

PARISH OF POLMONT (COUNTY OF STIRLING)

Rev Mr William Finlay

Name, Situation, Extent, &c. - The parish of Polmont was disjoined from that of Falkirk in 1724. The derivation of the name is uncertain; but one of the titles of the Duke of Hamilton, viz. Lord Polmont, is taken from it. The parish is situated in the county of Stirling, presbytery of Linlithgow, and synod of Lothian and Tweeddale. Its greatest length is 5 miles, and its breadth 2. It is intersected by the Frith of Forth on the north, and the river Avon on the east; and partly by the great canal (but *see the correction note added by Rev Finlay at the end of the account.*)

Soil, Climate. Minerals, &c. - A considerable part of the parish is of a rich carse ground, and very fertile; the average rent of which is 2 L. *per acre*. The rest is high, and of a light soil, but mostly in cultivation, except a small part of moor, and about one eighth, or one tenth, in common. The climate is remarkably healthy, even in the low carse districts. Seed is sown in March or April, and harvest generally takes place in September. There are several mineral springs, impregnated with iron, from the great quantities of iron ore in the higher grounds. The shore of the Frith (if it may be so called) is flat, pretty extensive at low water, and covered with sleetch. There are several considerable quarries of freestone, two of which are constantly wrought for building, and employ from 12 to 14 men. There are also several coal mines, chiefly belonging to the duke of Hamilton. The principal one is that at Shieldhill, in the moor south from Falkirk, which is let in lease to the Carron Company, and produces about 500 tons *per week*, of a remarkably fine quality. This coal work employs about 250 people, men, women, and children, and from 40 to 50 horses. It yields to the proprietor, about 500 L. *per annum*; besides the profit of the iron-stone, which is wrought from the old coal-pits, and is sold to the Carron Company at 10d *per stone weight*, above the expense of working it, and affords constant employment to about a dozen of people. (*but see the correction note added by Rev Finlay at the end of the account.*)

Population - According to the report sent to Dr Webster in 1755, the population then amounted to 1094 souls. It must therefore have increased considerably since that period, as it now amounts to about 1400. Of these the far greater part reside in the country, there being only a few houses near the church, and about fifty families who have feus on the turnpike road, which lies south from it. The average of births, for these last five years, is 64; of deaths, during the same period, 53, and of marriages, 22. The average number of persons to each family is $3\frac{1}{2}$, there being 400 houses in the parish, and not one of them uninhabited. Of these there are ten, which may be properly stiled villas, being possessed by genteel families, but without any great extent of property. The building of these houses, and the concomitant improvements of the country, occasioning a demand for labourers, have been the chief causes of increasing the population, as well as of preventing emigrations, of which there has not been a single instance from this district, for these five years past. There are about 200 household servants, male and female, in the parish, the former of whom get from 5 L. to 8 L. a year; and the latter from 2 L. 10s. to 3 L.

Church, Stipend. &c - The living, including the glebe, is worth about 90 L. *per annum* at an average. The Crown is patron. The church was built in 1732, and has had no reparations since, except being plastered in the roof and walls in 1785. The manse was built a few years after, and got some trifling repairs in 1784, and, in 1785, new office houses were built. There are about 40 heritors, 20 of whom are of the smaller sort. All the people attend the established church, except a few Seceders. There are no Episcopalians, and only one Roman Catholic. There are at present 17 regular pensioners, who receive alms from the poor's funds, besides those who receive charity occasionally. The annual amount

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of the funds for their relief is about 28 L. Sterling. (*but see the correction note added by Rev Finlay at the end of the account,*)

General Character, &c - The people, in general, are sober and industrious. None have been indicted for any crime, or banished, these many years, only one excepted. They measure from 5 feet 8, to 5 feet 10 inches. There is only one individual in the parish 6 feet 3. No particular manufactures are carried on in it. The expence of living is rather upon the increase of late years. Landed property has not changed often, and what has been sold lately has drawn 30 years purchase, and in general higher. On the whole, the people enjoy the usual comforts and advantages of society, and appear to be very well contented with their situation and circumstances.

The following corrections and additions to the Statistical Account of the parish of Polmont are here inserted, at the request of the Rev. Mr William Finlay:

Parish of Polmont

Corrections by the Rev. William Finlay

The parish of Polmont is not *intersected*, but bounded, by the frith of Forth on the north, and by the river Avon on the east. A small part of it is intersected by a short cut from Grangemouth to the Forth, which now forms the only navigable communication betwixt that and the Great Canal. The *ironstone* is sold by the proprietors of land to the Carron Company, not at *tenpence per stone*, but at tenpence per *ton*. The annual amount of funds for the relief of poor is not *twenty-eight* pounds, but about fifty-five, and the expenditure about fifty-two. By an interlocutor of the Tiend Court, June 1793, the stipend of this parish is ordained to be 111 bolls, 2 firlots, 1 peck, 2 lippies bear, 56 bolls of meal, and L. 152: 10: 10 Scots money, with L.60 money foresaid for furnishing the communion elements. The real rent of the parish amounts to about L.4000 Sterling per annum.