

OUR HERITAGE CAR TRAILS

BLAIRGOWRIE TO PITLOCHRY and DUNKELD



Published by Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council

Introduction

This series of booklets has been prepared to help people to enjoy our heritage as well as the countryside near the town. The Car Trail booklets are intended to be read aloud by a passenger during the journey, so that everyone in the car can be informed about a place before it is reached.

An audio tape is available for the solo driver. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the descriptions and the information given, and your indulgence is asked for any errors which you may find in the text. The Secretary of the Community Council will welcome corrections or suggestions for additional material for inclusion in the next edition.

If you stop anywhere on the journey, please observe the Countryside and Forestry Codes, and do not discard any litter.

Text by Adam H. Malcolm.

Additional material: David Brown and Archie Petrie.

Illustrations by John Hulverson.

Maps by George Mitchell.

Copyright: Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council. 1996.

The origin of the name Blairgowrie uncertain. It may mean "The Plain of Goats" or "The Battlefield", but other origins have been suggested. It is a small country town which grew from an 18th century village of 400 to be a busy industrial town of 4,000 during the 19th century. The growth was due to the building of textile mills on the banks of the River Ericht to process flax and, later, jute. The mills have all closed, as has any sizeable industrial enterprise, and the prosperity of the town depends on Agriculture and Tourism. The town is the centre of the raspberry growing area, which started here 100 years ago.

In 1634, the village became a Burgh of Barony, which continued to 1901.

In 1928, the Town Council was united with that of Rattray, the companion town across the river.

The name Rattray means "The Fort of the Hunter" which alludes to the ancient Fort on a mound to the east of Old Rattray.

The original settlement, claimed by some to be much older than Blairgowrie, had Old Rattray Kirk, established in 1170, as its centre.

New Rattray grew up round the top of the Boat Brae after the Brig o' Blair was built in 1777, and after the new turnpike roads came into use.

"OUR HERITAGE" CAR TRAIL BRIG O' CALLY/STRATHARDLE/PITLOCHRY/ DUNKELD/BLAIRGOWRIE

Please set your odometer at zero as you wait at or pass the traffic lights.

Leave the Wellmeadow by crossing the Brig o' Blair, which was built in 1777 to take the place of a ferry boat. This plied across "the Coble Pule" to the Boat Brae, which faces you on the other bank of the River Ericht. Animals and vehicles crossed by a ferry just upstream.

The flats on the right are built on the site of the first permanent cinema in the town. It was of wood, and after it burned down, the site became a fairground, used by travelling "shows". A new cinema was built in 1938 but became a Bingo Hall and then closed in 1992, to be demolished for housing.

Another cinema, Quinn's "Picture House" - now closed - was erected on the site of James Square in Reform Street.

The Riverside (Methodist) Church on the left has a notable stained glass window, the only Memorial in the country to the Labour Corps of the First World War.

At the top of the Brae, take the road to the left, the A93, leading through New Rattray, one of the suburbs of the town, but once part of the separate Burgh of Rattray.

This highway was constructed to replace part of the Military Road which was built in 1748/9 from Coupar Angus to Fort George, near Inverness, in order to avoid the steep inclines and difficult bends by which it climbed to the windswept heights of Cochrage Muir, to the north of Blairgowrie.

At 0.8 miles, on the left, you will see the sign for Keithbank Mill, now a Heritage Centre. Formerly a flax and jute spinning mill, it was adapted to produce artificial fibres, but ceased working in 1979.

"Keith" is a old Scots word meaning dam or barrier built across a river to prevent salmon running further upstream. The Minister of Kirkmichael, some fifteen miles upstream, records, in the Statistical Account of 1791, his parishioners' resentment at being deprived of the run of salmon. This valuable source of food in hungry times was denied them by the erection of the keith at Blairgowrie.

Just upriver from Keithbank is Bramblebank Mill, and then Westfield Mill at 1.00 miles. The valley opening up across the river beyond Westfield, is that of the Lornty Burn, with Brooklinn Mill at its confluence with the Ericht.

All the local mills are now closed, but were the principal source of employment in the 19th century. Originally spinning flax, which was grown widely in the district, they changed to jute when one of the local millowners discovered how to spin the difficult fibre, using whale oil which was then being brought into Dundee in great quantities.

The road now sweeps round to the right and on the opposite bank is a darkly wooded slope, called the Heughs o' Mause. The story is that the Devil, on being expelled from Heaven, fell to earth just to the south of the river, and, seeing the steep slope, made the fearsome scars in the hillside, now called the Cleughs or Heughs - that is, clawmarks - as he scrambled for a firm grip to allow him to gain the summit, whence he hoped to be able to return to Heaven.

On the face of the Heughs is a chalybeate well, from which flows water rich in iron. It was, at one time, very popular for the health-giving quality of the reddish water.



Heughs o' Mause.

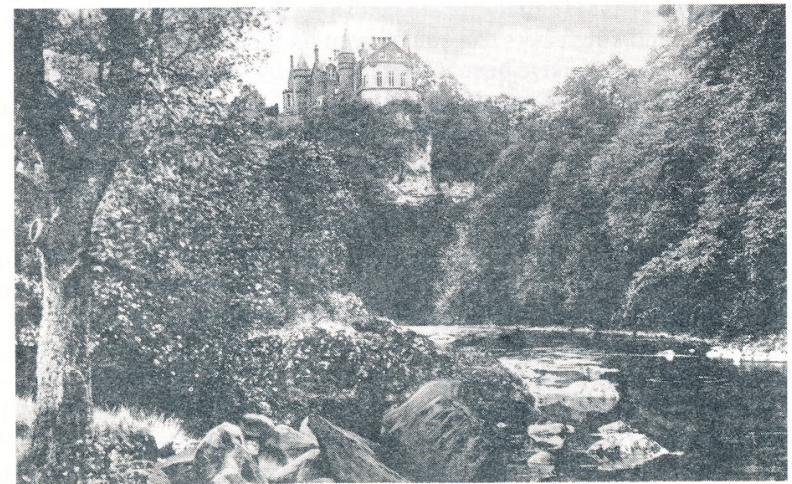
To the right is the entrance to Craighall, a mansion house which is the home of Rattray of Rattray, chief of the clan. The Rattrays have owned the estate since the twelfth century and built a castle on the edge of a precipitous gorge north of Craighall Brig which you cross at 1.50 miles.

The castle replaced a wooden fort which they had erected on a mound, Castlehill, to the east of Old Rattray, the move taking place shortly after the Battle of Flodden when the Rattray chief fell beside his King.

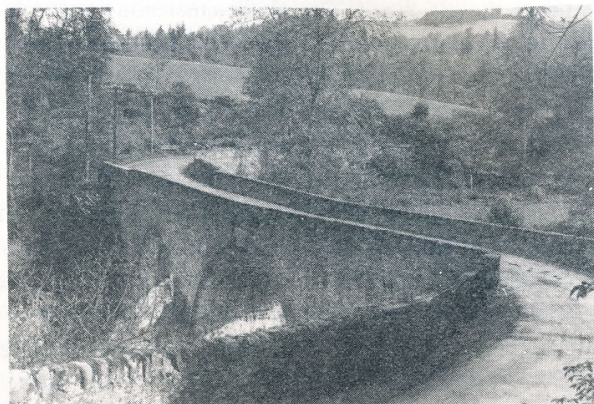
Shortly after that, the Earl of Athole, who had hoped to bring the Rattray estate into his ownership, captured the castle and married two of the Rattray daughters to two of his relatives, but Lady Rattray and her son evaded capture and eventually won back Castlehill and the estate by process of law.

It is possible to see Craighall when the foliage is off the trees, but only passengers should look for it!

The spectacular setting, on the brink of a 70 metre high cliff, was recalled by Sir Walter Scott, from a visit he had made in 1799, and woven into the description of the mansion of Tullyveolan, in his first novel, Waverley. The fictional building, however, was a composite of several great houses which he had seen in the Highlands.



Craighall.



The old Craighall Brig.

The present Craighall Brig was built just before World War Two, replacing that built by the Military in 1809.

For a considerable distance to the north of the Brig, the River Ericht runs at the bottom of a spectacular, narrow gorge with cliffs reaching 300 feet (100 metres) cut by the action of the water through the native bedrock, which is red conglomerate sandstone. Peregrine falcons used to nest there, and kingfishers can still be seen on the Ericht, as can otters. Unfortunately, they have been joined recently by wild mink.

On a sheer rocky promontory, on this side of the gorge, just south of Craig Liach (the Grey Craig), are the remains of a small fortification. This is said to be Lady Lindsay's Tower, where Lady Janet Gordon, who killed her husband, was imprisoned. She was the grand-daughter of James I, and married the Master of Lindsay, the son of the Earl of Crawford, later Duke of Montrose. It seemed a most desirable marriage, but he turned out to be a real rogue, leading a band of armed robbers in raids around the countryside from his castle at Inverquiech, near Alyth. He quarrelled with his brother and when their forces met, was badly wounded and carried home, where his wife, at the end of her tether, smothered him.

As punishment, she had to spin enough thread daily to reach from her tower to the river below before she was given food for the day, and her ghost was said to be doomed to spin to eternity.

After a succession of turns, the road bends away from the river and, at 3.3 miles, passes the other end of the service road to Mause, where the new road to replace the route through the gorge will rejoin the present A93.

Just beyond that, in the middle of a straight stretch at 3.3 miles, you will see an ornate gatehouse, a listed building, on the right. This marks the private road leading to the mansion house of Glenelich estate. If you look to the left, opposite the gatehouse, you will see a short road leading uphill to a house which was the gatehouse - or Porter's Lodge, as it was described by the owner, William Chalmers - when the old Military Road was still in use.

He opposed the building of the turnpike road from Blair to the Brig o' Cally in 1843 because he had just built his new lodge on the old road and did not want to have the new road run through his policies, as it cut off some of his new plantings. However, he did relent, and you are now travelling along the new Turnpike Road.

There is a persistent local story that the policies of Glenelich were planted out with trees to represent the disposition of the opposing forces at the battle of Waterloo. As his lengthy letters of objection are dated less than thirty years after that epic battle, and as it seems that the planting of trees in this way was something of a fad among the landed gentry of the time, the story may well be true. Today, alas, fellings have removed any chance of checking the story.

Another road, now disused, ran from the Brig o' Cally down the west bank of the Ericht to Glenelich House, and on uphill to Mause and the valley of the Lorn. It was along this road that the well-authenticated haunting of William Soutar took place between 1728 and 1730.

A ghostly black dog appeared to him several times as he was journeying to his home at Middle Mause and eventually persuaded him to dig under a certain bush on the Haugh of Rochallie, where the bones of a murdered man had been hidden.

These were removed for proper burial in the Kirkyaird at Blairgowrie, and the haunting ceased. The haunting is well authenticated, one of the examining witnesses being the laird of Craighall, then Bishop of Dunkeld. The full story is recounted in a book, "The Ghost o' Mause" by Maurice Fleming, of Blairgowrie, who has collected a large number of tales of the district and published them under this title.



Blackwater from Glenericht.

At 5.9 miles, you come to Brig o' Cally Hotel, one of the old coaching inns on this route. Formerly, it was known as the Invercauld Arms, an indication of the extent of the influence of the powerful Farquharson family, which had extensive holdings of land in the district. Their seat was - and is - at Invercauld House, near Braemar.

Immediately to the south of the hotel, the disused stretch of the Old Military Road from Blairgowrie joins the A93, which, to the north of the Brig o' Cally, still follows quite closely the line surveyed and constructed in 1748/9 by Major Cauldfeild, who was given the task by General Wade, the Director of the Government's post-1715 Highland roadmaking programme.

Beyond the hotel, the brig crosses the River Ardle, which drains Strathardle. The present bridge is the latest in a series which have spanned the steep river valley. A short distance downstream, the Ardle joins the Blackwater, the river draining Glenshee, to form the Ericht. The upper reaches of the Blackwater are known as the Shee and, north of the Spittal of Glenshee, the Allt na Glen Beag (the burn of the small valley), the headwaters of which rise just south of Braemar. This burn joins the somewhat larger burns flowing from Glenlochsie and Glen Taitenach to form the Shee.

You turn left for Strathardle and Pitlochry.



Brig o' Cally with the Military Brig in the background.

STRATHARDLE TO PITLOCHRY

To the left, on the corner of the Brig, is the Post Office which serves as a general store for the village.

Situated above the road, on the right, is Glenardle House, in which the famous tenor, Durward Lely, lived from 1925 to 1936, when his wife died and he went to live with his son in Glasgow. He was born James Durward Lyall in Ballintuim, where his father was a stonemason. While he was working in a solicitor's office in Blairgowrie, his talent as a singer was recognised, and a patron paid for his training, which included a spell at La Scala, Milan.

Becoming a star in the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, he worked closely with W.S. Gilbert, but performed other operatic roles. He was Don Jose in the first English performance of Carmen. The modernised house was recently on the market at an asking price of £250,000.

At 6.7 miles, a road to the left, signposted "Steps of Cally", leads down to the river valley to the disused Cally Mill near which is a small graveyard. This is said to have been created by a descendant of the Chalmers family, members of which were deeply implicated in the murder of George Drummond of Newton Castle at the Mercat Gait of Blairgowrie, in 1554. He returned in secret from exile and set it up, so that he could be buried as near as possible to his former family lands. Later, a Chalmers descendant made a hurried and successful journey from Edinburgh to the graveyard to prevent the burial in it of the victim of the Ghaist o' Mause, whose bones then had to be taken to Blairgowrie Parish Kirkyard. Be that as it may, there is a reference in an old charter of a Chapel, dedicated to St Mary, a little to the north of the graveyard enclosure.

It contains the family plot of the Constable family who owned the houses of Corrie Fodly, Lagan Dhu and Balmyle as well as Rosemount Farm near Blairgowrie. They had jute interests in Dundee.

Down at the river, below the graveyard, there was a pulley "bridge" where pedestrians could haul themselves across the water while seated in a chair suspended from a rope. There was another such "transporter" over the Ardlie further upstream.

Cally House is at 7.2 miles. In the grounds are the captured German cannon gifted to Blairgowrie after the First World War. The Town Council refused to have anything to do with them and by arrangement with the Provost, they were brought here by Colonel Davidson and his daughter, who was still in residence in 1996.

In a field on the left is the first of several standing stones which can be seen from the road.

At 7.9 miles, on the right is Lagan Dhu, which was known formerly as Monk's Cally. It was at one time in the ownership of the Cistercian Abbey of Coupar Angus, which had extensive holdings of land in the area.

On the slopes of Cally Hill, behind and above Lagan Dhu, are several groups of hut circles, field systems and enclosures.



The first Standing Stone on the route.

At 8.5 miles, look on the left for a pair of large stone gateposts surmounted by sleeping dogs. This is the entrance to Blackcraig Castle, which was the seat of the Barony of Balmachreuchie. It is well worth while taking a few minutes to go down the drive to see the gatehouse which is built over the River Ardlie. There is room to park on the far side.

If you choose to do this, please add 0.5 to the distances given from here to Pitlochry.

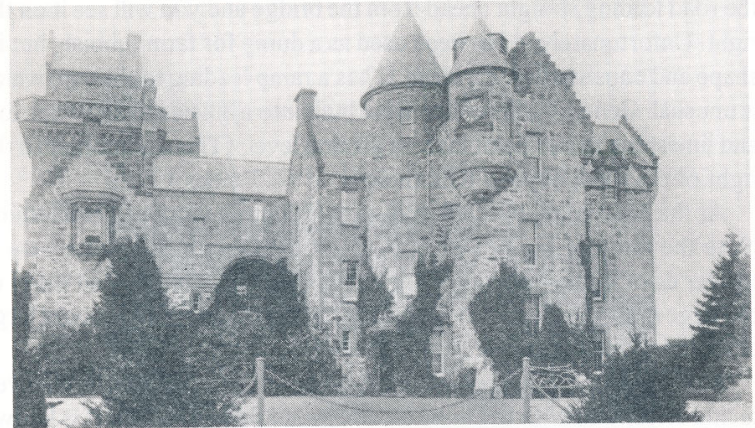
Above the archway is a small house, occupied from time to time. Built in a mock Gothic/Scottish Baronial style, it has several interesting features, one being the garderobe, or privy, at the entrance on the north side. There are stalactites growing down from the lintels of the window apertures and stalagmites up from the sills. Good views up and down the river can be had from these "windows". The unique design and quality of the stonework merits its designation as a Class "A" listed building.



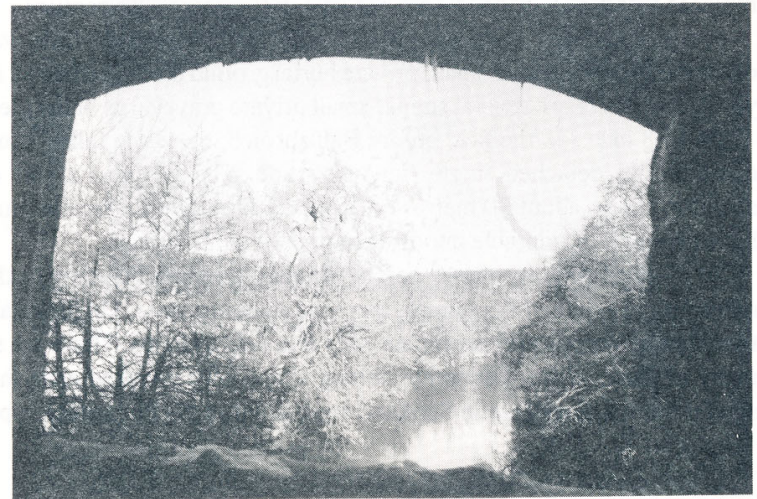
Blackcraig Bridgehouse.

The gatehouse was built about 1856 by Patrick Alan Fraser, who also extended and modernized the ancient tower house which you can see by taking the road to the left just beyond the bridge.

The stonework of the additions is quite distinct from that of the old tower, but the result is a happy one, and the whole edifice makes an imposing pile. The coat of arms on the east gable may be that of the Maxwells who were in possession in 1550.



Blackcraig Castle.



River Ardle from the bridge.

Before returning to the main road, you might like to see a very fine example of the lime kilns which are a feature of this area. Go further along the road leading straight ahead from the bridge and you will see it on the right. Unfortunately, it has been used as a dump for farm rubbish, but its shape and construction are clear. It has a ramp leading to the top, which is unusual. Generally, lime kilns were built into a hillside to allow the fuel and limestone to be tipped in from ground level. (There is another to the right of the road, beyond Kirkmichael, at 14.7 miles.)

At the main road, turn left and go through the village of Ballintuim. Note the tiny Episcopalian Kirk, built for the gentry who came here in former days for the grouse shooting and stalking. They rented many of the large mansion houses and shootings in the district, and brought large entourages with them.

At 9.6 miles, the last house in the village on the left, built with red facing brick, was where visiting Episcopalian priests stayed. It is known as the Red House, and was sold only recently by the Church.

The road to the left in the centre of the village leads to Woodhill House, which had its own RC Chapel. The wood on the hill above the mansion replaces that blown down by a great gale in the early 20th century.

Just past the Kirk is the entrance to Balmyle House, and a little way off to the right is another small, private burial ground distinguished by its yew trees. There are several similar small private graveyards in the glen.

At 10.8 miles, in the field before Balnabroich, there is a fallen stone circle with a detached single standing stone. There is also a pair of standing stones about 30 metres north of the farmhouse. The site must have been of considerable importance in prehistoric times.

At 10.6 miles, immediately before the road to the left leading to the mansion and estate of Pitcarmick, there is a standing stone. On the estate there are numerous prehistoric hut sites and field systems. There are so many of these with a distinctive oblong shape with rounded ends that similar houses elsewhere in Scotland are known as the Pitcarmick type.



Standing Stone near Pitcarmick.

The area of moorland behind Pitcarmick House, stretching to the north of Kirkmichael, shows an extensive pattern of prehistoric and mediaeval settlement. The earliest of the circles and huts date from 3,000/2,000 BC.

The settlement pattern in Strathardle, as in Glenshee, was that the valley floor of the main glen was cultivated, with the dwellings, or "fermtouns", strung out along the line between the infield ground and the rough grazing. Cultivation later spread up the side burns, then over the lower uplands and, in places, on to what had been the sheiling grazing grounds.

Sheilings were simple structures, made of turf, or turf and stone, or of drystone construction. Most had only one room, but some were quite elaborate. One has been found with four rooms and a milk place. They were the summer habitations of the young people, who went there for the summer with the flocks and herds. The milch animals, herded by the boys and youths, were milked by the girls, who then made large quantities of butter and cheese.

Behind the Pitcarmick settlement area is the rocky hill known as Creag na-h-iolaire, the rocky hill of the eagle.

At 12.00 miles is the road leading to the Mains o' Dounie, the farm on the hillside to the right. There, for many years, lived the Stewart family, who spoke only Gaelic at home, being the last speakers of the Strathardle dialect. They never allowed the peat fire to go out and it is said that, when they moved away from The Mains, they took a burning peat with them. It was the custom in the old days never to allow the peat fire to be extinguished, and it was carefully "smooored" at night, to be blown into flames in the morning.

At 12.3 miles you cross a small bridge and just beyond it, on the hillside to the right, is the Mill o' Dounie, where for many years a formidable lady known as "Meg o' the Mill" produced high quality oatmeal.

At 12.5 miles, there begins a stretch of straight road, and to the right of it is a group of farm buildings, with the attractive name of Croft o' Dounie.

At 13.0 miles, the road to the right, the B950, links Strathardle to Glenshee, where it joins the A93 at Dalrulzion. At the junction stands a memorial to the Small family.

The district War Memorial is on the hillside just beyond the Aldchlappie Hotel, the many names indicating the extent of the decline in the population of the glen since 1914. It would be hard to raise a platoon now where once a company could be mustered. In the First Statistical Account, the population of Strathardle and Glenshee was given as 2,689 in 1755 and 2,200 in 1781. In 1996, the electorate of the same area numbered 715, probably at least a quarter of these being recent incomers.

A little way along the B950, on the hillside to the south, is an outcrop of rock with unusual markings, like giant hoofprints. The legend told of this rock is that it was the site of a ferocious battle between the Devil and a giant bull, during which the marks were stamped deeply into the rock.

A short distance along this road is the entrance to Ashintully Castle, which originated in the 13th century, and the most important of the castles owned by the Spaldings. This one is reputed to be haunted by a Green Lady.

The Aldchlappie Hotel, just beyond the junction, was an old coaching Inn, standing on the outskirts of Kirkmichael.

Now a small rural village, Kirkmichael was once one of the centres of the cattle trade between the Highland clansmen and the cattle dealers of the south, who came from as far as Durham to buy the small black cattle raised on the crofts. The beasts were driven further south from Kirkmichael market by drovers over grass tracks, through the mountain passes to the great Trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, where as many as 150,000 beasts were sold annually.

The route from Kirkmichael was either west over the hill to the Tay valley near Ballinluig or south to Brig o' Cally and then over Cochrage Muir to Blairgowrie or Kinloch and thence to Dunkeld or Perth and, ultimately, the southern markets.

These drove roads - and other less frequented paths over the hills - were used by the smugglers of "usquebaugh", whisky illicitly distilled in tiny stills hidden in the hills. Barrels of the Highland dew were carried on the backs of ponies to lowland markets, where the fiery liquor was highly prized - and cheap, since no excise duty had been paid on it.

There is a fine example at Inveredrie in Glenshee of a still which has been built into the hillside. It is an elaborate stone structure, with a small lade bringing water 70 metres from a nearby burn to cool the "worm" through which the distillate passed during the condensation process.

The part of Kirkmichael across the burn is known as Williamston, and in it is situated the School, the village hall and the former Free Kirk. Its main road leads to Glen Derby, beyond which the drove road traversed the pass over the hill to the Tay valley. One of the streets is called "Sillerburn" (Silverburn). This derives from the former custom of concluding bargains by purchasers of animals at the market handing money (siller) over the water of the Burn to the sellers of the beasts.



Roadside Limekiln north of Kirkmichael.

On the left, after you cross the Brig, is Bannerfield, now the village recreation ground. The Earl of Mar, who had led his Highlanders from Braemar down to the Spittal of Glenshee and then across the hills through Glenfergus to Strathardle here raised the Banner of his exiled King, James Stuart, to start the first Jacobite Rising. This ceremony of 1715 gave its name to the park.

The old Kirk, which was founded in 1189, was dedicated to St Michael. There are several interesting 17th century headstones in the Kirkyaird.

It was the centre of a battle between local men and Cromwellian troops who were quartered in the village in 1653. One of their officers tried to molest a local maiden, the daughter of the farmer of Davaan, but was killed by her brother. The soldiers who were with him fled to their comrades in Kirkmichael to report the incident and they all began to hunt for local men and kill them. The alarm was taken to the Kirk where a service was being held, and the men of the village poured out to join the fray, for in those troubled days every man went armed, even to the Kirk. There were casualties on both sides before an uneasy peace was declared. Next day the soldiers tried to find the body of their officer, but the men of Davaan had buried it in a hollow near the farmhouse before taking to the hills. The burial place was long known as Lag an't Sassenach, the Hollow of the Englishman.

On the right, just after you leave Kirkmichael is the road to Dalnagairn, beyond which a track leads to Whitefield Castle, the ruins of which can be seen on the skyline.

Whitefield was one of the holdings of the Spalding family who, at the height of their power, owned about 40 great houses in the district, including Ashintully, Kindrogan, Invercroskie, Balvarran and Glenkilry. Rumour has it that Whitefield has a tunnel connecting it to Ashintully on the reverse slope of the hill.

For a considerable distance above the Village, the road runs along the bank of the Arde, with attractive trees on both sides.

At 14.2 miles, there is a lime kiln right beside the road, on the right, opposite the row of cottages, the first dwellings to the left after Kirkmichael.

At 15.6 miles, just past the tiny village of Enochdhu, the estate road to the left leads to Kindrogan, while almost opposite is the road to Dirnanean, whence a hill path leads, through the pass south of the hill called Elrig, to the Spittal of Glenshee.

In the garden of the gate lodge of Dirnanean is a low mound at either end of which are two stones, one large and one small. Tradition tells us that they mark the grave of Ardle, a chief who gave his name to the strath through which you are travelling.

Ardle was the leader of the Picts who took part in the Battle of Tulloch in 903 AD, near a house of that name, on the left of the road just a little further north, when they opposed a band of Danes who were invading from the east. During the pursuit of the retreating Danish force, he fell where he is now buried.



Grave of Ardle, Dirnanean Lodge.

The glen was called Glen nan Muick Breac, (the glen of the spotted wild sow) before it became Strathardle.

The estate of Dirnanean is first mentioned in 1530, when Small of Dirnanean married a daughter of Spalding of Ashintully. In the tributary glens and on the hill slopes behind the big house, there are many hut circles, farmsteads and sheilings.

Just beyond the entrance on the right, at the edge of the plantation, is another standing stone.

Kindrogan House, on the left, is now a popular centre for field studies, but was until recently the mansion of a large estate. There is a rocking stone near the house where offenders were tried.

The next house on the left, Tulloch House, named for the battle mentioned above, has several settlement remains to the northwest, including a cup-marked stone with 40 incised depressions or cups. The meaning of these marked stones, found widely in this area, is unknown.

At 16.6 miles, just before the road bends to the left over the narrow bridge, a road to the right leads to the estate of Glenferenate. Beyond the estate house and steading, a track winds north through the high hills to the grouse moors, the deer stalking slopes and the far, lonely dwelling of Fealar, some eight miles into the hills. From there a track leads to the Spittal of Glenshee. In ancient times, it was an important highway leading to Mar.

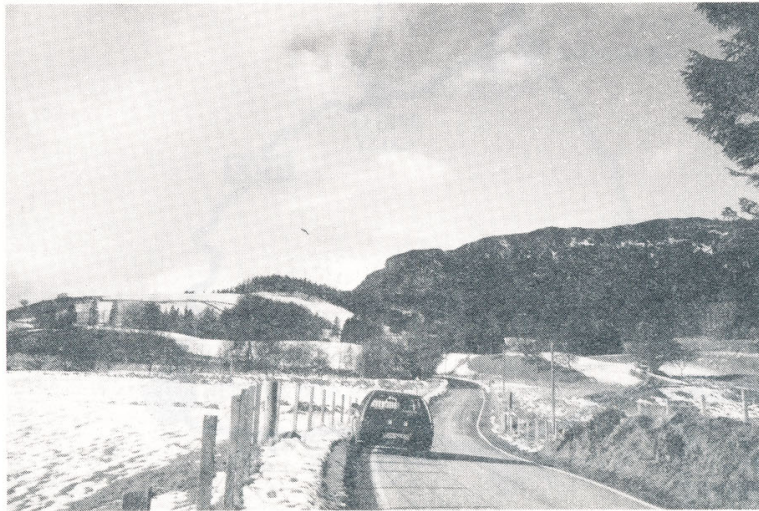
One of the well known personalities of the Glen was John Farquharson, born at Daldhu, Glenferenate, in the 1830's. His exploits as a poacher were legendary, and some of them are recounted in "The Romance of Poaching in the Highlands of Scotland". First published in 1904, it was reprinted in 1950. The author was W. McCombie Smith, at one time headmaster at Straloch, and himself no mean poacher.

Farquharson was an extremely fine marksman who invented and patented two important improvements to gun and rifle design. His Farquharson-Metford rifle was a favourite weapon at Wimbledon for many years. Later, he lived in a cottage at Dunay in Blacklunans, where he had a workshop in a shed in the garden. He carved the prototypes of his inventions from turnips.

The bridge marks the beginning of Glen Brereachan, a narrow glen with a few arable fields on either side of the road, and some farms on the north side. The demarcation between the cultivated valley bottom land and the hill-grazing ground above the boundary dykes is very marked.

The clachan of Straloch, with its School and Kirk, now a dwelling house, is the next group of buildings which you encounter.

The view along the valley, immediately after you pass the school, is of a landscape created by the last glacier to flow through here. To the left are terraces of sand and gravel deposited by the streams of melt water flowing along the edges of the ice. To the right is a kettle hole, scoured



Glenbrereachan.

by thick solid ice, and just beyond it a kaim, which is a heap of debris accumulated at the bottom of a crevasse when surface water has eroded rotten ice. Beyond that is a moraine mound, the spoil carried by the nose of the glacier and dropped when it ceased to flow. On the hills above are ice-scarred rock faces and on the skyline an eroded ridge, part of which has been worn away by the ice. The haugh between the road and the burn is a flood plain.

At 17.3 miles, the entrance to Straloch Lodge is on the right, and opposite the entrance is another standing stone, just beside the road, in the field, below the banking. You need to look back to see it.

The hills here are typical sheep-grazing country and the farms have ancient names - Tomchulan, Tarvie, Clunskea and Stronchavie.

The valley and its hinterland was home to many generations of Reids and Robertsons who were inter-related. Many tales are told of various Barons Reid, who were zealous in defending their lands from the depredations of the Highland caterans who made frequent raids on Strathardle, Glenshee and Glenisla in search of booty and cattle. Several of these appear in the book by Maurice Fleming, referred to earlier.

The last of the Barons Reid was General Reid, who was born in Strathardle. He left a large sum of money to found a school of music in Edinburgh, now the Reid Chair of Music at Edinburgh University. He is credited with the authorship of the tune of the famous song "The Garb of Old Gaul". The march tune is the regimental slow march of the Scots Guards, and a great favourite with military pipers. In retirement, the General lived in Glenshee.

The last house in the glen, called Dalnacarn, lies on the right, where you cross the bridge to begin the climb up the hill. This bridge replaces old Stronchavie brig on the right, built by Thomas Telford as part of the Government road-building programme begun in 1820, when the Highland roads had fallen into such disrepair that urgent action was needed to make them passable.



Stronchavie Brig.

On the hillside above the cottage a battle was fought in 1392 between a band of Highland caterans, or cattle reivers, and the men of Glenshee, Glenisla and lowland Perthshire, who had had their cattle lifted by the men from Atholl. This foray was known as the Raid of Angus, and was led by Duncan Stewart, the youngest of the five illegitimate sons of Alexander Stewart, the Wolf of Badenoch, who was the third son of King Robert the Second.

The Lowlanders had caught up with the reivers at Glasclune, just north of Blairgowrie, but were defeated in a bloody skirmish. Now strengthened by fresh reinforcements, they were making another attempt to regain their cattle at Dalnacarn (the field of stones - ie gravestones), but again the Atholl men were too much for them. They retreated, to fight at Tarvie, where the haugh by the burn is known as Dalchrosnie (the field of victory) and again at the east end of Glen Brereachan, where they were finally defeated.

It was as a result of this foray that the "Battle of the Clans" was organized before King, Robert the Second, on the North Inch of Perth in 1396. This time the Lowland champions were declared the victors, but not before 46 of the 60 contestants were killed.

The fight was described by Wintoun in his *Chronicle* and Sir Walter Scott, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, used the episode where a Highlander, pinned to the ground by the spear of Sir David Lindsay, the Lowland leader, struck such a blow with his sword that Lindsay's leg was severed.

On the hillside, about 150 metres west of Stronchavie Cottage, is another cup-marked stone incised with 26 cups.

From Stronchavie Brig (19.5 miles) you begin the climb up to Moulin Muir, a wide exposed muirland valley dominated by Dalnacarn Craig to the south, and the sort of place where you are very likely to see mountain hares and kestrels.

The elevation is 300 metres, and a wild place it is in winter. At 21.6 miles, just after you reach the beginning of the level moorland stretch is a memorial to John Souter, who died in a snowstorm on the 3rd of March, 1887, when returning from Moulin Market to Dalnacarn where he was shepherd. It is easy to miss, as it is to the right of the road on a corner, opposite a parking place.

About 100 metres north of the memorial is a cup-marked stone with 21 cups.

The fine view to the south is to Carn na h-Elrig and Faire Mhor, the hills to the west of Dalnacarn, and, just beyond them lies Loch Broom, some three miles due east of Pitlochry.



Memorial to John Souter.

Near the loch, in 729, the Battle of Drumderg (the red ridge) was fought. This was to decide who would be the King of all the Picts, as there was a dispute between four local kings who were claimants for the overlordship. After three battles which eliminated the others, Drosden, King of Fodla (Atholl), leading the northern Picts, confronted Oengus, King of Fortrui (Strathearn) leading the southern Picts. Drosden was killed, being buried 60 miles away at St Vigean, near Arbroath, while Oengus went on to overcome the Scots of Dalriada, capturing their fortress at Dunadd.



Moulin Muir.

The steep descent at the far side of the muir takes you down to a very sharp turn to the right. At the corner, the road to the left leads to Edradour, where the Distillery, the smallest in Scotland, has a visitors' centre which is well worth seeing.

The straight stretch of road after the bend is called the High Drive and is one of the last remnants of an ancient road system called the Queen's Drives. These were constructed some 2,000 years ago to take two chariots abreast, being much the same width as the modern road which lies over this stretch. It was later part of the first North Road.

Soon you are passing through the pleasant little village of Moulin, now a suburb of Pitlochry. To the north of the village is another standing stone in the grounds of Baledmund House, called the Dane's Stone, though it is much older than the Danish raids which ended about 900 AD. It was here that Moulin Market was held annually, late in February or early in March, and it was from there that John Souter was returning when he died in a snow wreath on the Muir.

Moulin was once a bustling, important crossroads, with a large coaching inn, as it stood on the Great North Road. Many of the houses from that time survive, but the village was one of the first victims of a bypass, as the road built by General Wade to replace the old road which ran high above the valley floor took a lower route along the strath, passing through the hamlets which became Pitlochry.

The importance of Moulin in ancient times is evident from placenames in the immediate vicinity, indicating the many guard points protecting it.

The ancient east west road to Glen Brereachan and Strathardle ran somewhat higher up the braeface than the modern road, and passed dozens of hut circles, which can still be seen on the moor.

It had a junction in Glen Brereachan where a branch went north, following the Brereachan Burn to Shinagag, hence its name "The Shinagag Road", and on to Atholl to connect with the Minigag Road and the road to Strathspey. Another branch went north through Glenfernate to Mar.

The first Kirk at Moulin was built on a peninsula in a lochan, and was founded about 600 AD, probably by St Colm. It has been rebuilt several times. A crannog (an artificial island) stood in the lochan and this was turned into a fortified castle, Casteil Dhu, the Black Castle, about 1326. Only a few stones remain, now on dry land, as the lochan was drained in 1720.

There was a souterrain, or Picts' house, near the village, but the site of it is now built over.

At the foot of the hill, turn left at the T-junction to go south down the A9 to the Dunkeld junction, where you turn left to return to Blairgowrie.

You might like to spend some time in the town where there are some interesting things to see such as the Festival Theatre, the Distillery and the Dam and fish ladder. The Tourist Information Office is down the main street, on the left, where you will find leaflets and books about the district.

When the railway reached Pitlochry in 1863, it became easy for visitors to come to the growing town. Among the eminent people who were attracted to the healthy situation and the beautiful scenery were Sir John Everett Millais the painter, Swinburne the poet, Turgenev the Russian novelist, Professor Blackie the eminent Greek and Gaelic scholar and Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived in Kinnaird Cottage in the summer of 1880. There he wrote several short stories, including *Thrawn Janet*, *The Merry Men* and *The Body Snatchers*. He moved on to Braemar, and during the journey, worked out the story line of *The Master of Ballantrae*.

While in Braemar, he wrote the first part of *Treasure Island*.

In order to keep the mileage references correct, please reset your odometer to zero at the junction of the slip road with the A9. While on the busy A9, be sure to be on the alert for traffic hazards!

PITLOCHRY TO DUNKELD

The next section of the route is along the extremely busy A9, which was reconstructed some years ago and has lost much of the character of the old Great North Road. There is very little of historical interest to be seen at close hand so you might care not to linger on this section.

When you come to the sign on the left, indicating the Tourist Route, you might like to take it to escape from the traffic and to savour something of the old road. It leads directly into Dunkeld, which is well worth a visit, and as you will be asked to re-set your odometer on leaving the town, the reading will not be upset by your taking the diversion.

The first place to note is Moulinearn, now bypassed, where the Earl of Mar gathered local men to the Jacobite forces in 1715 and Prince Charlie in 1745. There is a bridge on the old Wade road near the village, from which Prince Charlie reviewed his troops after staying a night in the Moulinearn Inn. It is still known as Prince Charlie's Brig, and is in the woods to the north of the road between the village and Tynreich. Queen Victoria visited the Inn in 1844 and tasted 'Atholl Brose' which is a mixture of whisky, honey, oatmeal and sometimes cream.

Near Tynreich there is a stone circle, quite near the road.

Ballinluig is the largest settlement on this part of the route, but is usually linked with Logierait, which is on the other side of the valley.

Logierait owed its importance to the ferries which plied across the confluence of the Tummel and the Tay, before these rivers were bridged. It was a centre of administration and had an especially fine courthouse and jail, from which Rob Roy escaped in 1717, after only one day behind bars!

The Kirk was founded about 650 AD by St Cedd and there are some interesting stones in the kirkyard, the oldest being dated 1680.

North of the village is "The Rath", a glacial mound which was a Pictish fort, then a royal castle, and then the gallows knoll of the Regality Court of Atholl.

Nearly opposite Dowally is Dalguise House, on the far side of the valley, where Beatrix Potter, who wrote and illustrated the popular Peter Rabbit stories for children, spent several childhood holidays. She formed a friendship with a local postman, Charles McIntosh, who lived in the village of Inver, where the great fiddler, Niel Gow, had had his home.

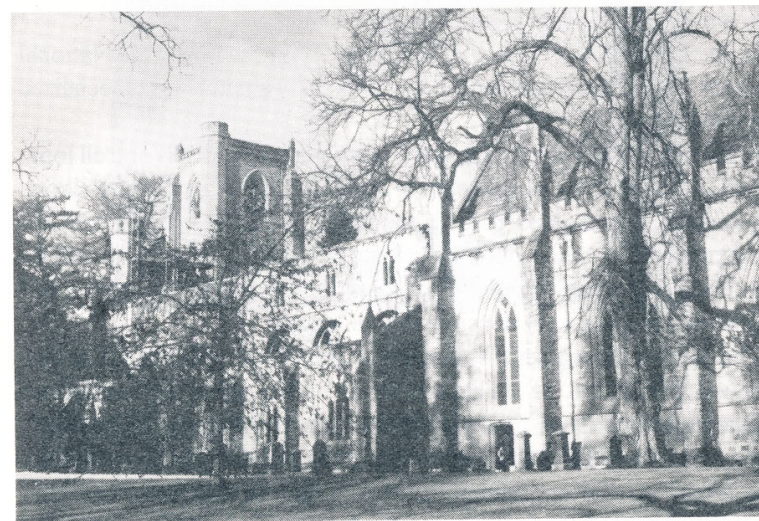
A superb naturalist, though a very shy man, McIntosh fostered her interest in nature, especially fungi, and she produced many beautiful colour drawings of the specimens she found in the woods round Dunkeld. Her parents holidayed in other houses in the vicinity.

As you leave the A9, the road begins a slow sweep to the left, and, almost immediately to the right, is the entrance to the village of Birnam.

When the line of the Highland railway reached this point in 1856, the attractive scenery round Dunkeld became readily accessible to visitors, and the expansion of accommodation to cater for them took place in proximity to the railway station. Birnam still retains the air of a quiet village.

If you wish to detour to see it, do not worry about the odometer reading. You will be asked to reset it at the far end of Dunkeld.

The bridge which crosses the Tay was designed by the great road engineer, Thomas Telford, and was the scene of a rebellion against the tolls imposed on the users of turnpike roads. In this instance, the leading protester was the Duke of Atholl, and the local agitation was taken up across the country so vehemently that the turnpike laws were repealed and tolls abolished.



Dunkeld Cathedral.

The first street on the left leads to the Square, the heart of the Cathedral "city" of Dunkeld, which has a long and distinguished history. The main point of interest today is the ruined Cathedral, the choir of which is still in use as the Parish Kirk. There are some interesting exhibits in what was the Chapter House, including a Pictish stone, and two effigies - few of which have survived the image-smashers of the Reformation in Scotland. One of these is of the Wolf of Badenoch, mentioned above.

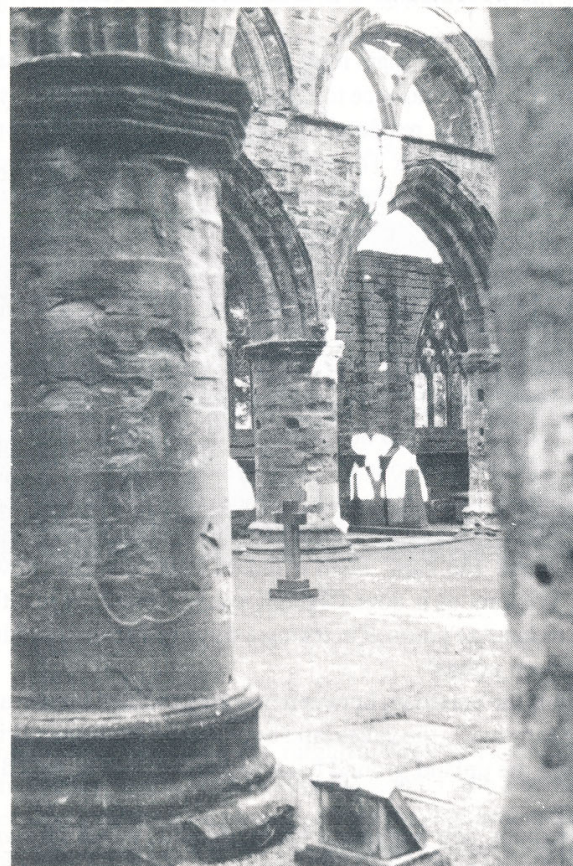
The Cathedral, as Dunkeld was a centre of Pictish rule, became the repository of the bones of St Columba and other Saints after the Vikings sacked Iona in 802 AD, and subsequently became the most important religious settlement on the mainland.

The Cathedral grounds are very attractive, and to the north is a walk through woodlands, in which stand the survivors of the five "Mother Larches", planted there by John Menzies of Culdares who brought seed and seedlings back from Austria. From these trees all the other larches on the vast Atholl estates are descended. The 4th Duke, John, planted twenty seven and a half million trees, firing seeds from a shotgun up hillsides and cliffs where the slopes were too steep to climb.

In the Square you will see the "Ell Shop". It is now run by the National Trust for Scotland, but for long it was owned by a tailor who specialised in making kilts.

Fixed to the front wall of the shop is an iron bar which is one ell long. The ell is an old Scots measure from the tip of the fingers to the elbow. The length of cloth needed for a modern kilt is seven yards, and the kiltmaker used to come out with a bolt of tartan and measure off the required length against the ell - thus ensuring that every customer had a fair deal, for arms vary considerably in length!

The town suffered severe damage in the Battle of Dunkeld, which followed the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, when the victorious Highlanders attempted to dislodge the garrison troops, the recently formed Cameronians. They met such a stout defence, during which the King's men set the houses alight to dislodge the attackers, that they retreated north, and the first Jacobite Rising was over. Only three houses remained undamaged.



The Nave, Dunkeld Cathedral.

If the parking spaces in the square are full, there is some parking on the main road and in a large carpark beyond the last house on the left. The Tourist Information Office is in the northeast corner of the Square, and leaflets about the history of the town and the network of walks are available there.

DUNKELD TO BLAIRGOWRIE

Leave Dunkeld by the main road to the west. Just after the carpark, you will see the ornate entrance to Dunkeld House, now used as a hotel, but formerly one of the residences of the Dukes of Atholl, sometimes occupied as a Dower House. The present building replaced a considerable structure much nearer the Cathedral. The A923 is to the right, a little further along the road.

Please re-set your odometer as you pass the signpost to Blairgowrie.

The road twists up the flank of the 330 metre hill, Craig y Barns, and then down round Crieff Hill. This is one of the most attractive roads in all Scotland, and you should not be in too much of a hurry to complete the journey to Blair - savour it! The drystane dykes by the roadside, attractively covered with moss and lichen, extend for miles. The sinuous nature of much of its course betrays its origin as the Turnpike Road in the days of the horse and cart, when it linked Dunkeld, Blairgowrie and Kirriemuir. Winding as it does through lovely scenery, it justifies your taking time to indulge yourself in taking a drive rather than making a fast journey between points!

The A923 is the boundary between two areas of land known anciently as "Lower Stormont" - the valley land bounded by the Rivers Ericht, Isla and Tay - and the upland ground lying to the north of it, called "Upper Stormont".

Along its route, you will pass a chain of lochs, which fill swirl pools formed by the action of an ancient river which came out of the hills west of Dunkeld and flowed along Strathmore to reach the North Sea in the neighbourhood of Arbroath. Later, its course was diverted to follow the line now taken by the present River Tay. Some geologists, however, regard them as "kettle holes", like the one in Glen Brereachan, formed by the grinding of thick, solid parts of the glacier which flowed along Strathmore before the river was formed.



Craiglush.

The first of these, the Loch of Craiglush, lies at the foot of the series of down-hill bends. If you wish to visit the Loch o' the Lowes, which is a bird sanctuary, take the road on the right at 1.1 miles, where the signpost points to Snaigow and Loch o' the Lowes. The ospreys which nest at the Loch o' the Lowes in the Spring and Summer can be seen from the hide which is open to visitors wishing to see the many species of water bird which frequent the Loch.

This flat area at the foot of the bends was at one time the firing range for the Volunteer force, the precursor of the Territorial Army.

The short straight stretch of road which crosses this haugh passes over the Lunan Burn, a stream which links all these roadside lochs, flowing eventually into the Isla.

Immediately after Craighlugh is Butterstone Loch, now a fishery, and the next group of houses is Butterstone village. A road to the left leads up into the hills above Dunkeld, where there are many prehistoric and mediaeval settlements.

At 6.9 miles, just before you come into Forneth village, you will see by the side of the road the bing or spoilheap from a slate quarry. Some of the larger stones have been built into a wall in front of the first house. The heap has proved so popular as a source of stone that few large pieces of slate are now to be seen. Some of the fragments have fossils of ferns and twigs on their surfaces.

The quarry produced a coarse slate - coarse compared to the fine grained Welsh slate - and had been driven deep into the hillside when, one day, the workmen came out from its gloomy depths to eat their midday meal. While they were all seated out in the sunshine, there was a tremendous roar as the sides of the quarry caved in. It was impossible to re-open it, so catastrophic was the collapse.

If you look across the valley of the Lunan to the hillside opposite, you will see a small wood which has grown up in another abandoned slate quarry. The outcrops of slate occur along the Great Highland Boundary Fault, one of the major geological features of Scotland, which runs along the hills above you on the left. You crossed it earlier, near Craighall.

At 6.9 miles, the road takes a sweep round the policies of Forneth House, and comes down a brae alongside Clunie Loch. This is a large sheet of water, the home of many water birds, and the winter roost of huge flocks of geese.

In it is an island, almost certainly man-made, on which are the ruins of a castle and a chapel.

The castle was erected as a summer residence by Bishop Brown of Dunkeld, only a few miles away.

At the time of the Reformation, the Bishop of the day sought to avoid the loss of Clunie to his Diocese by making it over to his relative, Sir Robert Crichton, Lord Advocate of Scotland.



*Clunie Loch.
The castle is now much more ruinous.*

The Crichton family took up residence about 1562, and their young son, David, was brought up in the Episcopal castle. At one time it was thought that he was born there but his place of birth is now established as being at Eliock House, near Sanquhar.

Young David proved to be a natural scholar, attending the Grammar Schools at Dunkeld and Perth and going on to St Andrew's University. He amazed his teachers by mastering several languages - Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldaic, Italian, French, Spanish and Flemish.

While on the Grand Tour of the Continent, he held a disputation in Paris with the best of France's scholars, and after a day's discussion on literature, science and art, the French scholars gave him best and presented him with a diamond ring and a purse of gold.

One of his admirers hailed him as "L'Admirable Crichton" and this title has been his ever since.

Alas, his career ended in Mantua, where he died on a street in mysterious circumstances on the 3rd of July, 1582, aged 22, and was buried in a little kirk.

On the west shore of the Loch is a huge mound on which King Kenneth McAlpine built a hunting lodge in the midst of his Royal forest of Clunie. The lodge was subsequently extended and strengthened and Edward the First stayed in it on his way to meet John Balliol at Stracathro, near Brechin, to force him into subservience.

Only a chimney breast, thought to be that of the kitchen, remains, and it is considered that most of the stones were robbed to form the island.

At 9.0 miles, there is a cairn by the roadside. This is a Bronze Age burial mound, which has never been dug. If you look to the right, you will see Marlee Loch, formerly called the Loch of Drumellie or Drumelzie. [The "z" in Drumelzie is the old Scots "ing" sound, uttered as a strong nasal as in Menzies, MacKenzie and ingans (onions).]

The Loch is another favourite roost of wintering waterfowl.

At 9.9 miles, is the village of Marlee or Kinloch. The steep road to the left, past the Hotel, leads north to the high moors, where there are many prehistoric remains and mediaeval settlements.

The hill on the left is called Craigroman, and about two hundred years ago the body of a Roman soldier, clad in full armour, was found in a peat bog on the muir which covers the plateau behind the ridge. Unfortunately there is no record of the discovery. The muir is claimed by some as the site of the Battle of Mons Graupius, when the Romans defeated the Caledonians.

At 10.1 miles, a road to the right is called the Palace Road. There are several explanations for this soubriquet, the favoured one being that, as the continuation of the road from the moors - once one of the principal routes from the north - it was the way to Old Scone, where the principal building is Scone Palace. Another is that a building just along from the junction, a smiddy, was the home of a blacksmith who formerly lived up on the hillside at Upper Balcairn. When he retired he made a throne-like seat and placed it in front of the house, waving regally to all who passed!

At the corner of the Palace Road and the Dunkeld Road is another Bronze Age mound, but this one has been opened in antiquity.

Along the side of the road is a vast reed bed, growing on the shores of a very pretty little loch, the Rae Loch. The shores and bottom of the loch were exploited for marl, a mixture of soil, clay and lime carbonate, which was dug out and dried to be used as fertiliser on the neighbouring fields.

At 10.8 miles is the entrance to Ardblair Castle, the building of which in 1175 is credited to Alexander de Blair, a favourite of William the Lion, but the history of the site goes back at least to Pictish times. It is considered to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in Scotland. Before the level of the Rae Loch was lowered to facilitate the extraction of marl, the Castle was surrounded by water.



Ardblair Castle.

Ardblair Castle houses one of the finest collections of Jacobite relics in private hands. One of the ancestors of the present Laird was an Aide-de-Camp to Prince Charles Edward Stuart during the 1745 Rising.

The steading opposite the Castle, the Mains of Ardblair, is to be the home of a collection of agricultural bygonies, and well worth a visit if it is open.

At 11.25 miles, if you look to the right, you will see a clump of trees. These grow on another Bronze Age mound, known locally as "The Roondie".

Just after you pass the 30 mile limit sign, there is a small industrial estate on the right. This is on part of the site of an agricultural engineering works, Greenbank Works, known locally as "The Foundry". Only one of the buildings is still in use.

It was started by Thomas Bisset, who worked with his uncle as a blacksmith at Kinloch. He was something of a mechanical genius who invented and patented a mechanical knotting device which enabled him to produce his world-famous "Bisset Binder".

Many other farming machines were designed and made in the Works, which had facilities for carrying out all the manufacturing processes needed.

He attended the first London Motor Show, and was seen crawling under the cars, making notes and taking measurements. It was his intention to begin making cars in Blair, but he died prematurely, and his plans with him.

Just imagine, Blairgowrie, rather than Coventry, could have been the centre of car manufacture!

Just before the street leading to the right, Shaw Street, is Greenbank Cottage, where a souterrain was found in the spring of 1995.

You are now back in the town and, by taking a left turn at the T-junction ahead, you will soon be back at the Wellmeadow.

We hope that you have enjoyed this excursion, and that you will explore some of the other interesting roads round Blairgowrie. If you like walking, there is a series of seven booklets describing heritage walks in and around the town, available from newsagents, hotels and the Tourist Office.

If the references to the archaeology of the area has interested any readers, they will find a wealth of information in the HMSO publication "North East Perth" published in 1990, price £35.00.

Its ISBN number is 0 11 493446 0.

J. BISSET & SONS, BLAIRGOWRIE.

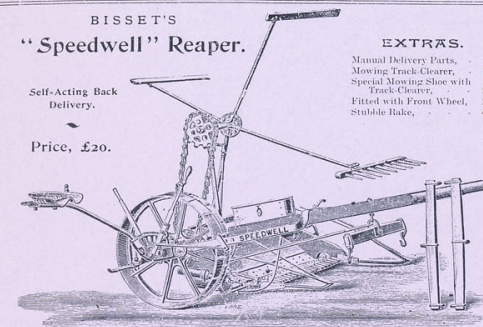
BISSET'S
"Speedwell" Reaper.

Self-Acting Back
Delivery.

Price, £20.

EXTRAS.

Manual Delivery Parts,	15s.
Mowing Truck Clearer,	10s.
Special Mowing Shoe with	20s.
Truck Clearer,	20s.
Fitted with Front Wheel,	20s.
Stubble Rake,	40s.

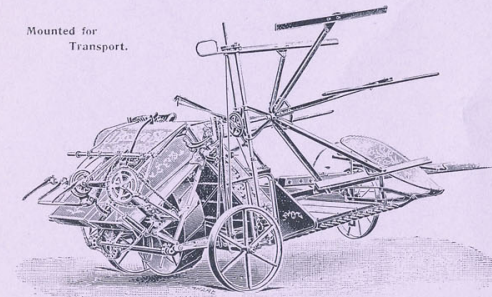


THE HANDIEST LITTLE REAPER THAT HAS EVER BEEN MADE.

J. BISSET & SONS, BLAIRGOWRIE.

The "Bisset" New Patent Open Back Steel Built Binder.

Mounted for
Transport.



Can be Mounted or Dismounted in less than 3 minutes.

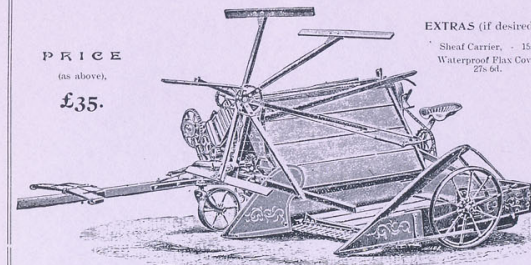
J. BISSET & SONS, BLAIRGOWRIE.

The Original "Bisset" Wood-Frame Binder,
WITH OR WITHOUT FRONT WHEEL.

PRICE
(as above),

£35.

EXTRAS (if desired)—
Sheaf Carrier, 15s.
Waterproof Flax Cover,
27s. 6d.



Greatly Improved—Now as Light to Draw as the Latest Machines.

