the Mackies held the other half.²¹ In 1697 the lands had descended to Andrew Mackie, the eldest son of John, who in that year received a charter of succession.²² Marie Graham, the widow of Andrew Mackie, discharged Robert Graham of Gallangad and Gartmore of a debt of £1,000 Scots in 1707.²³ It is not uncommon to find in these pre-banking days the bourgeoisie investing their money by lending to the upper classes who, no doubt, suffered 'cash flow' problems in sustaining their lifestyles. Andrew was followed by his son, William, who in 1744 held the tack of Ladysmill.²⁴ He was the last Mackie to be a portioner there as he sold his half of the lands of Larbert to Alexander Chalmers in 1751.²⁵



Larbert House

The other family of Larbert portioners was named Burn. The first of these to be noted is John Burn in Larbert, who gave a gift of three pounds to "*Kirk Wark*" at [Falkirk Parish Church](#) in 1617.²⁶ It appears that he was one of the baillies for Larbert as, in 1623, John Burn in *Lathbert* performed an act of sasine as procurator for Alexander, son and heir of Alexander earl of Linlithgow.²⁷ No doubt, Marjorie Burne in *Lairbert* was a kinswoman of John. At the baron court in Falkirk in 1641, James Aitken and Marion Muirheid, his wife, were ordered to hand over to Marjorie:

"Aught ellis of seybumbasie quhilk was stolline further of hir hous in Lairbert"

The eight ells of this satin cloth had been stolen, along with seven and a quarter ells of linen, by a woman called Margaret Grey who had then sold it to Aitken and his wife. It would seem that by the time this was brought to court the linen had been sold on and so it was further ordained that Marjorie should receive twelve shillings for each ell.²⁸ This is further evidence of the relative wealth of the Burns family. Another source of income for John came from being the tacksman of the fulling mill of Carmuir; in effect, having paid a sum of money to [Livingston of Callendar](#) for a fixed period of years, he received the revenues of that mill during the time of his tak.²⁹ John Burn senior was obviously still alive in 1639 when Alexander Oswald, portioner of Falkirk, was ordered not to trouble or molest John and his son, nor their wives, children, servants, heritages, goods and gear under a caution of 500 merks.³⁰ However, John senior must have died before 1645 as, in that year, John Burne “portioner of Lethbert” received a charter of precept of sasine of “*all and hail the lands of Lethbert and Bromage*”.³¹ In November of the previous year, John junior, described as the eldest lawful son of John Burne, portioner of *Lethbert*, received a crown charter of the tiends of the lands of Larbert and Broomage, which would suggest that his father had died some time prior to then.³² It would seem to be John the elder who is commemorated in an epitaph of 1665 inscribed on a gravestone in the burial ground of [Larbert Parish Churchyard](#). It reads:

HERE LYES INTERRED WITHIN HIS URNE
 THE CORPS OF HONEST GOOD JOHN BURNE
 WHO WAS THE EIGHT JOHN OF THAT NAME
 THAT LIVD WITH LOVE AND DIED W^T FAME
 IN CHANGING TYMES, SADDEST DISASTER
 TREW TO HIS KING, LORD AND MASTER
 KYND TO HIS KENERED, NEIGHBUR, FRIED [sic]
 WHOS GOOD LYFE HADE ANE HAPPIE END
 HIS SOUL TO GOD HE DID BEQUEATH
 HIS DUST TO LYE THIS STONE BENEATH

The younger John died before 1682, by which year his widow, Margaret Mylne, had married Gavin Clerk.³³ This John was succeeded by his son, yet another John, who held a tack from his mother of a fifteenth part of the town and lands of Falkirk which she held in liferent.³⁴ It is not clear whether she held this in her own right or terce, that is the right of a widow to the liferent of one third of her husband's heritable estate. John, who was married to Jane Willison, died before 1699.³⁵ Their son, also called John, with the consent of his mother, sold the lands to Lady Dunipace, the wife of George Foulis Primrose, the laird of [Dunipace](#). She then sold them to Alexander Chalmers in 1745.

The property is described as:

*“all and hail the just and equall half of all and hail the lands of Larbert with houses [etc] sometime possess by John Burn late proprietor thereof and Jean Willison his spouse and their tenants and cotters”.*³⁶

The charter, which was granted by James, Duke of Hamilton, describes the lands as:

*“lying within the barony of Kinneil and sherifffdom of Linlithgow and now within the Duckdom [sic] and Regality of Hamilton but lately within the parish of Larbert and sherifffdom of Stirling”.*³⁷

In the same year that Chalmers purchased the lands from Lady Dunipace he also acquired the half of the lands owned by the Mackies and so the estate of Larbert came into being.

Alexander Chalmers was succeeded by his son who was designed “of Larbert”. He sold the lands in 1782 to William Ferguson of Raith who, in 1789, sold them to Thomas

Milles Riddell younger, of Ardnamurchan.³⁸ His son, Sir James Milles Riddell of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, inherited the estate in 1798 and changed its name to Mountriddell, then taking the title 'Thomas Milles Riddell of Mountriddell'.³⁹ He was survived by his widow, Margaretta Riddell (nee Campbell).⁴⁰ Their son, Campbell Drummond Riddell, who was born at Larbert House in 1796, became prominent in Australia, where he served as Colonial Treasurer, a Member of the New South Wales Legislative Council and then as Acting Colonial Secretary. His house, "Lindesay", at Darling Point in Sydney is now owned by the National Trust of Australia.⁴¹



Curlers at Larbert House

By 1819 the estate was in the possession of Sir Gilbert Stirling, who had Larbert house remodelled in the years 1822-5 by David Hamilton, the architect responsible for designing [Larbert Parish Church](#), Falkirk [Steeple](#) and the nineteenth century frontage of [Airth Castle](#).⁴² Sir Gilbert died before 1855, at which time the estate was still in the possession of his trustees.⁴³ It was purchased from them in 1876 by John Hendrie, a coalmaster in Glasgow.⁴⁴ Gillespie, in 1879, writes:

"The estate, though small, is finely wooded – and as a loop-hole of retreat must be greatly enjoyed by the present proprietor".⁴⁵

In the late 19th century, it became the property of Sir John Graham who, prior to the opening of the [Dobbie Hall](#) by the Duchess of Montrose in 1900, entertained the Duke and Duchess at Larbert House.⁴⁶ The house and 750 acre estate are perhaps best known locally as having been the part of the Royal Scottish National Institution known in the twentieth century as the 'Colony'; the property was purchased by the Royal Scottish National Hospital in 1925. Significant changes in the care of people suffering from mental illness began in the last quarter of the twentieth century and in that capacity the role of Larbert House diminished. Latterly, a decision was taken to build a new Forth Valley Hospital in the grounds. For several years the house lay boarded-up and unoccupied and then, sadly, was badly damaged by fire on the night of 31st December 2006. At the time of writing its fate was unknown.

Broomage

Broomage as a place-name, like so many other ancient ones, has suffered distortion. The earliest records show that the second element derives from Gaelic *innis*, 'a meadow'. These are *Bruminche* (1451), *Brumeinch* (1476) and *Brome Inch* (1478).⁴⁷ Watson believed that Broomage represented Gae, *braoninnis*, 'damp meadow'.⁴⁸ The assimilation to the modern form is a common phenomenon.

When the lands first come to notice, it is in relation to Alexander Livingston of Callendar, who had been forfeited at that time for alleged treason.⁴⁹ From then onwards the lordship follows that of the lands of Larbert.

As in the neighbouring lands of Larbert, one of the prominent families of Broomage was that of McKie. The testament of John McKie in Broomage was registered in 1582.⁵⁰ Forty-one years later, George McKie was named as portioner of *Brwmage* when he endowed his wife, Agnes Boig in conjunct fee in his property as part of their contract of matrimony. Agnes was the daughter of Thomas Boig and Christine Laird in Beircrofts. The young couple possessed "*the just and equall half of the lands of Brwmage*", which pertained to George. In all probability he was a kinsman of the Mackies, portioners of the lands of Larbert. George had died by 1646 when Malcolm *Makkie* was named as his son and heir.⁵¹ At that time he was still in his minority and on his behalf his tutor, John Mackie, a wright resident in Broomage, pursued Malcolm's tenants, Alexander *Makkie* and John *Mckenley* for three hundred merks for the rent and duty of land belonging to him. Jean Leishman, the wife of John Mckenley was in trouble the following year when she appeared at the court charged with throwing stones at Alexander Mackie and for "*ruging of Marion Zung his spous hair*". She confessed to both attacks and "*Malcolm Broun portioner in Bromedge*", stood as cautioner for the future behaviour of both couples when it was decreed that :

*"They sall not trouble nor molest utheris But that they should keipe his majesties peace ilk ane of thame with utheris Under paine of ane hundredth pundis for ilk pairt".*⁵²

One wonders if Malcolm had his fingers crossed at the time. At the same sitting of the court Alexander Brown, also a portioner of Broomage, appeared and agreed that he would ensure the presence of Jean Leishman and Agnes Bog before the Kirk Session of Larbert on the following Sunday.⁵³ They lived in interesting times.

Presumably Malcolm and Alexander were descendants of William Brown in *Brumaige*, the earliest recorded resident there, who acted as a witness to an act of sasine in 1623.⁵⁴ Malcolm, it would seem, was not always the keeper of the peace and harmony for, when he is first encountered in 1642, it is also in the Baron Court as one of two parties who, apparently, had bad blood between them.⁵⁵ On that occasion Robert Burn in Falkirk stood surety for him when it was ordained:

"That James Quhyte in Donypace his wife bairns and servants salbe harmless and skaitheless in their bodies Landis heritages guides and ger and onnawayes to be trublit nor molestit be thame nor be na utheris quome the said Malcolm may stope or let directlie nor Indirectlie utherwayes nor be Ordour of Law and Justice Under the paine of ane hundrethpundis money."

The same judgement was passed upon James White. It would seem that the cause of this appearance had originated in a violent incident as the next case at the court also concerned Malcolm. In this instance Brown once again stood for him and agreed to ensure:

“Malcolm Broun in Bromedge to underlie his heines [highness’s] Lawis for the hurt commitit be him upone Robert Raynnie in Heilanddykes Incaise itsalhappine to him to depairt this lyfe be the said hurt and wound and that quhensoever the said Robert sabe requyreit for his said entrie be the Erle of Callender or his lordschips bailzies Under the paine of ffyve hundrethe pundis money.”

This incident was dealt with further when Malcolm was fined fifty pounds for:

*“stryking at Robert Raynnie in Heilanddykes ane suord and blooding of the said Robert thairwith he being cuming from the fair and mercat of Falkirk upon the 26 day of October lasbypast the quhilke the said Malcolm confest in judgement”.*⁵⁶

Alexander is named once more in a record from 1651 in the baron court.⁵⁷ His wife, Agnes Young, is mentioned in 1684 at which time Alexander is given as ‘elder’, implying a son named Alexander.⁵⁸ More than likely it is this son who appears as ‘Alexander Broun, elder in [Broomage] in 1724.⁵⁹ Apparently he was confirmed in his father’s property in 1725.⁶⁰ Also from 1684 we learn that Euphan Adieson was the wife of Malcolm Brown and that they had a daughter named Marie.⁶¹ It transpires from the same notice that Malcolm was yet another portioner in Broomage and that part of his holding had been purchased from Alexander earl of Callander by the deceased Alexander Brown and his wife, Janet Christie. An inference would be that Alexander was the father, or perhaps grandfather, of Malcolm and possibly a common ancestor of both him and his contemporary, Alexander Brown. The other half of Malcolm’s land had been sold to him by Mr. Alexander Norrie, minister of Larbert.⁶² When the founders of [Carron Company](#) began to plan the great water-lade to feed the dams, they were obliged to draw up contracts with the “*feuars of Broomidge*”; these were Alexander Hodge, James Heugh and Alexander Brown senior.⁶³ We must infer that there was an Alexander junior and indeed the line did continue, for the Browns were still in occupation of lands there in 1782 when Elizabeth Younger, wife of John Brown a portioner of Broomage, was given a liferent from his lands, probably as part of a marriage settlement.⁶⁴

What becomes apparent in looking at the history of this tract of land is that the proportional holdings of Broomage were complex. Certainly, by the nineteenth century the lands had evolved to become the two entries known as North and South Broomage. The mansion house of the first of these stood in the south-east corner of the junction of Stirling Road and the Bellsdyke Road.⁶⁵ William Caddell, one of the founding partners of Carron Company, bought North Broomage in 1775. He left the property to his son, also called William, who never married. When he died in 1855 he was succeeded by his brother, James John Caddell of [Grange](#). North Broomage remained with family and was in the possession of Henry Mowbray in 1908.⁶⁶

The other portion, South Broomage, was bought by Duncan Robertson of Roehill, Perthshire in 1819, who renamed the house ‘[Carronvale](#)’. He added two new wings to it, carried out extensive tree planting to the policies and embellished the interior of the house with mahogany brought from his estate in Jamaica. Carronvale was inherited in 1824 by

his eldest son, Duncan, an officer in the Indian Army. Following his death the estate was bought by John Bell Sheriff, whose son George extensively remodelled the house after the death of his father in 1896.⁶⁷ As happened with many mansion houses, it was used during the Great War to billet the officers of the 8th Scottish Rifles. During the Second World War the Prudential Insurance Company housed their records there, following which it was bought by the Boys' Brigade in 1945 to be used as their National Training Centre for Scotland. It continued in that role to when this article was written.⁶⁸

Woodside (Glenbervie)

Timothy Pont's Map of Stirlingshire, drawn sometime around 1590, provides the earliest recovered record for Woodside. He shows the property lying within the containing wall of the wood of [Torwood](#), an indication that Woodside must have been subdivided from the ancient royal hunting forest at some earlier period.



Old Woodside House

In 1607, the king granted letters of remission to Robert and James Forrester, sons of Thomas Forrester of Myothill, for the duration of their life for killing Robert Bruce of *Wodesyde*. Evidently the Bruce family were then the lairds of the estate. It was in 1628, during what must have been the lifetime of his son, Thomas Bruce of Woodside,⁶⁹ that a catastrophe occurred in the area. Excessive and continuous rain had caused water to float a peat bog to the point where it was lifted over the edge of the escarpment upon which Woodside lies. From there it cascaded downwards onto the carseland and inundated the arable land, causing much destruction, not only to crops but also burying houses and steadings under layers of peat.⁷⁰

Prior to assuming the title 'of Woodside', Thomas had married Elizabeth Rollok.⁷¹ It must be assumed that this was a second marriage for Elizabeth as the estate was inherited by her son, Mr. Henry Rollock. When he married Helene Elphinstoun, Thomas and Elizabeth gifted part of the lands of Woodside and [Larbertshiells](#) to the couple and

Henry and his wife were granted a royal charter in 1636 in which the king incorporated their property into “a free tenantry of Lerbartscheillis”.⁷² Two years later Thomas, now widowed, handed over the estate to the couple and to all intents and purposes retired.⁷³ Helen, the youngest daughter of Alexander, Lord Elphinstone, had previously been married to Sir William Cockburn of Langton, from whom she acquired the title ‘Lady Langton’ and several places in the proximity of Woodside, such as Lanton Mill, took their name by association. Henry and Helen had a son, John, who succeeded to the estate in 1654 following the death of his father.⁷⁴ Twenty years later it was his son, Henry, who fell heir to the lands.⁷⁵ By this time the family name had evolved to the modern form, ‘Rollo’ and it was as ‘Henry Rollo of Woodsyde’ that he took sasine of Woodside and Larbert Shiells.⁷⁶ In 1687 Margaret Young, wife of Henry Rollo of Woodside, took possession of an annual rent of 1800 merks out of the lands of Larbert Shiells and Woodside following a marriage contract between them. It is not clear whether this is the same Henry or perhaps a descendant. It is no more evident in the instance of Sir Henry Rollo of Woodside who was the laird in 1711.⁷⁷

Although Sir Harry retained the title, by 1731 the estate was in the hands of Sir George Dunbar of Mochrum who renamed the mansion house, calling it ‘Dunbar House’. He died in 1749 and was succeeded by his son, Sir James Dunbar of Mochrum. He was active in the area in the mid-eighteenth century and served as a local Justice of the Peace.⁷⁸ Buried in the churchyard of Larbert Parish Church, he died before 1763.⁷⁹ The property was bought from the trustees of Sir James by John Strachan who by 1783 styled himself ‘of Woodside’.⁸⁰



Glenberrie House

By the following year we find the estate in the hands of David Russell of Woodside whose origins, like those of John Strachan, have not been established.⁸¹ His son, James Russell of Woodside, was born in 1784 and eventually married Mary Stirling, daughter of John Stirling of Kippendavie. At some later date her brother, Sylvester Douglas Stirling, bought Woodside. Several members of the Stirling family had the middle name Douglas, for the reason that a maternal line descended from the family of Douglas of Glenberrie in Angus. Obviously proud of this heritage, Sylvester renamed the estate ‘Glenberrie’, which name it retains today.

Larbert Shiells

Today the lands of Larbert Shiells are recognisable as the farm called Shiells. The name tells us that at some early date this was the common grazing ground of the lands of Larbert as *shiel*, although literally meaning 'a hut, rough shelter' was commonly used as the term for summer pastures. The word entered into Scots from Northumbrian English and so probably dates from around the twelfth century. However, by the fourteenth century this had evidently become a land holding in its own right as sometime around 1340 the grant of the lands of *Lethbertscheills* was made to Adam Argent.⁸² These had been forfeited by William Lundie, probably as a consequence of treason during the [Wars of Independence](#). In 1370 the king confirmed a gift made by Adam to his wife, Marjorie of the lands of Lethberde schellis.⁸³ He resigned his possession of the property in 1376 at which time "*al and hail the lands of Lethberdschelis*" became the property of Robert, Earl of Fife and Menteith.

It is not until the following century that once again find notice of the lands when, in 1450, the king granted *Lethbertschelis* to Sir William Monypenny.⁸⁴ In that same year he also granted to Monypenny lands in the Halls of Airth and it is noteworthy that both holdings lay in the Lordship of Stirling. That Larbertshiells was Crownland is confirmed in 1451 when the consistent parts of the Lordship are listed.⁸⁵ In that same year, Monypenny was granted property in Fife in exchange for those of *Lethbertschelis*⁸⁶ which were then granted by King James II (1437-1460) to Alexander Bruce of Stenhouse. This we learn from a royal charter of confirmation issued in 1489.⁸⁷ Amongst the records for the maintenance of Stirling Castle is an entry that shows that the Master of Work measured and inspected the work of the glazier, Thomas Peebles, in 1532⁸⁸ and around that time the same "*Thome Peblis vitriario*" was awarded an annuity of £20 'for the whole of the time of his life' for his efforts in 'sustaining' the king's palace' in Stirling Castle. The money was to be taken from the rents of lands of *Lethbertschelis*.⁸⁹ As late as 1819 feu-duty was still being paid out 'the lands and tenandry of Larbertshiells' as part of the feu-duties of the Lordship of Stirling.⁹⁰

Evidently the Bruce family continued in their possession as, in 1541 Master Thomas Bruce claimed that *Lethbertschelis* was held by him in 'assedioun', that is on lease and that this lease had been "*maid to him by the quenis grace for his lifetime under hir subscriptioun*". Apparently he was paying an annual rent of £26 13s 4d but, the account relates with some sense of grievance, that "*the rentale yeirlie suld pay £40*".⁹¹ In 1542 he witnessed a charter as "*M. Thomas Bruse in Scheillis*".⁹² This is the first instance of the abbreviated place-name but it is restored four years later when he is designed "M. Thomas Bruce of *Leithbertsallis*".⁹³ 'M' is for 'Master' and indicated that he was a graduate, most like following a career in law or as a minister of the church. Throughout the sixteenth and into the first part of the seventeenth centuries this branch of the Bruce family continued as lairds of Larbert Shiells. Thomas Bruce of *Lethbertschelis* is first noted in 1572⁹⁴ and he was still active in 1589 when he handed the estate over to his son and heir apparent, Robert Bruce.⁹⁵ From the relevant charter we learn that Cristine Arnote was the wife of Thomas and that Robert was married to Marjory Drummond. Robert was dead by 1603 when his son, Thomas Bruce of *Lathberscheillis* was retoured heir to his father.⁹⁶ He was married to Elizabeth Rollock⁹⁷ and in 1628 he speaks of "*me, Thomas Bruce of Larbert Sheillis and Elizabeth Rollock my spouse*".⁹⁸

Shiells is bounded immediately to the south-west by the estate of Woodside and by this period the two properties had become inextricably linked. This is confirmed in a writ of 1624 which includes the phrase, “*me Thomas Bruce of Wodsysd for myselff and takand the burdene in and upone me for Elizabeth Rollok my spouse*”.⁹⁹ That they were then considered to be an entity at that time is confirmed by a charter of 1635 of the lands of ‘*Wodsyde and Scheilles*’. Following this, the progress of descent of the property favours the conjecture that Thomas must have been Elizabeth’s second marriage and that Henry Rollock, who inherited the estate, was the child of her first. In 1638 Thomas must have been in advanced years and describes himself as “*Thomas Bruce sumtyme of Woodsyd*” when he made a contract between himself and his (presumed) step-son, Henry Rollock.¹⁰⁰ The significant part of the document reads,

“Be it kent till all men – contract betwixt me and Mr Hary Rollok and Dame Helene Elphingstoune, Lady Elphingstoune, his spouse and me the said Thomas Bruce and umquhill (the late) Elizabeth Rollok my spouse – disponit to the said Dame Helene Elphingstoune and Mr Hary Rollok hir spouse – the lands of Larbertschellis”.

This was also a second marriage for Helen, the youngest daughter of Alexander, Lord Elphinstone, as she had been previously married to Sir William Cockburn of Langton from whom she acquired the title ‘Lady Langton’. The couple also were gifted part of the lands of Woodside, the remainder being retained by Thomas to sustain him in his retirement and they were granted a royal charter in 1636, at which time the king incorporated into their property into ‘*a free tenandry of Lerbartscheillis*’.¹⁰¹

Henry was a minister of the church, although a document which provides this information leaves a space for the place of his charge, presumably intending that it be entered later.¹⁰² In 1654 the lands, including *Larbert Sheills*, were inherited by John Rollo,

*“sone lawfull to the deceast Harie Rollo procreat betix him and Dame Hellin Elphingstoune Lady Langtoun”.*¹⁰³

John in turn was succeeded by his son, ‘Henry Rollo of Woodsyde’, who inherited along *Lethbertscheillis* with Woodside.¹⁰⁴ The subsequent history follows that of Woodside.

Stenhouse

In terms of name studies, Stenhouse is of interest as it is the earliest recorded place-name coined in English in Stirlingshire. The name almost certainly makes reference to the Roman structure which stood adjacent to the castle of Stenhouse known as *Arthur’s O’on*. Given that, it may be significant that all of the earliest people on record who were associated with the place are of Anglo-Norman descent. A charter of confirmation was granted sometime between 1185 and 1189 to Geoffrey de Melville, son of Maud Malherbe of *Stanhus*.¹⁰⁵ Among the witnesses are Thane Duncan of Callendar and Malcolm, son of Thane Duncan.

The Malherbes had been granted lands in East Lothian and eventually the family came to be known by the name of their estate: Morham. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that when Newbattle Abbey was gifted the mill of Stanhus in 1246, the granter was Ade de Colewill, grandfather of Thomas de Morham, the latter, no doubt, a descendant of Maud.¹⁰⁶ When this gift was reconfirmed in 1293, the charter places the

mill within the barony of Dunipace. This is equally unremarkable as the de Morhams were lords of that ancient barony, which was later to become known as [Herbertshire](#).



In the mid-seventeenth century, on the occasion of one of the Lords William of Stenhouse taking possession as heir to the lands, his instrument of sasine states:

*"the lands of Stenhous with the tower fortalice houses [etc] which formerly was held of the Lordship of Restalrig then to the baron of the barony of Harbertshyre".*¹⁰⁷

It should be stated that Gibson's belief that the charter dealing with an excambion by Alexander More referred to Stenhouse was incorrect: the lands of *Kythumbre* (Kittymure) were part of the barony of Stonehouse in Lanarkshire.¹⁰⁸ It would seem that only half of Stenhouse held of the barony of Herbertshire: the other lay within the Lordship of Torphichen. A warrant from the Regent of Scotland in 1577 enumerated the lands held by Bruce of Airth.¹⁰⁹ Among those was:

"The aught pund land of Stanehouse quhair of there is foure pund land haldin few of my Lord Sanct Johne".

And from 1601, when John Bruce of Airth was retoured in his lands, comes the phrase:

*"lands of Stenhouse with the Inches and mill and fishings of salmon and grilsis in the water of Carroun, in the barony of Herbertshire, and by annexation in the barony and regality of Torphichen".*¹¹⁰

However, reference is made to a superiority predating that of Herbertshire which, it will be remembered, dates from before 1293. This appears in a sasine of 1647 which contains:

“the lands of Stenhous with the tower fortalice houses [etc] which formerly was held of the Lordship of Restalrig then to the baron of the barony of Harbertshyre”.

Restalrig, or Lestalrig as it was once known, lies close to Holyrood in Edinburgh and, once again, we have a Lothian connection.

As an estate in its own right, it was the Bruce family who were associated with it; the early incumbants being the Bruces of Airth. The earliest recovered notice of their feudal possession of Stenhouse comes from 1466 when it was in the possession of ‘Alexander Brois of Staynhous’.¹¹¹ However, we learn from a later confirmation that he had been granted the lands by King James II, who reigned from 1437 to 1460.¹¹² On occasion he appears on record as Alexander Bruce¹¹³ and on others as Alexander of Stenhouse.¹¹⁴ It would seem that he had died by 1470, when we find notice of ‘Alexander Broys, son of Alexander Bruys of Stanhous’.¹¹⁵ Ten years later comes mention of ‘Johne Broys of the Stanehouse’¹¹⁶ who was still active in 1482 when Elizabeth Livingston, spouse of Robert Calendar of [Dorrator](#), swore not to revoke the alienation made by her to ‘John Bros of Stanehous of her half of the lands of Sunneside’.¹¹⁷ John met his death at the hands of Archibald and Thomas Menteith who, in 1484,

*“offered to make satisfaction to the abbot of Cambuskenneth for slaying the late John Broys of Stanehouse”.*¹¹⁸

The matter was raised again when William Menteith of the Kerse and Archibald Menteith, his brother, acting for:

*“thaim their kyn and frendis on the ta parte” and “Robert Broisse or Arthe, Alexander, Lucas and Robert Broisse, for thaim and brether, kyne and frendis on the tothere parte”, bound themselves to abide by the Sentence of the Lords of Council “tuiching the making of amendis for the slauchter of umquhile [late] Johne the Broise of Arthe”.*¹¹⁹

Next in line came “Robert Broys of Stanehous”, who received a charter of confirmation in 1485. In it the king acknowledged “a chapel suitable for ministration in his chapel or aisle in the south part of the church of Airth which the late Alexander Brois, his grandfather, constructed”. Robert fell along with the king at the Battle of Flodden in 1513. His son was also called Robert and he too met a violent death when, acting as Captain of Edinburgh Castle, he tried to subdue a clash between Scottish and French soldiers in the streets there.

A distinct cadet branch did eventually emerge when Sir William Bruce, who had succeeded in 1598, was created first Baronet of Stenhouse.¹²⁰ In 1618, Lord John Bruce and Lord William Bruce were the lairds of Airth and Stenhouse respectively.¹²¹ Lord John was by then in financial difficulty and eventually was forced to sell Airth. Although his grandson recovered the lands and barony in 1666, he was the last of the family to have possession.

Not so with the Stenhouse branch! between 1618 and 1732, there was a succession of lairds named William. The first of these was a brother of John of Airth.¹²² In that year the last William was succeeded by his son, Lord Michael Bruce.¹²³ There followed a series of Michaels; Lord Michael was followed by Sir Michael, the man responsible for the destruction of the Roman structure known as Arthur’s O’on in 1743.

His reason for doing so was to use the stones to repair the dam-head of the mill of Stenhouse. His action caused antiquarians to despise him and one, Dr. Stukely, drew a caricature of Sir Michael carrying off the stones while being goaded by the devil. His successor was his son Michael, who was married to Joanna Chalmers.¹²⁴ Next was Michael, husband of Dame Mary Agnew who died in 1795.¹²⁵ His son, Sir William, took the title before being succeeded by another Michael who, along with his wife, was still active in 1853 when he became a shareholder in [Carron Company](#).¹²⁶ He was the eighth Baronet of Stenhouse. Their ownership of the house and estate came to an end in 1888 when Michael's nephew, Sir William Cunningham Bruce, the ninth Baronet, sold them to John Bell Sheriff of Carronvale.¹²⁷ By 1920 the house was in the possession of Carron Company, who converted it into apartments to house employees.¹²⁸ It was demolished in the 1960s and the site is now a recreational area in a housing estate.

Inches

From 1569 comes the earliest recovered record for Inches, which is found in a charter by Andrew Bruce of *Inchis* to Robert Bruce his brother, granting to him half of his lands of Inches.¹²⁹ Andrew is the only one of the Bruce family who has come to attention as being styled 'of inches'. Alexander Bruce of [Airth](#) had an interest in this property as he did in several others in the parish. In 1581 he received an Instrument of Redemption from Robert Bruce of Baldrig, his brother, of:

*an annual rent of 300 merks furth of the lands of Stanehous, Crawnestis and Inches, following payment of 3000 merks by Robert Bruce, son of the said Alexander, who was acting as his procurator.*¹³⁰

This charter also shows that Inches, along with Stenhouse and Crownest, lay within the superiority of Herbertshire.

The Airth lordship is seen again in 1601 when John Bruce of Airth, son and heir of Lord Alexander Bruce, was retoured in his estate, which included the lands of Stenhouse with the Inches.¹³¹ It becomes apparent from the various charters that, although it was connected with Airth, it was historically aligned with Stenhouse. For instance, in 1615 the same John Bruce received a precept of sasine from Torphichen which included: "*the lands of Stenhouse, with Inches (and) Milnes of the same*".¹³² As mentioned above, by the start of the seventeenth century [Stenhouse](#) had become an estate in its own right and in 1630, when William Bruce of Stenhouse was retoured as heir, his principal lands were Stenhouse, Inches and Crownest.¹³³ Again, in 1665, Lady Jane Fortune, the wife of Lord William Bruce of Stenhouse, received an annuity derived from his lands of "*Stenhouse Inschis and Crawnest*".¹³⁴

Worthy of mention is a family named Esplin who had an association with Inches over several generations. There is a tradition that the ancestors of the Esplins (a form of the name Absalom) were Jews who fled from Spain to Scotland in the fifteenth century to escape from the Spanish Inquisition. The first of the local family to come to note was James *Esplene*, who appears to have died sometime in or before 1594.¹³⁵ It is of interest that his testament was registered in Edinburgh rather than Stirling and this was not an uncommon name in the capital; being found on several gravestones in St. Cuthbert's churchyard. Nevertheless, people of this name did live in East Stirlingshire and so James probably had local origins. William *Espline* in Inches, who died in or around 1668, certainly had his testament registered in Stirling.¹³⁶ The status of the family was

highlighted in 1685 when James Turnbull in Kersebrok, his wife Katherine Duncan and their family had sasine of an annual-rent out of the lands of Forresters Quarter of Seabegs.¹³⁷ Their family consisted of John Turnbull, son of James and John *Espline* in Inches, his son-in-law. This type of acquisition was not uncommon in these days. There were no banks and one of the most common ways of investing and protecting money was to lend it. The loan was secured by using the borrower's land as collateral, hence the sasine. Both Johns, brothers-in-law, were still active in 1693 when they received a further sasine for the same annual-rent.¹³⁸ Inches farm is noted from 1855, at which time it was still the property of Bruce of Stenhouse and was then occupied by Mrs. McVie, described as "farmer".¹³⁹ The 1881 census shows that William Weir, the farmer there at that time and his wife Janet had eight children, the eldest being aged sixteen and the youngest two. In 1912 it was being farmed by William Mungall.¹⁴⁰

Crownest

Crownest does not sit on a distinctive height and so it is unlikely that the name is used figuratively of a viewpoint and it is more likely that it is an assimilated form of an older name. In 1510 it is *Crawnest* and is given as being within the lordship of Herbertshire.¹⁴¹ A year later, Robert Bruce of Airth received :

"the gift of the malez and dewities of the lands of Stanehouse and Crawnest with their pertinentis liand in the barony of Herbertshire and scherefdome of Striveling".¹⁴²

We learn from a record of 1536 that it was valued at 3 merks and so was the most modest of the lands discussed in this article.¹⁴³

By 1630 it had become part of the estate of Stenhouse and was to remain so for many years.¹⁴⁴ It was acquired in 1771 by Thomas Dundas, younger, at the same time as he took possession of the lands of Skaithmuir.¹⁴⁵ The farm of Crownest was a holding of the Carron Company by 1855 and in that year was occupied by Alexander Binnie, junior.¹⁴⁶

At the time of writing, this area – once the public park known as 'the Lido, was being developed as part of the shopping precinct of Stenhousemuir.

Kinnaird

Kinnaird is a Gaelic name meaning 'hill-head' and makes reference to its location on top of the old raised beach; the feature that marks the inner edge of the carselands. The place is mentioned some time between 1189 and 1193 in a royal charter confirming the gift of a ploughgate of land in *Kinard* to the Abbey of Holyrood by Gilbert de Umfraville along with common pasture.¹⁴⁷ Gilbert was over-lord of the barony of Dunipace, or Herbertshire as it came to be known in the period following the Wars of Independence. In 1229 Holyrood received a tack of the lands from William Colville, who was married to Ade Lockhart.¹⁴⁸ She gifted Kinnaird to the Abbey of Newbattle and this act was confirmed in 1241 by her grandson, Thomas de Morham.¹⁴⁹ Here once again, as with Stenhouse, we find connections with Dunipace and the de Morhams. This property became yet another holding of the Bruce family when, in 1467, Newbattle Abbey feued the lands to Alexander Bruce, the same Alexander who held the lands of Airth and Stenhouse at that time.

There is no doubt that this was the principal family, as John Bruce of Airth was retoured in the lands of Kinnaird in 1601 when he came into his inheritance.¹⁵⁰



Old Kinnaird House

In the time of his son, Alexander, the records of the Abbey show that the annual feu duty paid for the lands was sixteen pounds, six shillings and eight pence, a substantial sum in those days.¹⁵¹ By 1499 it is evident that Kinnaird had become a cadet house of the family when Andrew, Abbot of Newbattle, granted a charter of the lands in favour of Edward de Brus.¹⁵² He was married to Christina Stewart and was still active in 1517.¹⁵³ The next recorded laird was David Bruce, who is on record in 1541.¹⁵⁴ The succession continued: Ninian his son, named as his heir apparent in 1542¹⁵⁵ and Edward given as apparent in 1569.¹⁵⁶ The last of that line was Jonete Bruce, styled “*daughter and heiress of the late Ninian Bruce, laird of Kynaird*” in 1590.¹⁵⁷ Because of the terms of their founding charter, the failure of the male line resulted in the estate reverting to the principal house of Airth. The laird of Airth at that time was Sir Alexander Bruce and he gave Kinnaird to his second son, Mr. Robert Bruce who was married to Margaret Douglas. In 1611 he is named as Laird of Kinnaird.¹⁵⁸

He, of course, was the famed preacher, designed ‘evangelical minister’.¹⁵⁹ His life was remarkable, particularly his complex relationship with King James VI and it is a story that has been recounted several times:

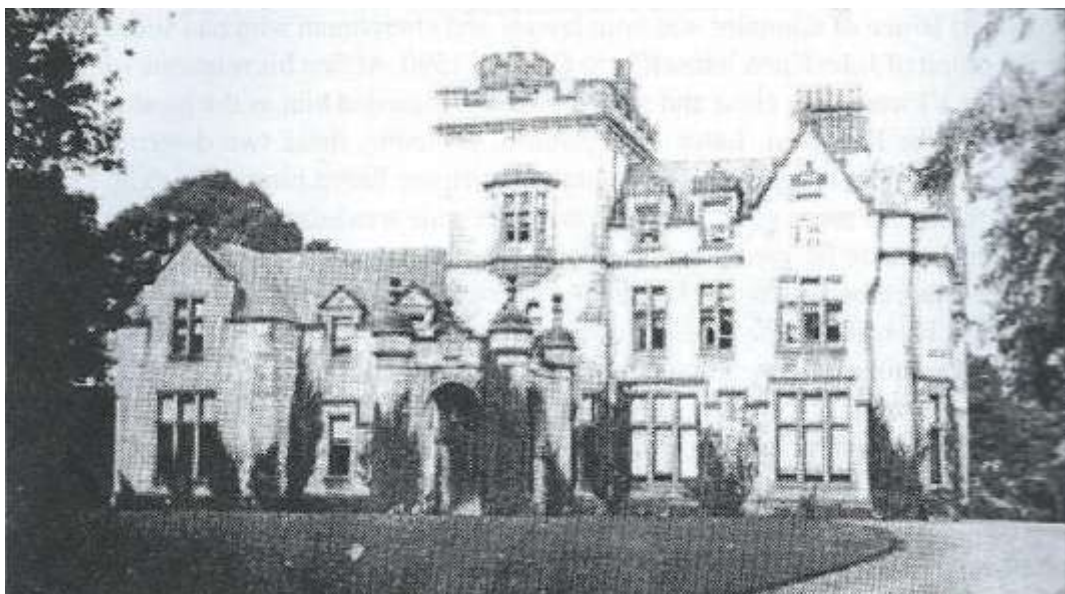
“Robert Bruce of Kinnaird was both lawyer and churchman who had succeeded to the pulpit of John Knox himself in St Giles by 1590. At first his relations with King James VI were very close and some observers regard him as the most powerful man in the Kingdom. Later, on a point of principle, these two determined and dogmatic men disagreed so profoundly that Bruce found himself in exile abroad and then, after some years, confined to a three-mile area around his Kinnaird home. From this base he continued to defend what he saw as the fundamentals of the protestant reformation and hundreds of people flocked to the parish to hear him preach. He restored the broken down church at Larbert and until his death in 1631 continued to attract the attention of Scotland to the little country parish.”¹⁶⁰

He had several children, among whom were Alexander,¹⁶¹ Robert, his heir apparent,¹⁶² Samuel who was contracted in 1618 to marry Isabella Ross, daughter of a Glasgow merchant burgess¹⁶³ and Marie, who was betrothed in 1618 to Michael Elphinstone, son of Alexander, Lord Elphinstone.¹⁶⁴ Despite being the oldest, Robert the younger did not enter into an arrangement of marriage until 1623, when matters were arranged between his family and that of Margaret Monteith, the daughter of Lord William Monteith of [Kerse](#) and the late Margaret Hepburn, his spouse.¹⁶⁵ Another son was John who, in a preamble to a sasine relating to a gift of an annual-rent (annuity) gifted by his mother and father, begins,

*“Me Johne Bruce ane of the lawful sons of umquhill Mr Robert Bruce of Kynnaird and umquhill (the late) Marie (sic) Douglas his spouse my father and mother for the love and affection which they buir to me and for the advancement of me to ane honest lyff so that I may be able to gyd and govern my self in ane guid estait in respect of the honourable houses quhairoff I am descendit and all in full content and satisfiounne to me of all former”.*¹⁶⁶

His mother, Margaret Douglas, had died by 1627.¹⁶⁷

Robert the younger took possession of his inheritance in 1638, principal of which was *“the lands of Kynnaird in the lordship of Newbotle”*.¹⁶⁸ The succession continued: Colonel Robert Bruce who flourished 1645,¹⁶⁹ his brother, Alexander Bruce who succeeded in 1655,¹⁷⁰ Helen, daughter of Alexander who flourished 1711,¹⁷¹ David, her son in 1729¹⁷² and James, the son of David. James, like his ancestor Robert a century earlier, also achieved fame. However, this was in the entirely different role of explorer and adventurer. Often named ‘Bruce of Abyssinia’, or ‘Bruce the Traveller, he has been described as ‘athletic, daring, standing six feet four’. He travelled to Spain and Portugal and studied Arabic as well as the ancient language of Abyssinia. He came to the attention of William Pitt, who appointed him consul of Algiers. It was at that time that the obsession took him to discover the source of the Nile.



The Present Kinnaird House

He is quoted as saying,

“It was at this moment that I resolved that this great discovery should either be achieved by me or remain, as it has done for three thousand years, a defiance to all travellers”.

Having fallen out with the Bey of Algiers in 1765, he left there and travelled widely, encountering many adventures on his way. Eventually he arrived in Abyssinia, where he lived with the King and from there, following many more colourful, dangerous and exciting incidents, in 1770 he eventually found the source of the Blue Nile. Not everyone was convinced of his account of his exploits, particularly after James Boswell who, having met him, wrote several disparaging essays regarding Bruce’s tales. Oddly, Bruce and Boswell were distant cousins.

‘The Traveller’ died in 1794 while handing a lady down the steps to her carriage at Kinnaird. He slipped and fell down the steps and died the next morning. (He is buried in Larbert Church yard, see [G.B. Bailey, “The Bruce Monument at Larbert” Calatria vol 30, \[2013\] p29](#)) He was succeeded by his son, James, who died in 1810.¹⁷³ In turn the title was taken by Mary, daughter of the younger James, her daughter Elizabeth and then Elma, daughter of the last. In 1895 the estate was sold to Robert Orr, a Glasgow merchant.¹⁷⁴

Quarrell (Carron Hall)



Carronhall

Quarrell is an old Scots word for a quarry and an estate plan of 1779 shows a quarry immediately to the north of the mansion house. The name first appears in 1425, when we find ‘*Richard Redheugh of Quarrell*’.¹⁷⁵ It is most likely his son who was designed ‘*Andrew Reidheuch of the Quarrell*’ in 1462.¹⁷⁶ A special Retour was issued in 1466 in favour of *Christian Redechuch*:

'as daughter and heir of the deceased Richard Redehuch, in the lands of Quarell'.¹⁷⁷

Two years later, a Precept of Sasine was issued in favour of Alexander Bisset of the lands of Quarrel and Skaithmure, following on a retour in favour of Alexander as heir to his mother, the deceased Christian of Redhueuch.¹⁷⁸ Apparently he was married to Elizabeth Elphinstone, who is named as his widow in 1472.¹⁷⁹ Five years later, Sir John Sandilands of Calder presented a Retour of the lands to Thom as Bisset of *Quaren*. In 1485 this same Thomas, then given as 'of Quarrell', along with James *Redeheuch*, witnessed an Airth charter.¹⁸⁰ He was still active in 1492 when he acquired portions of land in Pocknave and Halls of Airth.¹⁸¹ He had a son, also called Thomas, who is named as his son and heir apparent in 1502.¹⁸² Thomas (probably the younger) was the laird there in 1512 when the king granted the lordship of the lands of Quarrell to Alexander, Lord Elphinston and united them into the barony of Elphinstone with "*licence to infett the said Thomas*".¹⁸³

The next incumbent was Robert Bisset who flourished in the years 1533-1544 ¹⁸⁴ but he must have died young as he was succeeded in 1542 by his uncle, Robert Bisset, named as "*heir of the deceased Robert Bisset of Querrell, of the lands of Querrell*". This new laird made over the lands of Skaithmuir and Kersebrok in 1547 to his eldest son, Thomas Bisset.¹⁸⁵ In 1554, by which time he was laird of Quarrell, Thomas was killed by Robert Henry, popularly known *Deill amang us*, who was convicted of

"art and part of the cruell Slaughter of Thomas Bissate".¹⁸⁶

His successor was yet another Robert, relationship unknown, who had died by 1584 when his wife, Margaret Kinross, was appointed to be his executrix.¹⁸⁷ In 1593 she described herself as: "*relict of umquhill Robert Bissat of Quarrell*" and speaks of "*Thomas Bisset my son*". However, this later Thomas must have died at an early age as, in 1604, John Bisset was retoured as the heir of Robert Bisset of Quarrell, "his father". He was still active in 1694 when, apparently, he relinquished the estate to his feudal superiors, the Elphinstones. The last mention of the family we find comes from 1620, when the testament of Margaret Kinross, the widow of Robert Bisset of Quarrell was activated, presumably following her death.

The lordship of the Elphinstone family, which began in 1512 as stated above and can be observed to continue in the sequential charters and retours of that family. However, in 1596 Robert, Lord Elphinstone, issued a charter in favour of James Elphinstone, his nephew, of the lands of Quarrell and Easter Skaithmuir, both of which are stated to be in the barony of Elphinstone.¹⁸⁸ Lord Robert had died by 1619 and he was succeeded by his son, Lord Alexander Elphinstone. In that same year, Mr. James Elphinstone of Quarrell resigned the lands of Quarrel and Easter Skaithmure to Alexander, his cousin and feudal superior.¹⁸⁹ In that same year Alexander, with consent of Alexander, Lord Kildrymmie, his eldest son and heir, made a grant in favour of Michael Elphinstone, his son, of the lands of Quarrel and Easter Skaithmuir.¹⁹⁰ In 1626, when he was designed Michael Elphinstone of Quarrell, we find that his wife was Marie Bruce.¹⁹¹ They must have been married for several years by then as in 1627 it becomes evident that he had a son, also called Michael, who is described at that time as his second son.¹⁹²

As mentioned above, the moss of [Woodside](#) overflowed into the carselands, with consequences for the inhabitants there. At the time it was related that:

“twenty families wer constrayned for lyffe and deid and with the extreme hazard of their lyves to flee and leave their houses and all within the same to the violence of the mosse”.

Among those who suffered damage to their lands were Michael Elphinstoun of Quarrell and Alexander Mure of Skaithmuir, which is not the indication of the geographical extent of the catastrophe that it first appears to be.¹⁹³ Amongst his land-holdings was a piece of land called *Dubbibeas Meadow*, which appears to have been located in the vicinity of [Shiells](#).

Michael must have married for a second time as his wife is named in 1635 as Elizabeth Jackson.¹⁹⁴ He was still active in 1635¹⁹⁵ but was dead before October 1641, when a Precept of Clare Constat was granted by Alexander, Lord Elphinstone, in favour of Robert Elphinstone, “now of Querrell”, as son and heir of the deceased Michael *Elphingstoun of Quarrel*, of the lands of Quarrell and Easter Skaithmuir.¹⁹⁶ Among Michael’s other children was Helen Elphinstone, described in 1653 as his youngest lawful daughter.¹⁹⁷ At that time she was betrothed to David Livingston of Bantaskine. Robert was still active in 1662¹⁹⁸ but had died by 1681.¹⁹⁹ In 1685, a Precept of Clare Constat was granted in favour of Michael Elphinstone of Quarrell, as son and heir of the deceased Sir Robert Elphinstone, in the lands of Quarrell and Easter Skaithmuir.²⁰⁰ He was married to Rachael Bruce, designed ‘Ladie Quarrell’, when she received sasine of several properties in 1685.²⁰¹ Robert resigned his lands in favour of Robert Elphinstone, his eldest son, in 1693.²⁰² This was done in respect of a clause in the marriage contract between Robert and Anna Campbell, daughter of Mr Adam Campbell of Gargunnoch in 1687. Evidently Michael died sometime before 1694 and his son then became Sir Robert Elphinston of Quarrell in his own right.²⁰³ He entered into a legal Agreement with James Guidlet of Abbotshaugh in 1700, in which he bound himself:

*“not to claime any interest of ferrie boats passing betwixt the Coalshoar of Quarrell and the lands of Abbotshaugh excepting a boat for himself and his family and friends”.*²⁰⁴

With the consent of his wife, Anna Campbell and his eldest son, Michael Elphinstone, Robert sold the lands of Quarrell and Skaithmuir in 1725 to John Drummond, a London merchant and Agatha Vanderbent, his wife.²⁰⁵ John was a brother of James Drummond of Blair-Drummond. After John’s death, the property was inherited in 1748 by his nephew, George Drummond of Blairdrummond.²⁰⁶

He did not retain the estate for very long as it was bought in 1749 by Thomas Dundas.²⁰⁷ Married to Ann Graham, daughter of James Graham of Airth, he was the son of Thomas Dundas, also a merchant of Edinburgh, and Bethia Baillie, daughter of John Baillie of Castlecary. Thomas and Bethia acquired part of the lands of [Powfoulis](#) in 1730, naming them ‘Fingask’, the name being taken from the hereditary lands of the Dundas family in Perthshire.²⁰⁸ When Thomas and Ann took possession of Quarrell they renamed it [Carron Hall](#) and the family then took the title of Dundas of Fingask and Carron Hall. A succession of the male line, most of whom were called Thomas, continued. The last of these was Thomas George Dundas, who died in Canada.²⁰⁹ Carronhall was acquired by Robert Dundas Orr, the son of Robert Orr of [Kinnaird](#), which estate is the immediate neighbour of Carronhall and, following his death in 1914, it was bought by [Carron Company](#), who demolished the house.²¹⁰

The actual deed of sasine was normally ritualised by handing over to the incoming owner a handful of earth and stones, symbolising possession of the land. Occasionally, when other facilities were present, additional presentations were made, such as the clapper when a mill was involved. John Drummond's sasine of 1725 is quite revealing as the relevant passage reads,

"by deliverance to him of earth and stone of the ground of the said lands, ane handfull of grass and ane handfull of corn for the said tiends and of ane oar for the coble and ane handfull of sand for the said passage boat and fishings with other symbols requisite".²¹¹

The 'coble' was the boat used to ferry people across the River Carron and it must be that the 'passage boat' was a separate entity, perhaps a flat bottomed vessel used to carry goods and animals. As well as the lands and ferry, Drummond and his wife also took possession of *"the Shoar of Quarrell the coall fold Warehouses and heal pertinent"*.

In 1763 the Company took a tack of the harbour, shore and shore dues of *"Quarrole shore now called Carron Harbour"*. Granaries and houses also stood at the shore as well as a "coal fold, inclosed with a stone wall".²¹² Due to this influence the place came to be known as [Carronshore](#).



The Graving Dock at Carronshore

However, preceding notices show that Quarrelshore, or Coalshore as it was sometimes known, had been a community for a long time before these events. George Cowie and James Collie were weavers there in the mid seventeenth century.²¹³ George was married to Margaret Geichen, who died sometime around 1664 and James to Janet Garnock, who died four years later. John White, a shoemaker in *Quarrell*, made a gift in 1686 of an annuity to his daughter, Jonet White and her husband, George White.²¹⁴ In 1697 the testament of James Manson, mariner at Quarrellshore was executed.²¹⁵ John Millar, a shoemaker at Quarrel Shore is noted from 1737²¹⁶ and John Whyte, a shoemaker there died in or around 1752.²¹⁷ John McLeish was a gardener at *Quarrele Shoar* in 1753.²¹⁸ James Aitken, who had been a tide waiter at Quarrel Shore, died sometime

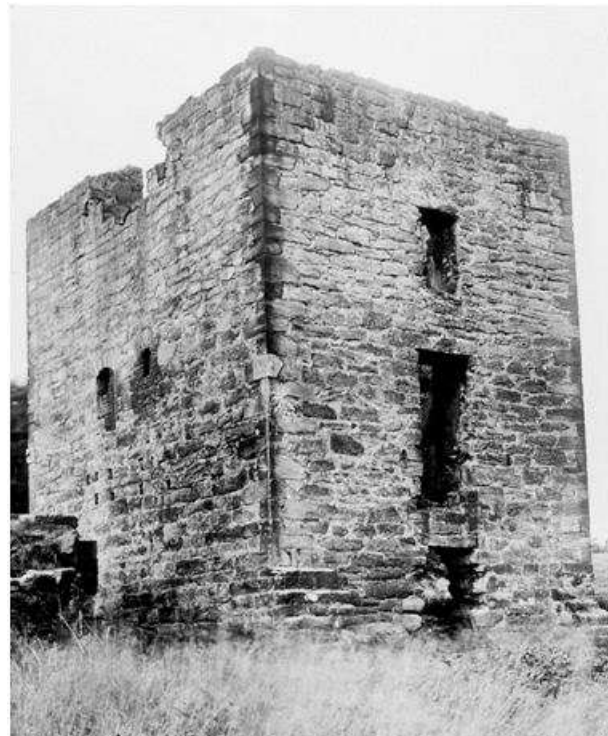
around 1754.²¹⁹ A tide-waiter would board incoming vessels at high tide and remain on board until they tied up in harbour, making sure that the cargo was not unloaded without being observed by the customs officer or land-waiter as they were known. In 1774 Mary Hall, the wife of Charles Telford who was a barber at Quarrelshore, died.²²⁰

The duality of the name of the place is observable in a record of the appearance of Alexander Leishman, a sailor in Newton, before the kirk session of [Bothkennar](#) for having 'irregularly' married Jennet Reid, daughter to John Reid "*att the Coalshore*". Later in the same record, Jennet's father is given as "John Reid at Quarrell". A particularly intriguing resident was Dudley Brest Garencieres, a land-waiter in Carronshore, who acquired a piece of land in Skaithmuir "near Carron Harbour in 1788."²²¹ He sold the property "near Carron Harbour or Quarrol shore" in 1795 to Theophilus Garencieres, an apothecary in Stonegate, York.²²² They must have been descendants of Theophilus Garencieres, a French doctor who, in 1672, translated the prophesies of Nostrodamus into English. His son Dudley settled in Chester in 1676 and was buried in Chester Cathedral in 1702. A record exists of the marriage in 1740 of Theophilus Garencieres, "of the city of York, apothecary", the great-grand-son of the French physician. He died in 1784, aged 69. His only son, Theophilus Davye Garencieres was lord mayor of York in 1796 and it is more than likely that Dudley, who lived in Carronshore, was his son. It should be pointed out that only part of the present day village is situated in the old feudal parish of Larbert; the eastern part is located in what was formerly the parish of Bothkennar.

Skaithmuir

As its first element, Skaithmuir has a word that derives from *skeid*, a word of Scandinavian origin. It has nothing to do with the Scots word *skaith* – 'damage, hurt, harm, etc.' but means 'boundary road' or 'boundary'. The road called the Langdyke forms the western boundary between the ancient parishes of Bothkennar and Larbert. The second element would appear to be the personal name Muir, which also takes the forms Mure, Moor, Moore and More. The [castle of Skaithmuir](#) is said to have been built by Reginald More, Chamberlain of Scotland.²²³ Certainly, the family of More of Abercorn, who descended from Reginald, held land in this vicinity in the fourteenth century.²²⁴

It is worth remarking that on the opposite side of the Langdyke from Skaithmuir was a place called Skaith Mallar, which name incorporates the personal name Malherbe, the same family as were associated with Stenhouse and Kinnaird. The belief regarding the origins of the castle would seem to derive from a grant made in 1329 by Newbattle Abbey to Reginald More of part of the lands of Kinnaird. The relevant charter, in defining the bounds of a piece of land being received by him, contains the phrase,



Skaithmuir Tower

“and from that place ascending on the west to the corner of the eastern gable of the great hall which was newly erected by Reginald”.

There is much to commend the notion that the piece of land acquired by More was that we know as Quarrell; it is sandwiched between Kinnaird and Skaithmuir. However, while More was evidently responsible for building a ‘hall’ in that vicinity it cannot have been the one known as Skaithmuir Tower as its architectural style belongs to the early seventeenth century.²²⁵ However, it is not improbable that he was responsible for its predecessor. It is intriguing to consider that the stone for this may have come from the quarry that gave the name to the lands of Quarrell.

Sometime between 1189 and 1193, a charter of confirmation of a grant of a ploughgate of land in Kinnaird by Gilbert de Umfraville was issued to Holyrood Abbey.²²⁶ An endorsement is inscribed on the charter, specifically stating that this portion of land was *Scaythmor*. Unfortunately the date of the addition is unknown but, circumstantially, this is the earliest notice of the place that came to be known as Skaithmuir. Nevertheless, the earliest overt notice comes from 1466 when Christian *Redechurch* was retoured in the lands of Quarrell and *Scathmure*.²²⁷ However, as it later emerges, there were two portions of Skaithmuir and it becomes evident that the Mure family were still occupying one of these in that same period for, in 1482, we find Alexander Mure of *Skaithmure* as the laird of the property.²²⁸ He was still active in 1497 when he is styled “lord of *Skathmure*”.²²⁹ One of his sons, James, held Westerton of Bothkennar in the period around 1488.²³⁰ His eldest son, William, who was described as his heir apparent in 1504²³¹ had succeeded to the estate by 1513 when he appears as “*William Mur of Skethmur*”.²³² He witnessed a charter in 1542²³³ but by 1569 had been succeeded by “Alexander Mure, laird of *Skaythmure*”.²³⁴ A writ of 1549 speaks of :

“Alexander Muir of *Skeithmuir*, and his tennantis, inhabitantis, and occupiaris of his fiftie schilling land of *Skeithmure*”.²³⁵

He died by 1582 when his son, Alexander, was retoured “in the lands of *Skaythmure* with the mill”.²³⁶

It is not immediately apparent that there were two divisions of these lands; this becomes apparent in 1549 when Robert, Lord Elphinstone, made a grant to James Elphinstone, his nephew, of the lands of Quarrell and *Eister Skaythmuir* in the barony of Elphinstone.²³⁷ A century earlier, in 1509, Alexander Stratoun of Laurieston received a crown charter of the lands and barony of Straiton in East Lothian.²³⁸ Incorporated into that barony were the lands of Seabegs, Castlecary and Skaithmuir. This was not a new incorporation and must have taken place at an earlier period. An act of Parliament of 1503 shows that Skaithmuir had formerly lain within the jurisdiction of “*Edinburghshire*” but from that time was to be subject to the sheriff court and justice ayre of Stirling. The connection is also apparent in charters concerning the lands of Castlecary and Seabegs.²³⁹ Several subsequent records show that these lands continued under the lordship of Straiton for several generations and it was the portion retained by the Mures that was held under that superiority. However, the two parts came together as the property of the Elphinstones in 1636, when Michael Elphinstone of Quarrell took possession of *Skaythmuir* with the manor place, houses, mill and mill lands which, it is stated, “*pertained to Alexander Muir*”.²⁴⁰ He was the last of the family to hold the lands and was described as the late Alexander “of *Skaithmure*” in 1643.²⁴¹ From that time forward, Skaithmuir and Quarrell are, to all intents and purposes, a single entry and so they have a common feudal history.

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