

PARISH OF MUIRAVONDSIDE

Rev. Mr John Bertram

Name, Situation, Extent, Soil &c. - This parish takes its name from the river Avon, which divides the counties of Linlithgow and Stirling. It is situated in the latter, although it belongs to the presbytery of Linlithgow, and synod of Lothian. It is bounded by the parishes of Borrowstounness, Linlithgow, Torphichen, Polmont and Slamannan. It is about 6 miles long, and 2 broad. The east end is of a light gravelly soil; the rest clay, with a mixture of moss and moor. A considerable part of the parish has been inclosed within these few years. The farms are very small: The rents commonly are high: The harvest early. There are 50 ploughs in the parish; and no farmer has more than one. As the farms are small, grass parks are commonly taken from year to year for feeding cattle. More corn is raised than is necessary to supply the parish. Twenty acres of lint were sown last year. The rental of the parish may be about L.2000.

Population – The return of the population to Dr Webster is said to have been 1469; but there seems to have been a mistake here, as one who knows it well asserts, that there has been no material alterations since the year 1745. At present, the number of souls amounts only to 1065. Of these, there are 302 under 10 years of age. The oldest man in the parish is 90. The barony of Almond has been all laid out in grass, and the farm houses have become ruinous. This may be assigned as one cause, and it seems to be the principal one, of the decrease of the population; but that estate being now all inclosed, considerable plantations made, and to be let out in commodious farms, will add greatly to the beauty and population of the place. The annual average of births is 45; deaths 35; but the Seceders, in general, do not insert their names in the parish register. The number of this sect here is 65. There are 37 heritors. The greatest part of them reside in the parish. There are no vagrant poor belonging to the parish. There are 20 pensioners on the poors roll.

Church and Stipend – The church is old. The stipend is L.83:6:8, a the old conversion of L.8:6:8 the chalder of victual. The glebe consists of 4 acres. The crown is patron.

Antiquities – There still remain some ruins of an old abbey, called Manuel, on the side of the Avon, about half a mile above Linlithgow bridge. It was built in the 12th century. There is an old castle called Almond hard by the church, which belongs to the Callander estate, but is not inhabited.

Miscellaneous Observations – There are several coal mines, and a great quantity of iron-stone in the parish. The fuel is coal and peat; but the former is chiefly used. There are 17 mills in this parish on the river Avon. There is 1 flour and 1 barley mill; 4 corn and 4 lint mills; 2 snuff and 2 fulling mills; 1 bark; 1 bleaching; and 1 flint mill. The wages of men servants, living in the house, are commonly L.6 a year, and of women servants L.3. Labourers get 10d. and 1s. per day.