

New Statistical Account - Dunipace

PARISH OF DUNIPACE Drawn up by Mr Robert Watson, Parochial Schoolmaster of Dunipace.

I - TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Topography - The parish of Dunipace is bounded on the west and north by the parish of St Ninians; on the east, by the parish of Larbert; and on the south, by the parishes of Falkirk and Denny, the far-famed river Carron separating it from the latter for nearly five miles. Its form approaches to that of a triangle, and it contains about 4600 Scots acres; valued rent in the cess-books, L.3138. 11s. 8d.; real rental, including lands, mills, quarries, and annual produce of woods, upwards of L.6000 Sterling. The teinds are all valued, some at a more early, and some at a more recent date. They amount to L.483, 9s.3¼d.

Name - This parish takes its name from two beautiful earthen mounts called "the Hills of Dunipace," situated in a small but beautiful plain, traversed by the river Carron. They are about sixty feet in height, and both together cover about two Scots acres. Buchanan says their name is derived from *Dun* or *Dunum*, the Celtic word, signifying a hill or tower on a hill, and the Latin word *pax*, peace. Other etymologists, say with much more probability, that the name is derived from two Celtic words, *Duin-na-Bais*, or *Duna bas*, (pronounced pas,) hills or tumuli of death. In writs issued by Edward I of England, at Dunipace, 14th October 1301, it is written Donypas. Buchanan, and most historians after him, say that these hills are artificial. He adds, that they were raised to commemorate a peace concluded between Donald I and the Roman Emperor Severus, in the early part of the third century. These opinions appear to be wholly untenable. Any lengthened discussion on this subject being inconsistent with this work, we merely mention, that, in the immediate neighbourhood, there are several similar though less remarkable earthen mounts. About two miles to the westward of these hills, there was a very beautiful one about forty feet in height, and covering nearly three roods of ground, said also to be artificial. This hill was mutilated, from time to time, for the purpose of repairing roads and other purposes. It was entirely removed about six years ago, to form an embankment on the turnpike road near Denny bridge. The strata of which this hill was composed, were carefully observed during its removal. These were so regular, and as if rising out of, and gradually returning again to similar strata in the circumjacent level ground, as to afford conclusive evidence that the hill was not the work of man. On the top of this hill, and about three feet below the surface, was found a coffin or tomb, composed of five large unwrought stones, in which were the bones of a human body, scull and teeth not much decayed. Along with these, was a vase of coarse unglazed earthenware, containing a small quantity of material resembling the lining of a wasp's nest, probably decayed paper or parchment, which in the lapse of ages had assumed that appearance. No conjecture could be formed about the individual here interred, tradition being entirely silent on the subject; but this circumstance corroborates the opinion of some writers, that the hills of Dunipace might have been used as burying-places for ancient chiefs. For, previous to the erection of bridges in this district, the ford in the vicinity of these hills was the principal passage over the Carron, and would be the scene of many a bloody conflict between hostile armies. Hence the appropriateness of their name, "hills of death."¹

II - CIVIL HISTORY

Heritors - There are twenty-nine heritors in this parish, of which the principal are,

| Estates. | Proprietors' Names. | Valued Rent |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Denovan, | James Johnston, Esq. of Alva, | L.779 17 7 |
| Dunipace, | Thomas Spottiswoode. Esq. | 441 3 9 |
| Quarter, | John H. Brown, Esq. | 305 7 6 |

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| | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Torwoodhead, | Major Dundas, Carron Hall, | 251 10 10 |
| Herbertshire, | William Forbes, Esq. of Callendar | 156 4 4 |
| Burnthouse, | Peter Muirhead, Esq | 116 13 8 |
| Househill, | Sir Gilbert Stirling. Bart. Larbert, | 10 5 11 |
| Bogend, | Robert Bauchop, Esq. | 102 5 8 |
| | | L.2263 9 3 |

The balance of L.875, 2s. 5d. is divided among the remaining twenty-one heritors, in various proportions; only three of them are under L.50 per annum of real rental. Of these twenty-nine heritors, eight are Dissenters, whose joint valuation amounts to L.401, 6s.

Mansion-houses - Herbertshire Castle.- This is a very ancient building. The date of its erection is unknown. Its situation on the north bank of the Carron is very beautiful. The banks of the river above the house are extremely picturesque, - sloping in stripes of verdant meadows, tufted with trees to the water's edge, and rising boldly into rocks fringed with brushwood, and crowned with plantations, amid which a beautiful variety of walks conducts to the most striking features of this romantic scene. It was originally a royal hunting station. In the fifteenth century, it was in the possession of that once powerful family the Sinclairs, Dukes of Orkney. In the following century, it was the property of the Earls of Linlithgow, from whom it passed into a family named Stirling, cadets of the Stirlings of Auchyle in Perthshire. An heiress of this surname, Lady of Lord Alva, Senator of the College of Justice, sold it about seventy years ago to a Mr Morehead, whose grandson sold it in 1835 to the present proprietor, William Forbes, Esq. of Callendar, M. P. for the county of Stirling.

Torwood Castle - The ruin of this castle stands about a quarter of a mile to the westward of the turnpike road from Falkirk to Stirling, surrounded by the remains of the ancient Caledonian forest. Its history is involved in much obscurity. It was long in possession of the Baillies, who were at the same time proprietors of Castlecarry, in the parish of Falkirk. One of these Baillies married a daughter of the first Lord Forrester, by whom he became father to the second Lord Forrester, from whom this estate came by purchase into the possession of the late Thomas Dundas, Esq. grandfather of the present proprietor, Colonel Dundas of Carron Hall. The forest of Torwood is associated with all that is ennobling in patriotism and personal valour. Here stood Wallace's oak, 12 feet in diameter, in the hollow of which he and his patriotic companions, it is said, used to meet and concert their plans for wresting their country from the grasp of the ambitious Edward. This noble son of the forest disappeared about thirty years ago, after having weathered the storms of a thousand winters. Not far from the site of this tree, Mr Donald Cargill, in the month of September 1680, in the presence of a numerous assembly, pronounced sentence of excommunication against some of the most violent persecutors of that day, among whom were Charles II., his brother, James Duke of York, Duke of Monmouth, and several other persons of note. This act of Mr Cargill's was never publicly approved of by Presbyterians.

Dunipace - This beautiful estate was, in 1606, in the possession of Mr John Levingston, who was one of the jury appointed to try six Presbyterian ministers at the instance of King James VI for meeting with some other ministers, and holding an Assembly at Aberdeen, in the preceding July, without his Majesty's consent, who was then exerting himself by every means in his power, to erect Episcopacy on the ruins of Presbytery. Six of the jury voted, "not guilty," among whom was the laird of Dunipace, who, says Calderwood, not only absolved these ministers from being guilty of treason, but maintained "they were honest ministers, faithful servants of Jesus Christ, and good subjects of the King." This independent manly conduct of the laird of Dunipace, King James was weak enough to resent afterwards. This same gentleman, in 1621, as Member of Parliament for the shire of Stirling, voted against the adoption of the "five articles of Perth." Dunipace afterwards came into the possession of the Primroses, the last of whom, Sir Archibald, having in 1745 joined the rebel army under the Pretender, was taken prisoner and beheaded at Carlisle. Dunipace then fell into the hands of Government, from whom it was afterwards purchased by the father of the present proprietor, Thomas Spottiswoode, Esq. The mansion-house, which stands within a few yards of the site of the old church, is of modern architecture, and has an elegant appearance.

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Quarter-House, the residence of John Harvie Brown, Esq. was built by the late Alexander Brown, Esq. on a rising ground to the eastward of the turnpike-road leading from Denny to Stirling. It had, for a number of years, rather a bleakish aspect; but the clumps of trees intended to screen it from the north and west winds now growing up, give it both an elegant and comfortable appearance.

Carbrook-House, the seat of John Campbell, Esq. is built in a very romantic situation, within half a mile of Torwood Castle, the woods around which adorn Mr Campbell's house, in a very picturesque manner.²

III - POPULATION

The population of this parish in 1831 was 1278; since that time, from accommodation having been built for nearly fifty additional families, the number has increased to 1460,³ of which .above 1000,⁴ belong to the Established Church; the remainder, exclusive of those that attend no church, belong to the Dissenters, who have two places of worship, in the neighbouring parish of Denny. It is worthy of notice, that the adherents of the Establishment have increased greatly here since the agitation of what is called the Voluntary Question, which has been conducted in this quarter with unexampled virulence.

It is a curious fact, that there is neither a medical man nor a clergyman, a smith⁵ nor a wright, nor even a resident beggar in this parish; and it is but of late, that there was either a baker or a tailor in it. The oldest resident families are the Muirheads of Tyggetshaugh and the Watsons of Wester Barnego.

IV - INDUSTRY

Agriculture - Of the 4600 acres which this parish contains, there may be about 500 acres under wood, partly planted and partly natural; about 300 acres of moor, moss, and rock; the remainder arable, but of very different qualities. Two-thirds of it lie on a substratum of sandstone; the remainder on whin rock. It rises at its western extremity to the height of 600 feet above the level of the Forth. Its eastern parts terminate in the carse of Stirling, a few feet above the level of that river. The average rental may be about L.2 per Scots acre of what is reckoned good land. Some fields, however, on the banks of the Carron, let as high as L.3 and sometimes L.4 per acre. With a very few exceptions, the land is cultivated in as improved a method as it will admit of. The nature of the soil will not bear often cropping. A considerable proportion is always laid down in grass, for rearing and feeding cattle. Considerable quantities of turnips are raised, and still more of potatoes, which are generally of a very good quality. Formerly, flax was sown on every farm, but since foreign flax was so plentifully imported, that crop has given way to wheat, which grows here well. From the proximity of the Campsie hills, Denny-moor, and other high moorland districts, a great quantity of rain falls, particularly during the continuance of the westerly winds, which prevail here during eight months in the year; yet, from the unevenness of the surface, assisted by draining, there is scarcely any stagnant water in this district, a circumstance, no doubt, favourable to the health and comfort of the inhabitants. From this draining and other agricultural improvements, the river Carron, except in time of floods, discharges a much less quantity of water than it did fifty years ago. To command a supply of that necessary article to the numerous mills on this stream, a large reservoir has been lately formed on one of its feeders called Earl's Burn, in the parish of St Ninians. Every article of farm produce finds here a ready market and a good price. Rents are all in money. Cattle are generally of a moderate size. Heavy ones are found not to be profitable on light soils, either for dairy or feeding. Labourers' wages run about 10s. per week; men-servants' L.16, and women L.9 per annum. The number of separate farms is forty, and of families depending on agriculture about sixty-eight, being rather more than one-fifth part of the whole population.

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Manufactures - There are two extensive and respectable calico-printing establishments in this parish, viz. Herbertshire and Denovan. The former was begun in 1783, the latter in 1800. The number employed at Herbertshire print-works, the property of Charles Carnie, Esq. in September 1836, was nearly as follows:- Block-printers, journeymen, 16; apprentices, males, 44 females, 40. Tierers, one to each printer, and a few called paper-layers, 110; print-cutters, dyers, colour-mixers, labourers, &c from twelve years of age and upwards, 100; girls employed in sewing and fringing, 80. Total number employed, 390. A great quantity of goods are printed here by machinery. Some of these machines put in four different colours almost at the same instant.

Near these works, the proprietor has a genteel country residence, but its beauties are considerably obscured by the lowness of its situation, and by the proximity of the neighbouring village of Herbertshire.

The number employed at Denovan print-works, the property of James Graham Adam, Esq. from an official statement, is as under:- Block-printers, journeymen, 100; apprentices, males, 85; females, 15. Print-cutters and pattern-drawers, 30; colour-mixers, dyers, bleachers, and general labourers, 80; sewers and fringers of shawls, vary, according to the season of the year, from 50 to 150, - average, say, 90; miscellaneous, employed during the course of the year, 20; tierers, composed of boys and girls, one to each printer, - the ages of this class of workers vary from six to twelve years, 200. Total number employed, 620. Journeymen printers earn from L.1 to L.1, 10s. per week; male apprentices earn from 10s. to 15s.; and females from 5s. to 10s. per week, according to their respective skill and expertness; print-cutters and drawers earn from 15s. to L.1, 15s; labourers from 7s. to 12s.; and tierers from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per week.

Of the workmen belonging to these two printing establishments, about one-third are domiciled in this parish, the other two-thirds live in the opposite side of the river Carron, in the village of Denny; consequently, the general manners of the inhabitants in both places are very similar.

The scenery around Denovan Works fascinates the eye of every traveller. On their southern boundary, the red-roaming Carron, with its thousand associations, just escaped from its native mountains, moors, and glens, rolls its now peaceful waves. A little to the eastward stands the parish church with its beautiful Gothic tower, rising majestically above the surrounding oaks. A few yards higher in the landscape, stands Mr Adam's House, delicately screened from the northern blasts, by the rising eminences in the back-ground of this beautiful panorama.

Mills - There are in this parish three grain-mills, two flax-mills, one mill for carding and spinning wool, and one for grinding charred wood for Carron Iron-Works.

Quarries are four in number - all producing superior freestone. One of them abounds with excellent flag or pavement stone, which has an extensive sale. Considerable quantities of these flags are carried in carts and boats to a great distance. These quarries employ about 40 individuals.

V - PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

Villages - There are three villages - Herbertshire, Denovan, and Torwood; the former contains about 761, and the two latter about 150 inhabitants each. There are eight tippling-houses, one to every thirty-seven families; and in the closely adjoining village of Denny, there is a tippling-house for every twenty families, and the whole seem to be well-frequented, some of them both night and day.

Bridges - Previous to the year 1824, carriages passed the Carron near Dunipace House by a ford, and foot-travellers by steps. In that year, a handsome bridge of three arches was erected a little below the ford. In 1828, the bridge over the Carron, between the parishes of Dunipace and Denny, on the Glasgow and Stirling road, being considered unfit, from its height and narrowness, for the wheel-

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carriages of the present day, and also in an unsafe state from its age, was removed, and a neat substantial bridge of three arches erected in its place.

Farmers' Society - About two years ago, a Farmers' Society was formed for the purpose of encouraging agricultural improvements, and particularly for improving the breed of cattle. The Society has a ploughing match and a cattle-show every year. Almost all the proprietors and farmers in the parish are members. Much good, in these particulars, has already been done, and much more is expected from the exertions of this respectable Society.

Poor - The number of poor on the roll averages about 10, who receive from 1s. to 3s. per week respectively. The heritors assess themselves annually, generally at the rate of 20s. per hundred pounds Scots of valued rent. The amount from collections at church door, and interest of a sum belonging to the parish, varies from L.50 to L.60 per annum. Besides this, the late William Simpson, Esq. of Plean, left L.500 to the kirk-session for behoof of the poor not on the roll. The interest of this sum is expended annually in purchasing coals, paying house rents, and otherwise, as the kirk-session may direct.

Schools - There are two schools - the parochial school, situated near the centre of the parish, and a private school in the small village of Torwood. The greatest part of the scholars attending this school, come from the contiguous parishes of St Ninians and Larbert. There was a parochial school-house built in this parish in 1696, but whether it was the first in the parish or not, cannot be determined, the parish, or rather existing session records, extending no farther back than 1707. The number of scholars attending the parochial school has averaged, for the last twenty years, about 60. Fees for reading, 2s. 6d., with writing, 3s.; arithmetic, 3s. 6d.; Latin, French, and Greek, 5s. per quarter. The schoolmaster is kirk-treasurer, for which he receives L.2, 2s. per annum. The salary is the maximum. The school-room and school-house are built on a liberal scale. The garden is of the required extent. The office of session-clerk, worth L.5 per annum, has not been held by the present schoolmaster, nor by his immediate predecessor. The number that cannot read, is not great; but many, particularly of the female part of the rising generation, read so imperfectly, that they can reap little practical benefit from it. This arises chiefly from the prevailing but reprehensible practice of putting mere infants to work, in the several manufactories in this district.

Ecclesiastical History - This parish was originally a chapel of the parish of Egglis, now St Ninians, and was conveyed, along with the other chapels and oratories of that parish (*i.e.* the said abbey was founded very lately before the said annexations) to the newly founded Abbey of Cambuskenneth, by Robert the sixteenth Bishop of St Andrews, about the year 1130. An uncle of the renowned Sir William Wallace was parson or officiating priest of Dunipace, in the latter part of the thirteenth century. Sir William frequently made his uncle's house his home. The following lines, said to be composed by his uncle in the fashionable style of that period, were often repeated by that hero:

Dico tibi verum, libertas est optima rerum

Nunquam servili sub nexu vivito fili.

Which may be translated,

I tell you truth, of all things liberty's the best,

O never be my son with slavery oppress.

At the period of the Reformation, Dunipace and Larbert were erected into separate parishes. Dunipace was then more populous, and by far more wealthy than Larbert, so much so, that the latter parish could not maintain a minister. A union, therefore, with Dunipace was desired, and accomplished under the authority of two acts of the Scottish Parliament 1617 and 1624. From various documents, and from immemorial usage, it appears that the terms of union were, "That there should be one minister only for the two parishes; that each parish should retain and maintain its own church, and its own school; that each parish should have its own kirk-session, and maintain its own poor separately; that the celebration of Divine service, and the pastoral labours of the minister should be equally divided between the parishes." It appears also, in consequence of the above terms of union, that Divine service was uniformly celebrated alternately in both churches. The sacrament of our Lord's supper was also uniformly dispensed alternately, the Fast-day services preceding each

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sacrament being performed in the church of the other parish. On other occasional fasts, public worship was observed alternately. This union seems to have given satisfaction to all concerned, till after the induction of the late Dr Robert Knox, in 1794, when a deviation from the terms of union was observed to take place, by the minister preaching oftener in Larbert than in Dunipace.

This apparent indifference about Dunipace on the part of the minister, reduced still farther the *debris* of that congregation, the greater part of whom had already become Seceders. At last, on the 28th of April 1799, alternate service was finally given up. In 1801, complaint was made to the presbytery of Stirling against Dr Knox, who obtained a vague kind of sentence in his favour, which was afterwards confirmed by the synod of Perth and Stirling "allowing Dr Knox to preach oftener in Larbert than in Dunipace, on account of the increase of population in the former parish;" - a decision evidently *ultra vires* of any ecclesiastical court, the civil rights of the parish being thereby injured, such as the collection for the poor, &c. After this, Divine service was performed two days in Larbert, and one in Dunipace till 1823, when Dr Knox declined preaching altogether in the parish of Dunipace. The sacrament of our Lord's supper was not administered in Dunipace, after 1795 till 1830. A process before the church courts was commenced by the heritors in June 1825, for recovering the rights of the parish of Dunipace; but the death of Dr Knox in the month of December following, put an end to that contest. The present incumbent, the Rev. John Bonar, was inducted to the charge of these parishes in 1826, and immediately resumed the practice of preaching two Sundays in Larbert, and one in Dunipace. But the impropriety of having either of these parishes without the regular dispensation of Divine service, became so apparent to all concerned, that, after some preliminary arrangements, an assistant to Mr Bonar, at the joint expense of both parishes, was obtained, by which Divine service was performed in both churches every Lord's day. Mr Bonar, however, continued to preach as above, till the opening of the new church of Dunipace. Since that time, Mr Bonar has preached alternately in both churches, agreeably to the original terms of union between these parishes. The congregation of Dunipace has, from a few individuals, increased to several hundreds. The kirk-session at present consists of the moderator and three lay elders.⁶ Here, as elsewhere, there is an unwillingness to accept of that office.

Old Church - This church was situated within a few yards of the "Hills of Dunipace," where the burying-ground belonging to the parish, still is. It was a very plain building, with galleries in front and ends, affording accommodation for 350 sitters. The date of its erection is unknown. From several appearances of arches in its walls, it probably had originally several aisles attached to it. Its stability was not called in question, till two or three years before its removal, when a mason was employed to insert in its front wall, a marble tablet to the memory of William Simpson, Esq. who left, as above stated, L.500 to the poor of the parish. This mason, and others employed for the purpose of inspecting it, declared its walls to be in a dangerous state; of which opinions the result was

The New Church. - This church stands a mile and a half to the westward of the old church, on the top of one of these little knolls with which, as was formerly noticed, this district abounds. Its Situation is peculiarly fine. It is built in the Gothic style, with a tower, in which there is a very good bell. It is seated for 604 individuals, and cost L.2500. It was opened for public worship on Sunday the 29th of June 1834.

Stipend - The parishes of Dunipace and Larbert, being under the pastoral superintendence of one minister, his stipend is allocated from the teinds of both parishes. The stipend, as fixed by the Court of Teinds in 1823, the period of the last augmentation, is 8½ chalders of barley and 8½ chalders of oatmeal, at the fair prices of the county, with L.16, 13s. 4d. for communion elements. The manse was lately repaired at the mutual expense of both parishes. These repairs cost L.660. At the manse, which stands in the parish of Larbert, there is a good glebe, the common property of both parishes, and there is another glebe belonging to the parish of Dunipace, worth at least L.10 per annum. The Crown is patron.

Revised September 1841.

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Notes

1. Perhaps after all, the learned criticism that has been bestowed on the name "Dunipace," the meaning simply may be "the round hills at the pass, i.e. over the Carron, or, the pass at the round hills." It is in favour of our theory of these hills that the French form of the Celtic word Dun is "La Dune," plural "Les Dunes," meaning small conical hillocks, such as those sand hills on the coast of Kent, near Deal, the most of which are now covered with the sea. Hence that well known road for ships in the neighbourhood of these hills is called the "Downs." Tradition says that the site of the Dunipace hills was formerly covered by the German Ocean.
2. Since the above was written, the following alterations in the state of property have taken place, - James Johnston, Esq. of Alva, has sold Denovan to William Forbes, Esq. of Callendar, by which purchase Mr Forbes is now the first heritor. The Dunipace and Quarter estates are now conjoined by John Harvie Brown having married Miss Spottiswoode, heiress of the late Thomas Spottiswoode Esq., of Dunipace. This makes Mr. Brown now the second heritor.
3. By the census of 1841, the population, amounts to 1578, whereof 1100 belong to the established Church.
4. From the continually shifting, and anomalous nature of a calico printing population, no accurate statistical account of them can be given.
5. Since the above was written, a smith has commenced business here, and is doing well.
6. Since the above was written, other two elders have been elected, making the present number five.