

Glenshee Kirk

Originally a Chapel of Ease for Kirkmichael Parish and, even before then, a standing stone behind the church was probably a centre for local worship. Later, it served for tethering shepherds' dogs. Proposed site at Runavey, but 'fairies' kept demolishing foundations. Built in 1822-58, it was the centre of the parish in those days. Population of Glenlochsie and Glenbeag was large. Major James Robertson of Cray was living at Runavey while the mansion was being built at Cray, and was concerned in the plans for a new church. (He) gave the land for the church and manse.

James Farquharson, Invercauld, William McDonald, St. Martins, and George Clark, Dalnaglar, granted endowments for the new parish in 1858, which was for the Free Church.

Sunday Schools

Mrs James Robertson (widow of Major J. Robertson of Cray) was Sunday School teacher until she died in 1887, when her niece took over.

(1910) Miss Lizzie Ayton and her sister, Miss Mary Ayton, of Askintully, held the Sunday School at Blackwater School. Bible studies (were held) in the old schoolhouse at Blacklunans (in the) mid '20s by Mr Richmond of Cray for 14-16 year olds.

Cray and Glenshee

Mrs Swanson's Sunday School (was held) once a fortnight at school in Glenshee at 5 p.m. She came in a pony and trap. The pony was called Laddie, and (was) followed by Bobby. She came in all weathers, and wore a big tartan- lined cape. (Also Mrs Balingal, Finegand, Ashmore Farm, Strone House, Rattray). Miss E. Lamond ran a big Sunday School at Netherton during the war and after it, during Dr. Vrie's ministry at Netherton and before the union of Glenshee and Glenelg in 1951. Mrs Cray took over Netherton Sunday School from Miss Lamond, (followed by) Mrs Hill, the minister's wife, and then Mrs Trenholme.

Congregations and Ministers

Sunday School picnics: Mr. Stewart Cameron remembers Fergus Fleming, Leyhillloch's horse and cart in about 1908, which took Sunday School from over the Balloch to Tinker's Den, just past the second cattle grid on the right, of course there were no cattle grids then. Mrs Munro, Blacklunans Post Office, remembers similar expeditions when the sun was so hot that the lemonade bottles exploded! Mrs Sinclair remembers the Swansons at the schoolhouse in Glenshee, when the Swansons entertained. Jack Swanson was a medical student at Edinburgh and very lively.

The local adults held a singing group that met once a week, led by Mr. Swanson. Mr Swanson hired a magic lantern and pictures, and everyone had a 'poke' and buns, etc., for refreshment – annual treat.

When Mrs Sinclair was young, Cray Church was full. Two pews were filled with servants from Cray and Dalnaglar every week. Often, the Lamond family walked five miles if the weather was too bad for the pony.

When a sheep was killed at Runavey, a leg went first to the minister. When coal was ordered, a ton went to the minister.

The Free Kirk had little wealth and Mrs. Swanson had no domestics.

In later days, Mr Richmond had a servant who lived in a little wooden bungalow on Cray Estate, built for the purpose. (Now probably demolished when the log house for Colonel Don was ready).

Mr Charles Ferguson of Shieldrum, as a laddie at the Corb, walked to the Free Kirk with his family, and usually the result was that he wakened up at the last psalm.

Mrs Sinclair remembers, as a lassie, two sermons, one Old and one New testament and, if she was sleeping or restless, Miss McIntosh from Tighnacaille, who sat behind, poked her and gave her a pan drop.

Dinner at Runavey was in the parlour on Sunday, and reading was 'Sign of Our Times' and the 'Christian Herald'.

A harmonium was introduced to Cray in 1910. Mrs Swanson played. Before that, Jimmy Kennedy of Dulrulzion, was the precentor.

Ministers

Mr Swanson came from Caithness to Cray in 1894, and was there till he died in 1924. The Swansons were a very lively family, and musical. They held a weekly singing class, attended by many adults in the Glen, and musical evenings were frequent in various homes. Jack Swanson was a 'devil' of a boy – now a respected, retired medical practitioner in Aberfeldy. His sisters, Bessie and Dora, are both dead.

Mr Ross was minister for two and a half years. His daughter, Mrs Mitchell, lives at Meigle, widow of Mr Will Mitchell, later of Easter Bleaton.

Mr Richmond succeeded Mr Ross at Cray. He married the Glenshee schoolteacher, Miss Morton. They retired to Glenshee Manse, the kirks by then being united. Glenshee Manse was sold after Mr Richmond died and his widow moved to Glen Lyon.

Mr Thomson was a batchelor, and used to be seen early in the morning before breakfast at the top of Ben Gulabin. Mr Thomson was thirty-five years at Glenshee. When Mr Thomson retired, Mr Richmond took services at Cray and Glenshee. The winter services were held in the schools, which were easier to heat. Sunday School was held in Cray vestry. The teacher was Miss Clark from Dundee, who married Willie Cameron, joiner. The school closed when the Swansons left on Mr Swanson's death.

Persie

Mr. Thomas Smith was fifty years at Persie. Many stories are told of him. He hoped to be buried at Persie, and had erected a headstone and prepared a grave, but permission was not forthcoming. It is said that the congregation, being tired of his ministry, contributed very generously to a gift when he was about to accept another charge. Mr Smith was so much moved by their generosity that he told his congregation that, had he realised they thought so much of him, he would not have sought to leave. In any case, he could still change his mind, and would stay with them.

He used to frequent Persie Inn (Auchinflower), but all drinks bought him were lined up and consumed at a gulp just before he set off for home. Thus he was able – just – to get home safely.

His wife taught the local children to swim the river. She was rather a large lady.

Colonel Clark of Corrydon went to Cray Church. He drove his own coach and pair. His Coachman sat alongside, very spruce, arms folded. His job was to look after the horses while the Colonel was in the Kirk. Kenneth McLean, the coachman, attended the auld kirk at Glenshee.

Professor Ramsay of Drumore, and the Misses Ramsay, his sisters at Whitehouse, went to Cray.

The Lamonds of Runavey still survive at Strochnacraig, and at Cally, where Mrs Sincalir (nee Lamond) is a chief source of Glen lore. They were Free Kirk (and Liberal) whereas the Lamonds of Finegand were Auld Kirk (and Conservative). They often met on a Sunday about Corrydon, and Finegand, Lamonds northbound, and the Runavey Lamonds southbound.

As a laddie, Jim Lamond of Finegand was sent up to the Kirk on his bicycle, the only representative of his family that day. He was late, the service had started, and he dare not go in. So what did he do? He cycled to Braemar because he had never been there. He must have got a very warm reception when he eventually got home!

Before the union of the United Free Church with the Church of Scotland in 1929, Dr. Inch, the Moderator of the Free Church, preached in Glenshee Church to a huge congregation of all types of Presbyterians and other denominations.

Mrs Dutton can remember when buses used to have trouble crossing the bridge at the Spittal (Wade Bridge). It was more pointedly humpy then, and it was necessary to empty the bus and manoeuvre it over, using long planks kept at the bridge for the purpose.

Her father was once moved to leave Mr Thomson's sermon to quell the exuberance of the passengers, enjoying this performance with much hilarity.

Netherton Church

Originally a mission church, attached to St. Andrew's Free Church, Blairgowrie. It was built in 1891 by local tradesmen. The ceiling is a notable feature, the work of Mr Keay, a Bridge of Cally joiner. (His son is the radio engineer in Blairgowrie).

The ground for the church was gifted by Lord Ashmore (lawlord), who is buried alongside the church in a private plot.

When Mr Thomas Smith, minister of Persie, died, the congregation were united, and services held in both churches. The minister, Mr Fulton, lived in Persie Manse.

When Mr Ballingall succeeded Mr Fulton, the present charge of Glenshee and Glenericht was formed, and he lived at Cray Manse. Persie was closed and the church and manse sold.

1. Mr and Mrs T. Smith retired to the Knowe, Drimmie.
2. Mr Donaldson lived in Netherton House, across from Brigadier Dumphie.
3. Mr Connachie lived in Mrs Sinclair's house, Woodford, opposed Corriefodly.
4. Dr. Vrie lived at Persie, extremely learned man.
5. Mr Ballingall lived at Cray.