

Kilconquhar - A Hidden Gem chronicles life in a Scottish village over a period of time. Current community projects and historical activities are highlighted against the backdrop of the landscape and the built environment to offer a detailed description of this 'wee' village and its people.

£6.00

KILCONQUHAR

A Hidden Gem



FOREWORD

A big welcome to our lovely and interesting village of Kilconquhar. We hope you will wander around and enjoy your visit. Please note the varied village architecture, look around the Church and the cemetery, and admire the Loch; and then visit Kinneuchar Inn for a well-earned refreshment and delicious meal.

King James VI described Fife as "a beggar's mantle fringed with gold", and it is within this fringe of "gold" near the coast that Kilconquhar lies. Industrious locals became prosperous with rich farmland and the Loch which used to have plenty of fish. It is well worth your while to go down to the Loch, which is now a bird sanctuary, and watch the swans, ducks and geese.



Photograph of Main Street looking East from Church Tower

The inhabitants of Kilconquhar were Celts originally Druids who converted to Christianity by missionaries known as Culdees, one these being Conquhar or Connacher who founded the church of Conquhar, that is Kil-conquhar, pronounced as either Kilconquhar or Conneuchar as well as numerous other ancient spellings. Hence the confusion, even to this day, as to how you should pronounce the other ancient spellings. However, you will be understood whichever you say and be made most welcome.

The name Kilconquhar also includes the 'clachan' or small village of Barnyards which is part of the north side of the village.



Looking down the Brae in 1960

One really interesting nugget of history is that our Lindesay-Bethune family home of Kilconquhar House (now timeshare) was originally owned by a local laird called Adam of Kilconquhar who married an heiress, Marjory, Countess of Carrick and thus became Earl of Carrick.

This Adam went out to the Crusades with Prince Edward of England and died in Acre leaving his widow Marjory, who subsequently met and married Robert Bruce. By marrying her, Robert Bruce became Earl of Carrick and Lord of Kilconquhar. Their son grew up to become our great Scottish national hero – Robert the Bruce!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Irene Wallace, Karin Kilborn and everyone who has contributed photographs, copy and interesting information for the production of this book.

Jean Lindsey-Bethune

KILCONQUHAR AND BARNYARDS THEN AND NOW

Kilconquhar and Barnyards were thriving villages in the past and in the 18th century it was known for its weaving industry. It was then a bustling village with many other businesses and shops. The weaving industry died in the late 19th century. Kilconquhar was connected to the estate and many of the cottages were used to house estate and farm workers. In 1793 the population was 258 with 198 people living in Barnyards. By 1836 the combined population was 558 dropping to 350 in 1881 and in 2011 it is just over 200.

It was in the early to mid-20th century that Kilconquhar experienced the decline that other villages were also experiencing. Jobs for manual workers became fewer with time, businesses and shops closed. The lack of provision of mains water, drainage and lighting had a large part to play. The cottages and houses were not all maintained and there was not enough money to update these.

It was due to two sisters Miss Margaret Tytler and Mrs. Kirsteen Noble that some of the derelict houses in the village were restored. The first house had lain empty for eight years. It had once been a coaching inn. However, a programme of restoration was begun by these ladies who had only driven through the village and seen its potential. Several houses were upgraded and improved over time. In 2011 we see a pretty village with many natural assets.

We hope to continue exploring the history of Kilconquhar and Barnyards and to record this for the future.

BEAUTIFUL KILCONQUHAR GROUP

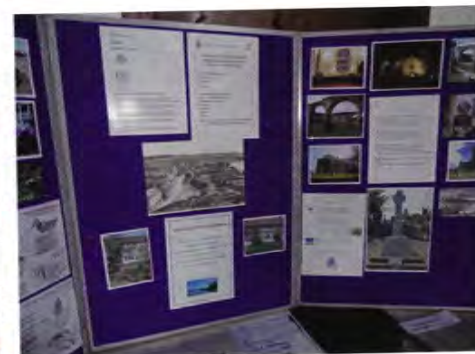
Beautiful Kilconquhar

In May 2009, a group of like-minded villagers decided to further enhance our village and after discussion with the local Community Council entered Fife Council's Beautiful Fife campaign which was a new campaign in that year. There was not a great deal of time but we did embrace the criteria of the campaign which includes floral enhancement, environmental responsibility and community participation. We were delighted to be awarded a Silver Gilt certificate and to receive a gold award for the "Best Small Village in Fife". There was a great deal of local support for the campaign. Following this we made a decision to enter both the Beautiful Fife and Beautiful Scotland campaigns in 2010. We were awarded the "Best Wee Village in Fife" with a Gold award and in Beautiful Scotland we were awarded a Silver Gilt certificate.

Pivotal to our work was the support received from Fife Council through Celebrating Fife 2010. The purpose of this programme was to:

- **Celebrate and promote Fife.**
- **Raise awareness in Fife and Scotland and beyond of Fife's special gifts.**
- **Broaden access to and promote participation in cultural activities.**

Funding and support enabled us to further enhance our village and support our exhibition "Kilconquhar – Past – Present – Future", by paying for publicity, printing and display boards. The legacy of the latter will remain in the community. The exhibition on 20th June 2010 was well supported and held in Kilconquhar Parish Church and halls.



Kilconquhar - Past - Present - Future Exhibition 20th June 2010

It is as a result of our activities when we further explored our heritage that we decided to publish this booklet. We have received funding from Fife Council and we should like to express our thanks for this.



Some of the group and the Dale garden

We would like to thank our group for their efforts in the last year. The following pages will display some of our work as well as the many contributions received from interested parties in our village and the surrounding area. The next few pages give details of our 'Walk in Time'. Some of the information is provided from the writings of Mrs. Agnes Stewart who recorded details of shops and businesses in the 1900s.



Planting around the village

2010 Awards



Awards and Certificates presented to the Beautiful Kilconquhar group in 2010

It is hoped that the group will continue with their enterprise which would not have been possible without the help of the local community for which we are most grateful.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Beecher of Kinneuchar Inn generously arranged a celebration for the village and we wish to thank them for their kind hospitality. Many of the people living in the village attended the celebration and we spoke about our work. Councillor Elizabeth Riches was present and spoke about the village achievements and community participation.

"In Bloom"

In years gone by other groups in Kilconquhar have entered "In Bloom" campaigns.

More recently in 2001 the village was awarded the "Best Kept Village In Fife" and for the third year running was a finalist in "Scotland In Bloom".



The notice erected by Fife Council to mark the achievement of winning "Best Kept Village in Fife"

The group who all worked so hard are very modest about their achievements. Here is a photograph of those involved:



From Left: Bill Elder, Ann Fotheringham, Mary Elder, Josephine Chalmers, Stewart Hutton & Bill Chalmers

A WALK IN TIME

Please follow our walk and enjoy a leisurely stroll around the village and read some of the information about the village in the past until the present day.

Entering the village from Elie, you will observe the village signs. On the left hand side you can see the old manse now called "Hill House" which is set back from the road. Immediately next to this house there is the more modern "old" manse next door which has a well-cared for garden and a good loch view. Some years ago the manse was established in Elie. The Parish Church there was linked with Kilconquhar and Colinsburgh for some years and is now a united parish. There is a good view of the Loch from here.



Kilconquhar Loch

Metal poles can be seen in the field next to the graveyard. Mr. Stuart Purves recalls that these were used during the last war and can be seen at both ends of the loch. Wire hawsers were stretched across the loch with wooden floats to help support the wire and it is assumed that these were placed to deter sea planes.

Walking down the road we pass the old Church Manse cottage which was derelict for some years, but was restored in the early 1980s to make a lovely home called "Camas Inas." A well-known lady "Aggie Mackie" lived here.



Old Church Manse Cottage



Next door is a house which was restored and rebuilt in the 1990s. It has beautiful garden displays which change with the seasons.

Continuing down the hill we see the lovely building of Kinneuchar Inn which was formerly the Commercial Hotel. Please note the Inn sign which shows a curling stone. The Inn has many beautiful window boxes outside in the summer and autumn. It has two metal rings attached to the walls which were used to tie horses.



Kinneuchar Inn

Taking a left turn up the road we pass the Car Park. On the right hand side of this road we can observe the Barnyards Marsh which

comes under the auspices of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Our group is becoming involved in assisting the volunteers with a project for the Marsh. There are boardwalks in the marsh and a pond to encourage wildlife and water plants. There are many different species of flowers and plants. More of this later in this book.



Barnyards Marsh

Turn right at Greenbrig Road beside the planter and seat and you pass the banking on the left which has wild flowers in season. The verges have daffodils in season which make a pretty sight. We are now in Greenbrig Road with its old restored cottages.



Wildflowers on Banking

A further 100 yards or so there is a lane called 'Cockie Chairlie's Way' so named after a 'local worthy' who used to go down the lane to the well from his house – this building is no longer in existence. There were several wells in the village. This one remains and is covered. There are some old cottages which have been carefully restored, overlooking the Barnyards Marsh. The white cottage in the left of the photo is Meadow Bank Cottage, which was for many years was the home of Mr. George Forgan the father of Mr. Ron Forgan who has a great knowledge of the village and its history.



Barnyards Marsh



**Old photograph of Meadow Bank Cottage
and Nurse Mercer's cottage**

The feu duty for Mr. Forgan's house was one cockerel a year. The water butt is just visible in the photo outside Nurse Mercer's.

Continuing on this road we pass the cottage called Cragard, which retains many of its original features and which has been in the ownership of the Sutherland family and descendants for 100 years.

We take a right turn down the slight incline and pass on the right the old schoolhouse. This is a very old building which housed the "dominie" or headmaster. The top storey was added later after the house was built and this is where boys boarded who attended Kilconquhar school but lived outside the village. They would return home at the weekend. The boys had to help in the garden. This house was derelict in the 1960s, with pigeons nesting and was restored by

Mr. and Mrs. Barron. On the left is a house with a fine lawn well looked after by the owner!

We turn left at the foot of the hill into Meadow Road. We will pass several old cottages, which have been restored. (Please see map drawn by hand of old Barnyards on page 22). On the left hand side we pass Silverdale. This was a thriving bakehouse and shop and Agnes Stewart recalled that the bakehouse had two vans which went out to the country districts.



Barnyards Looking West

The timber building in the foreground housed the baker's horse drawn delivery van used by the bakehouse next door

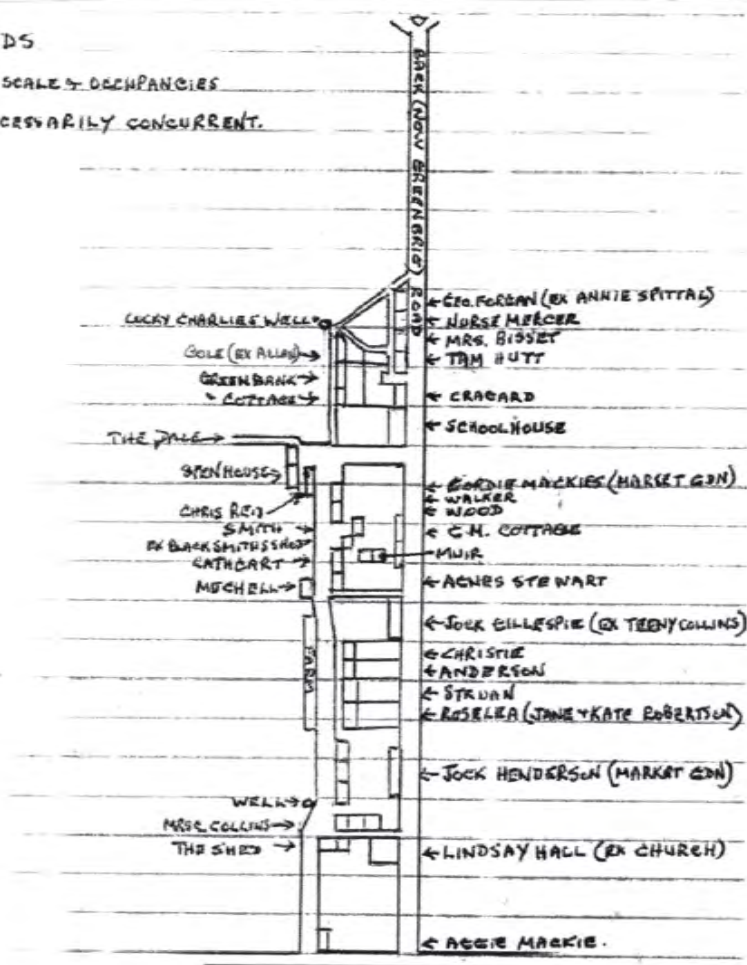
Going left up the lane known as Kirk Wynd at the top we see a two storey building which has replaced the Lady Lindsay Hall which was left to fall into disrepair, and was not used for many years. It was

restored some forty years later but had to be kept in the style of the old building. There was a grocer at the back of the Lindsay Hall, which used to be a church. Mrs. Sheila Peebles recalls that the Hall was used for a number of social reasons. More information is provided about this historic building later in this book.

OLD BARNYARDS

NOTE - NOT TO SCALE & OCCUPANCIES

NOT NECESSARILY CONCURRENT.



Hand-drawn map of Barnyards

Along from the Hall is Norlands, which used to be a greengrocer. The hall and buildings near had been left to become derelict and in 1997 a local builder restored the Lindsay Hall which is shown in the photos. It is now two houses. Other houses were built nearby in an attractive little corner as the photograph shows.



Barnyards 1990



Barnyards 1997



The "Lindsay Hall" built replacing the original building – it is the larger of the two buildings. We are grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred White who supplied these and other photographs.

After viewing this area walk back down Kirk Wynd and enter Bruce Square with it's little cottages. There are lovely floral displays in season facing the field.



Bruce Square

As we walk down the road towards the corner we pass the field with ponies and just behind is the village play park with a footpath at the far end called the Dale. There was a market garden in the field many years ago. Situated opposite at the east end of Main Street is the Smiddy with its many associations of an era gone by. In the past this house was a collection of cottages. The cottage nearest the road was 'The Young Men's Club' and the original entrance was through the middle window. The upper house was the Smith's house and the forge was probably in what is now a ruined cottage in the garden. There was a small cottage attached at the end of the upper house and outside is one of the seven wells that served the village.



The Smiddy

Opposite the Smiddy is Butler house, which used to be the home of the butler on the estate. It has been restored and extended. It has beautiful flowers in season.



Butler House

It appears that a laundry business was run in Quoin House, next to Butler House, along at the east end of Main Street.

On the left we pass, on the corner, the restored house called Little Coates. There was a shop and later a laundry in Agnes Stewart's time. Moving left up Balbuthie Road we see a cottage called Balclevie, which shares the name of an old village, which was situated almost opposite on the side of the Loch. It is said that Sir John Anstruther removed the village in the mid 18th century as his wife objected to the view from their home Elie House on the estate of that name. This is the same lady who reputedly bathed in the sea at the Lady's Tower in Ruby Bay. Further up the house, marking the boundary of the village to the east is Lochside Steading, which was a farm and has undergone a very careful restoration. This is the last property on the eastern boundary of the village on Balbuthie Road.

Lochside Farm is a beautiful conversion from a derelict range of farm buildings built in the 18th century.

In later years the farm was run as a small-holding by Robert Archer and family who became tenants in 1920. The steading was used to fatten over 10 – 12 cattle per year, and had use of ninety acres of adjacent farmland over the period 1920 – 1970. Originally the steading building included stables, a threshing barn with horse-powered threshing machine, a straw barn and covered cattle court, a turnip shed including boiler and implement shed. The threshing machine equipment was removed prior to 1920.

Since 1970, when the steading was left unused, the property steadily deteriorated with roofs and walls collapsing and extensive vegetation growing through the buildings. In the 1990s planning was originally granted to Lord Lindsay who owned the property to convert into housing but this lapsed. It was renewed in 2005. Mr. and Mrs. Guy Mace approached Lord Lindsay and in 2006 purchased the property with half an acre of ground bordering the Loch.



Lochside Farm buildings before renovation

Plans were submitted for conversion of the steading into one dwelling with a new extension and renovation work commenced with final completion of the house in March 2009. All renovation and external building works were carried out to the highest standards using local natural stone and traditional lime mortar.

Lochside Farm received commendations in the Dundee Institute of Architects Design Awards 2009 for the 'best regeneration/conservation project' and 'Best Private House'.



The completed renovations of Lochside Farm buildings

Coming back passing Little Coates on the left, opposite we see the restored old Farmhouse which also retains many original features. The garden ground used to be farmland. (See photographs of house prior to restoration which was two houses.) The house was restored by Mrs. Elsa McFarlan around the early 1970s.



The old Farmhouse prior to restoration

The front door had been bricked up. The building comprised a small cottage and a larger two storey house



The Old Farmhouse present day

The previous owner carried out a great deal of work in the garden with planting of flowers and shrubs and to this day it remains colourful and attractive. It is still well cared for as you will see when walking past.

Continuing next door there is a restored cottage with nice floral displays and opposite is the first property to be restored in the village after it had lain empty for eight years.

This property is now known as "Woodlands". In 1758 the owner made leather goods and shoes. The house at this time was insured

for £100 and the contents for £40. The annual premium was 10 shilling. It was also a small early eighteenth century coaching inn belonging to the Earls of Lindsay. The property has also in the past stored curling stones. It still has set into the wall fronting Main Street a stone insurance fire



"Woodlands" before restoration



Fire Seal on Woodlands

The insurance seal set into the wall showed that the owner had paid his 'dues' in the event of fire, otherwise there would be no help forthcoming from the Fire Brigade!

mark seal dating from the 18th century. In 1961 having lain empty for several years it was purchased by two sisters who had noticed its dilapidated state while driving through the village and who believed that they could restore it to provide a fine house.

This was the beginning of a programme of restoration by this family.

Next door to Woodlands there is a blue whinstone cottage, Allan Cottage, so named after the person who was a shoemaker who built the cottage in 1753.

In the 1930s there was an owner called Euphemia Grieve who rented the use of her mangle for one penny to the villagers for wringing their washing! The photograph on the next page shows Woodlands, Allan Cottage and Laigh Cottage. The latter is a pretty white painted cottage with its irregular windows. Please note in particular the small windows, installed long before building regulations. Laigh Cottage has one of the standpipes outside which was before running water was installed.



Above: Woodlands, Allan Cottage and Laigh Cottage

Photo of the three houses, a Renault Dauphine car & Pharaoh the dog! (1964)

Right: standpipe outside Laigh Cottage



Opposite these houses is St. Margaret's, which is a blue whinstone house like Allan Cottage with chips of whinstone embedded in the joints between the stones with mortar called cherry cocking. St. Margaret's has a large garden, which in years gone by was rented to a local farmer called Bert Archer (in the 1922 School photo later in this book) for a nominal sum of £1.25 per year. Crops were planted and harvested in the traditional way. St. Margaret's is the last house in the photograph. Next door to St. Margaret's was a garden which the photograph shows and later two houses were built there.



Main Street and former garden

The photograph on the next page shows Main Street houses in the 1980s with below an updated photo with further refurbishment. The Main Street houses have no front gardens but do have lovely window boxes and tubs on display whatever the seasons. There is an annual competition for the best window box organised by the Community Council.

On the left hand side of the colour photograph is Knox House an imposing house named after its owner who used to be the proprietor of the hotel at one time. There are sweeping views to the Loch. This was one of the houses restored by the Noble family in the early 1960s.



Main Street Past and Present

Next door to Knox House is Loch House which was also refurbished in the early 1960s. Opposite are attractive refurbished cottages, one of them was originally four cottages.

Near this house beside the telephone box, there is an interesting house that housed Brown's Post Office and down the side there was a joiner and undertaker. In the wee cottage there was also a cooking house for the school. Agnes Stewart describes it as having all white tiled walls and a nice big range. The next house called the Bell House was a baker's shop.

Next door at number 14 some years later became Copeland's pub. In 1945 this was bought and turned back into a house which was refurbished. The cottage was called Cameron cottage so named by a former occupier, Jack Ramsay who named it after Cameron near St Andrews where he met his wife at the dancing.

Opposite is the Post house still called that where two sisters, the Misses Matthesons had a shop. They sold all kinds of wool and fancy goods including crest china and sweets. They had an organ upstairs and local children including Agnes Stewart used to sit in the room on a Sunday afternoon whilst they played hymns. The sisters sang in the church choir.

On the left hand side of Main Street at the War Memorial we see Lochside Cottage which has been restored and always has lovely floral displays.



Lochside Cottage

Next door is Bella Ramsay's cottage which was once two cottages and has been restored. It was the home of a lady by the same name. The next houses are Kirkside cottage and the Tannery which was built beside the old Tannery. Not much remains of that building. There is another house at the end of the lane. There is no access to the church or the loch from the lane. In front of Lochside there is the War Memorial of the First World War. In this area there is the award winning bus shelter.



Above:
Drawing of the Bus Shelter by
young Phoebe Somerville

Left:
Young volunteers watering
tubs on either side of the bus
shelter

Behind the War Memorial there is the Church wall now covered by ivy. At one time there was a cottage which has fallen into disrepair and is now completely hidden. Mrs. Fotheringham gives an account of Luke Maloney who lived in here. He sold bathroom towels and ladies underwear, with his wife. In 1909 he was presented with the Chinese medal for his service to the Navy during the Chinese War of 1859-60.



Mr. Gordon and Mrs. Ann Fotheringham

She was one of the founder members of the group who participated in various community projects

Bella Ramsay later moved to Cornercroft on the other side of the road facing the War Memorial. Previously Mr. Brown had lived there and he was a tailor, and then his son-in-law took it over as a draper's shop. When Bella Ramsay moved in she used Luke Maloney's Cottage as a paraffin oil house. Next door to Cornercroft walking west is St Anne's, the home of the Purves family. It used to be a greengrocer's shop and thereafter became a Fish and Chip shop. At the back of the Main Street in the field there was a poultry farm.

Continuing on our walk we pass the old schoolhouse building which still looks the same outside but is now divided into two homes. In front is the Dale garden, which has been replanted. The work was organised by Ellie Theobald, one of our group, with volunteers, and she is in the photograph. It is now a colourful garden.



The Dale Garden

Immediately next to the garden is an attractive stone cottage which used to be the last shop in the village run by Mr. Haddow. Continuing on the right we pass Conacher Court and two houses recently rebuilt. There is an old photo of one house later in this book.

We are back at the Church which you may wish to visit. The Church is open for visitors at certain times during the year. Services are advertised on the notice board outside facing the Main Street.



Kilconquhar Church

Afternoon teas with delicious home baking are served in the Church hall on the third Sunday of the month from April to September. These are organised by Mrs. Margaret Rollo and helpers and you will be most welcome.

BARNYARDS MARSH



Barnyards Marsh

Barnyards Marsh is one of the natural amenities adjacent to Kilconquhar and Barnyards that, along with the neighbouring loch, adds to the experience of living in, or visiting, Kilconquhar and Barnyards. The marsh is a mix of vegetation, from willow trees to grasses, sedges, flowers etc.

This vegetation provides cover for myriads of different insects, many of which have yet to be identified. The insects in turn provide food for birds, (birds have no problems with identification...insects = food), such as the migratory Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Willow Warbler, and Chiff Chaff which turn up every Spring to take advantage of this 'larder' to raise their families over the Summer months. Snipe, both Common and Jack, use the marsh during the winter months because of the ready supply of worms in the soft soil. Here are the usual 'local birds' such as Blackbirds, Robins, Heron (who take advantage of the frogs/toads in the pond) etc. that nest in the Willow scrub south and east fringes. Migrating Long Eared owl has been recorded on the marsh in recent years.

The marsh is part of the 'glebe' (Latin: "gleba" – lump of earth etc.) of the local Kirk. The 'glebe' was land 'gifted' by the local 'laird' to the parish, the revenues from which contributed to the parish expenses... usually to support the Minister. Today the 'glebe' is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, (they pay a nominal rent to the local Church), for the benefit of both wildlife and humans.



Barnyards Marsh

The best time to visit the marsh is over the summer months when the birds are busy, the flowers are 'buzzy' and the marsh is 'alive' and dryer. "Wellies" are advised at all but the driest time of the year.

Lesser Pond Sedge (*Carex acutiformis*) covers the biggest single area in the middle of the marsh, with 'patches' of Canary Reed Grass, and Brown Sedge forming the other main obvious vegetation, outside the Willow trees which grow along the south and east borders. Taller 'flowering' plants like Meadowsweet, Valerian grow mostly in the western side of the marsh while the smaller flowering plants such as Northern Marsh Orchid, Ragged Robin, Marsh Marigold and others are seen mostly, and are more obvious, in the patch of lower growing Brown Sedge and alongside the path that meanders round the marsh.

A pond has been dug to provide 'open' water for water voles, last recorded in the ditch on the west side of the Colinsburgh Road in the mid 1990's, for frogs/toads to spawn, and for water 'living' insects...i.e. Damselfly's and the like. Recently 'Bonkers' of St Andrews donated funds for boardwalk over the wettest part of the marsh path. This has greatly improved the 'walk' round the marsh, especially now that over the past few years there has been a marked increase in the water levels. The marsh is a peaceful place, except when you get too close to a nesting pair of Sedge Warblers or Reed Buntings...then the parent birds will give you a 'round of the guns' to let you know you are disturbing them, but all that adds to the 'marsh' experience.

Albert Lawrie
(Scottish Wildlife Trust)



Wildflowers of Barnyards Marsh

BARNYARDS MARSH NATURE RESERVE



Dear Friends,

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has leased Barnyards Marsh from the Church of Scotland as a nature reserve.

The reserve lies to the south of the ditch and is bounded by a fence. The area affected by the new pumping station is to be returned to its original state when that work is completed.

We intend to provide gates to the reserve and to involve the local schoolchildren in nature studies there.

Its wildlife value is in the marsh plants, such as Northern Marsh Orchid, and also for the large numbers of snipe wintering there.

Perhaps you have read about how rare these marshlands have become and how easily they are destroyed, so this is an important little site right on our doorstep. The local S.W.T. management committee hopes you will take an interest in the site by discouraging any rubbish dumping or damage to fences.

If you do happen to see any rare birds or spot any plants, perhaps you could report these to the local warden,

Mrs Frances Gordon,
Loch House,
Main Street,
Kilconquhar.

We are holding an Open Day on the 24th April from 2.00 - 4.00 pm and will be glad to welcome you then.

Yours sincerely

JOYCE CARSTAIRS (Convenor)
Siwardlea,
Siward Lane
Ellie.



DON'T



Children of Colinsburgh School Project

School Initiative by Head teacher Mrs. Susan Grant supported by Mr. Tom Bray Educational Environmentalist 1992.

BARNYARDS MARSH KILCONQUHAR



By Scott Kippen

Have you ever seen a brown
bird flying low
in zig-zags across the
marsh?

Or maybe probing its long
beak into the mud?

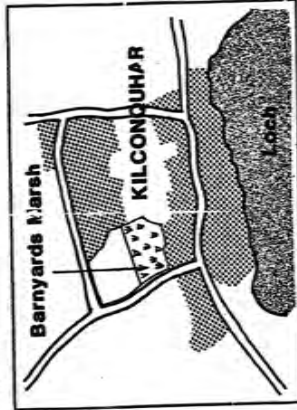
Because snipe do that, and
they winter here!

**WILL YOU
HELP CARE
FOR IT?**



Every time it swooped the bird opened its tail against the
rush of air, so that the feathers made a sound between the
beating of a kid and a dove's cooing. Its mate was flying
nearby.
They were snipes who had chosen for a nesting place a
raft clump in the marsh. They flew down to find worms
by pushing their long bills into the luggymine.

from "TARKA THE OTTER"
by Henry Williamson



By Kimberley Rogers

**IF WE LOOK AFTER IT, WE ARE
DOING IT FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS
AS WELL AS FOR INTERESTED
NATURE LOVERS NOW!**



By Sharon Carstairs

**DON'T PULL
UP PLANTS!**



By Louise Doherty

**DON'T DUMP
RUBBISH!**

The Northern Marsh Orchid
is a rare and protected species.
We are so lucky to have them
growing nearby.

KILCONQUHAR CHURCH

Kilconquhar Old Church

Kilconquhar has long been thought a significant site even before Christianity. In the area around the village there is reported evidence of a Pictish dwelling in Balcarres estate and a lone standing stone can be seen on the brow of the ridge that runs towards Pittenweem. Mention of Saint Conquhar, a Scottish Saint, is found only in the Perth Psalter written towards the end of the 15th century and records his saint's day as being the 3rd May.

Kilconquhar parish was a large and important one. Approximately nine miles in length and two miles inland and originally included Elie, Earlsferry, St. Monans, Kilconquhar, Barnyards, Colinsburgh and Largoward. Later in the first half of the 17th century Elie and St Monans became separate parishes.

Kilconquhar was a seat of the Culdee Church and the first mention appears in 1177 along with a chapel. During the 12th century the Culdee Church lost ground to the Roman Catholic/Episcopalian Church. In 1200 Duncan Earl of Fife bestowed the revenues of the church and parish to the Cistercian Nunnery in North Berwick. The Church was consecrated in 1243 by Bishop de Bernham and in 1499 records show that Patrick Dunbar, Laird of Kilconquhar, set up an altar to 'Our Lady of Pitie' in the church.

The old Church started off simply with a nave and chancel. Later alterations in the fifteenth century saw a north aisle linked to the nave by an arcade. Three of the arches with their Norman pillars can still be seen. Look carefully at the south side of the middle arch for the remnants of a carving thought to be a 'Green Man'. This is a carving

of a face often found in old churches and buildings and may be a symbol of rebirth or renaissance. On the south side there appears to have been a small chapel or south aisle and the main entrance porch to the Church.



Kilconquhar Old Church

The Church is said to have had an earthen floor, no heating and the main part would have been a large open space. The general congregation would bring their own benches or stools. The galleries were accessed by ladder. The only people with seats would be the great and the good. The Elders' seats had a lock and key to the door, the heritors put up and maintained their own desks, and fishermen and tenants would be allocated seating. Services tended to be long, and the Annals of Colinsburgh note that for special services like communion there may have been two or three sermons preached. This often meant that the

main body of the congregation were often restless, moving in and out of the building and at times inattentive. The Elders were expected to keep order and in 1649 records suggest that they were policing the galleries checking on those who did not pay attention, made a noise or left before the sermon, and admonishing the offenders.

In the South aisle or chapel area of the old Church lay a stone effigy of 'Jock of Bucklyvie' a knight in chain mail. Unfortunately with the destruction of the old church to make way for the new he has been exposed to the elements and is now very well weathered and has lost his feet. It is thought that there may have been an independent estate of Bucklieve or Balclevie and that this effigy represents one of the Lairds.

Kilconquhar Church

By 1818 the old Church was in need of repair and enlargement so it was decided to build a new church big enough to accommodate 900. The plan of the church being built at the time at Cockpen in the parish of Dalkeith was adopted and was not to cost more than £2500. The perspective view of the new Church from 1819 prepared by Messrs R & R Dickson, Edinburgh Architects can be seen in the Church's North Hall. Before the building was completed the plans were enlarged to seat 1035 and the heritors were canny enough to save money by using as much of the old building as possible. They also needed to take down the old church as the space was needed to accommodate the new building.

The building is a cruciform design with a clock and bell tower at the west end and was opened on 12th August 1821. It more or less came in on budget at £2761, the additional cost due to the changes to the

design. In 1900 the chancel at the east end was added along with the organ, the communion tables and chairs.

At the end of the 20th century this large drafty Church, with now antiquated amenities, had a smaller attending congregation. Also at the end of the 1990's after great discussion a small working committee was convened to supervise the remodelling of the Church to bring it into the twenty-first century. Briefly the two transepts were walled off to form two halls. The old vestry was redesigned to provide modern toilet facilities, disabled access, minister's vestry and a neat kitchen area. The North Hall is the main meeting room and display room of Church artefacts. The South Hall has the kitchen next to it and is used by the Sunday school, for Church social events and by the community.

These changes were completed in 2002 and in the South Hall the Heritage Award 2002 for the sympathetic redevelopment of the church can be seen.

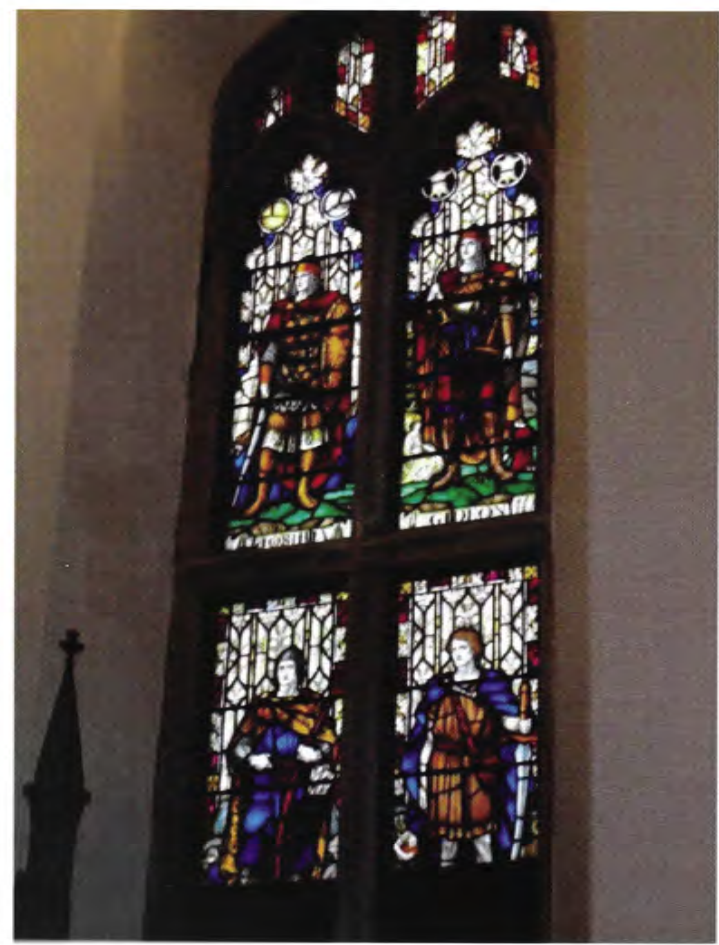
There are a total of five stained glass windows in the Church. The one that is first seen as you come into the chancel of the Church is the magnificent stain glass window that depicts the Acts of Charity by Ward and Hughes installed in 1867.



Stained glass depicting the Acts of Charity

The window depicting four biblical warriors to the right as you face the main window was gifted by Mrs Andrew Grant in memory of the loss of her four nephews in the First World War.

Church History by Elizabeth



Stained glass depicting four biblical warriors

Bracher

Kilconquhar Church Bell

In 1954, the Minister of the Parish, Robin Mitchell researched some old records and found that in the early 1800s it was not the intention to build the church on its present site. As we know this site gives an outstanding view of the village and surroundings, including the loch. The Minister also learned that the old church, which goes back to the 12th Century and had been left to fall into disrepair, would have been completely destroyed by the builders had not two of the heritors bought this for the sum of £30.



Church Bell

At the time of the building the Countess Dowager of Crawford and Balcarres took a great interest in the construction of the parish church. She proposed to present a bell for the new church. Her second son Robert agreed to this and sent his younger brother Hugh to London to look for a bell. He found one which had been used in Greenwich Hospital.



Church Bells

(There are in fact two bells).

Church Bell Ringer Billy Donaldson of Colinsburgh has rung the bells in the churches of Kilconquhar and Colinsburgh for over twenty two years since he was aged eleven. Thanks to Billy for all his endeavours.

Photographs of the bells were taken by David, of H E Weir & Son who maintain the church clocks in the Parish and in many other areas. He did this as a favour so that we would not have to climb two ladders to the bells and we are grateful to him!

The Millennium Banner

On Sunday 19th September 2000, Diana, Countess of Lindsay, unveiled the Millennium Banner which was duly dedicated by the Reverend Iain Paton. This handsome banner, comprising hand-worked panels was designed and made by ladies from Kilconquhar and Colinsburgh congregations. This banner hangs on the north wall of the Church's North Hall.



Millennium Banner

Reverend Robert Armstrong

Reverend Armstrong was minister of Kilconquhar Parish from 1919 to 1953. He was known as "auld Robbie" in the Parish. He wrote poetry and in 1936 published a book of his "Collected Poetry". The poem printed over has already been published in church documents and we are pleased to include it.



Reverend Robert "auld Robbie" Armstrong

Kinneuchar Church
Rev. Armstrong 1936

Thou noble pile built by a hand that knew
Where beauty dwells and peace has her abode,
Whose soul the seed of inspiration grew
In scenes surpassing any man hath trode.

The generations rise and like a breath
Their passage is and of too short a date;
Thou standest sure as is the loch beneath
Defying Time's decay or vicissitude of fate.

Within these hallowed walls our sires their song
Of praise and love to God have often sung,
Wak'ning the sacred memories that throng
Where headstones tell the graves of old and young.

Dear shrine, guard thou God's name through years to come
When we are gone and sleeping in the tomb.



Kilconquhar Church in the snow

Church Anecdotes

Mr. Donald Young tells a story of the big storm in the 1960s when the church bell in Kilconquhar Church was damaged. Two Colinsburgh ladies, Mrs. Haldane and Mrs. Annan arranged a raffle in order to raise funds to repair the bell, but the Minister refused the cash because it came from the proceeds of a raffle. The bell was repaired somehow.



Kilconquhar Church

One of the clock faces is larger than the other three and it is said that the Earl of Balcarres wished to be able to view the time from his home and could do so because of the size of the clock face to the North. (Left face).

War Memorial

The memorial is situated beside the church with a lovely garden. The garden was started by a group of villagers who have tended it faithfully for many years and it is a colourful display according to the seasons.



The War Memorial

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—St. John xv.-13.

ORDER OF SERVICE

AT THE

UNVEILING AND DEDICATION

—OF—

KILCONQUHAR PARISH WAR MEMORIAL

—ON—

25TH SEPTEMBER 1921.

At 3.30 P.M.



THE MUSIC WILL BE LED BY LARGE SILVER BAND.

Order of Service from the Church Service
for the unveiling of the War Memorial

The war memorial commemorates the names of the men who lost their lives in the First World War. There was a service to unveil the memorial.

KILCONQUHAR SCHOOL

A school master is mentioned as early as 1593, but there are many references to education in the Kilconquhar area which may have been parish type gatherings. In 1695, a meeting of the Kirk Session decided that Kilconquhar should have a school and school house. Education in those days was a different format, children were taught subjects that would enable them to function in society; girls, household tasks and stitching and the boys reading, maths, gardening and farming.



Kilconquhar School Pupils 1922

Back Row: Peggy Forgan, Bert Archer, Jimmy Hamilton, George Forgan, W Adamson, John Black, Eck Wilson, Alex Purves, Lizzie Wilson
Middle Row: Andrew Walker, Will or Tom Reid, Alison Wilson, unknown Dunn, Annie Dick, Babbie Allan, Dick Knox
Front Row: Margaret Smith, Sybil Sutherland, Jenny Mackie, Mary Black, Elsie Walker, unknown, Nancy Dickson

The School was important to the village and seemed to evolve as the community needs dictated. The exact date of the opening of the present school building is unclear. We have an early photograph of the school pupils in 1922 from Ron Forgan whose father is in the photograph.

There were two teachers in the 1930s and 40s. In those times children left school at a much earlier age. Latterly there was only one teacher. The school had a variety of teachers, most recently Mrs. McAllister followed by Mrs. McRae. The School House in Barnyards housed the Headmistress, Mrs. McAllister, and she is mentioned regularly in the anecdotes related by past pupils.



Kilconquhar School Pupils 1962

Back Row: Teacher Mrs. McAllister, Fiona McRae, Joan Green, Jane McRae, Dorothy Peebles, Tommy Archer, Elizabeth Green, Susan Sutherland
Front Row: James Ramsay, Catherine Brown, Heather Elrick, Irene Peebles, Linda Elrick, Eric Peebles, Joyce Elrick

We have recorded recollections from some of the pupils. They have spoken of happy times! Mrs. McAllister cycled to school on a huge old-fashioned bicycle with a big basket in front into which she put her 'School Bag'.

Former pupils recall having tests and having to sit behind the piano in order to avoid distraction or 'cheating' and even the good old '11 plus' exam was done behind the piano. The toilet block was outside and in summer you had to avoid spiders and other beasties and in winter the icicles.

When your turn at being oldest in school arrived you were allowed out five minutes early at break to run next door to Davidson's shop to collect the head's paper. On the last day of summer term you got to collect ice lollies for all the school. On one pupil's last day at school the ice-cream van came and pupils were treated to a cone.

In winter the daily free bottles of milk were put on the radiators to thaw. There were holidays from school when weather was freezing and on days when the loch was frozen.

Boys and girls played in separate playgrounds. In summer desks would be put outside and the pupils would enjoy working in the fresh air and sunshine. There was one classroom and a room for gym in the building. Visiting teachers came to teach specialist subjects, such as music and movement, knitting and sewing.

The 'dinner lady' Granny Purves is remembered with fondness. She was also the janitor and carried out lots of duties. Mrs. McAllister was the head teacher and it was well known that she looked forward to coming to school as Mrs. Purves had her cushion warmed for her arrival. As well as the cleaning of the school, Mrs. Purves also tended

the boiler which was solid fuel and needed to be stoked several times a day. She was known to go round the houses, which were being renovated, to collect bits of wood to use as kindling to get the boiler started! Mrs. Purves was also the dinner lady serving the daily meals to all the children at the school. She also watched over the children at break and lunch times. She was invaluable to the smooth running of the school and clearly carried out her various tasks with enthusiasm.

Mrs. McRae, the last Head Teacher before the school closed was in charge of them all and she was well liked. She was a talented musician, as well as being a good teacher.

All the children had a part in the pantomime and other entertainment. Mrs. McRae taught the children to play musical instruments.



Photograph of Mrs. McRae and one of the pantomimes

There was a pantomime production every December and all the children had a part to play. They all sang and played musical instruments at the annual prizewinning in June. Mrs. McRae went to French lessons and taught her pupils so that one year there was a French sketch. She rearranged the words of the latest pop songs to make them fit into the story. Proper staging and lights were hired and every pupil had a part. No one was left out. Costumes were made for the various productions and these performances were greatly appreciated by family and friends.



A photograph of the pantomime 'The Emperor's New Clothes'

Back Row: Carol Barron, Marion Mason, Laura Anderson, Murray Cole, Clare Anderson, Raymond Elrick, Wilma Mason

Front Row: Billy Bell, Yvonne Aitken, David Jardine, Shona Hepburn, Dorothy Mason, Sandra Wallace, Jennifer Sutherland, Paul Barron, John Sutherland, Janice Bell

Mrs. Elsa Wilson who was the school secretary, remembers these happy times. Elsa's husband Fred, the local policeman, used to play the piano and would accompany some of the performances, mostly the pantomimes. Elsa remembers the children performing the song 'I'm forever blowing bubbles' and she was hiding behind the piano trying to blow bubbles but this was hampered by the heat of the lights. She did manage to blow only one bubble and the audience of parents and relatives cheered! Concerts and Christmas parties are remembered with such fondness by school children of the time. The photograph below is of prize giving in June when all the children received a prize.



Kilconquhar School Prize Giving

Back Row: David Doig, Teresa Provan, Lorraine Aitken, Julie MacIntyre, Lisa Milner, Rhona Wannan, Elinor Forgan

Front Row: Malcolm Burns, Laurie McGowan, Robbie McGowan, Michael McKenzie, Graham Burns, Kevin Brand

Mrs. McRae retired in 1980 when the school closed. By then the pupil numbers had fallen to eleven. She had stayed on an extra year so that the school could stay open. It was hoped then that the building would be converted to a Community Centre, but in 1985 it was decided that it would be converted into housing, these homes remain today.



Kilconquhar School and Barnyards from the Church Tower

After Mrs. McAllister retired the Old Schoolhouse in Barnyards became derelict. Mrs. McRae lived in Kilconquhar and did not need accommodation. Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Barron bought and refurbished the house – this took a year to complete, in the early 1960's. As we can see in our 'Walk in Time' the building has been well preserved.

LADY LINDSAY HALL

The Lady Lindsay Hall which has now been replaced by two houses in the style of the Hall, was a venue for many village events and was used as a church originally known as the Barnyards 'Burgher Chapel'. It was a breakaway from the Church of Scotland of those who disagreed with the 'Burgher Oath'. It was built in 1795, and the money was raised to build it from public donations. Business people such as the local candle maker and harness maker and other trades attended the church.

It was taken over by the Lindsay family in 1921 and was named after the then Lady Lindsay. There was seating for 270 people. There were two storeys. Sheila Peebles remembers the Hall having a cobbled floor and upstairs there was a wooden floor which had lots of knots in the wood, which made dancing difficult at times! Local dances were held there and people came from the surrounding area. There were long wooden seats made from logs. There was also smaller circular seats made from the trunk of a tree. There was an outside stair to the top floor and there was a big stove upstairs to heat the Hall. Cubs and Scouts met there. Alan Rodger was the Scout master and David Miller was in charge of cubs. Mr. Stewart Purves went to cubs in the Lindsay Hall and recalls there being a trap door used by the cubs to access a ladder to the next floor.

Irene Hamilton recalls the Brownies meeting in an anteroom of the Lindsay Hall. The 'Brown Owl' was Madge Semple whose father had the local Post Office. She also recalls social events taking place in the Hall. The windows had shutters and a coke stove. The hall was used by the WFF. Sheila remembers a 'Welcome Home' party in the Hall for all the tenants who were returning from the Second World War. Her was hosted by Lord Lindsay's grandmother, Countess of Lindsay.

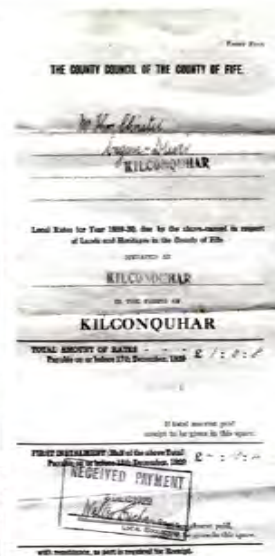
THE PLACE WHERE NOTHING HAPPENS - KILCONQUHAR!

It's a bonny wee bit village
And it sits by the loch side
The auld Kirk in its square tower
Can be seen baith far and wide
There's a clock on every face of it
To mark the passing day
To call you to your daily tasks
Or to God's house to pray
I doot we're gie auld fashioned
Wi oor wells upon the street
Oor crow stepped gables red
tiled roofs
And maist aw the folk ye meet
For we're no fashed wi' fashion
or wi' modern fol-de-rols
We're happy at the dyke side
To crack wi' village pals
When the starlings in the bat-
talion
Are flying overhead like an army
sent
from Him above
to guard the sleepy dead

This poem captures life as it was before mains water and electricity reached the village. It was written and given to Mr. Alexander Christie by Mr. Claude Gemmell, a neighbour who lived in the village. We met Mr. Christie's grandson with his son in law Mr. Ewan Rodger at our exhibition. Ewan has shown a great deal of interest in our project.

O'or sports are clean and healthy
When the summer time comes
doon
We saunter doon the shady road
That leads to Elie toon
When the great big North-sea
breakers
Roar tumbling on the sand
And there we baith play at golf
Wi' the delight o' the land
But at the dusk o' evenin'
We come back to oor wee toon
With the road that lead to no-
where
But just wander doon and doon
And we have a wee bit chatter
Just before we pairt at night
We dinna dae much reading
Because we've just lamp licht
See the place is aw in darkness
And ye will'na hear a sound
Fur aw the folk are sleeping
In oor wee toon.

Mr. Christie lived in one of these recently rebuilt houses opposite the Church, and also in Heather cottage in Barnyards. Mr. Christie's grandfather, aged 88 years was photographed using one of the wells for the last time in 1950. He was the oldest inhabitant of the village.



Possibly the well
at the Church wall
on the Main Street
which remains to
this day

Colinsburgh, 18th Nov 1939
Received from Mr Thomas Christie, Barnyards, the
sum of Two pounds, eighteen shillings & sixpence by
payment of house rent for half year to Martinmas
1939 belonging to Miss Brydie.

Geo. Rodger
Factor

Home, Rate Book and Rent Receipt

KILCONQUHAR LOCH

There is no feeder stream for this **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** loch, just rain, and possibly a couple of underwater springs. When the level gets too high the water runs away via a conduit in Elie Estate that ends up at Elie Harbour.

The loch is fairly shallow, varying from 6 to 12 feet; the deepest areas being near the church. There are stories about witches being drowned in the loch but no bones have been discovered... just old kettles, pans and jelly jars. The loch came into existence in the 11th century.

A recent innovation is the wooden hide, which you can see at the western end of the loch. This was erected by the Fife Bird Club.

Written by Stewart Hutton and Sue Rabjohns in 2002

Permanent residents of the loch include:



Moorhen



Greylag Goose



Swan



Mallard



Coot

Occasional visitors include the following birds:



Great Crested Grebe



Black Necked Grebe

Very Rare



Little Grebe



Teal



Shoveler



Grey Heron



Ruddy Duck

well around despite a controversial cull



Tufted Duck

The loch is not without its tales, and anecdotes and was used by the village population all those years ago even for their washing. It was also used for dumping ashes from their fires amongst other things. There was a path round the loch which disappeared in the early 50's through non-use. Now the banks are mostly thick rushes except where

they have been cut. There are tales of witches and the well known ballad of the *Witches of Pittenweem* by David Vedder. The drowning of a witch is reputed to have made the swans leave the Loch.

They tied her arms behind her back,
An' twisted them with a pin;
And they dragged her to Kinnoquhar Loch
An' coupit the limmer in—
An' the swans flew screamin' to the hills,
Scared with the unhaly din.



Kilconquhar Loch from the far shore



Curling on Kilconquhar Loch

Winter 2010

The winter ice was thick enough for curling in the winter of 2010 over four days and for one afternoon at Christmas 2010. There was a bonspiel with local curling clubs taking part. There is an old tradition of curling on Kilconquhar Loch.

Wilma Wilson remembers the loch freezing over and the curlers who also played in the evenings, on the artificial pond beside the loch, and the kids used to go and clear them on.

There has always been some mystery surrounding the Loch. In his book *The East Neuk of Fife*, second edition in 1901, the Reverend Wood tells us that the Loch was originally called Redmyre and has a drainage westward to the burn which was closed by sand in the 1620s. It has been a subject of some studies over the years. Whatever its origins the Loch is a tranquil stretch of water inhabited by many species of birds and ducks.



Hercules Club and Hercules Ladies Curling Club

Winter 2010

Copyright R. Paton

Mr. Robert Burns kindly provided information about Broomlees Farm and also the local area. He has a great deal of knowledge having spent all his life here and his account is in the following paragraphs. He tells us about the Hercules Curling Club using two artificial curling rinks on Broomlees; where there is a new clubhouse as vandals destroyed the original hut containing over 175 years of history.



Mr. Andrew Burns with his grandchildren and Mr. Alex McLeod, Curling Secretary, Hercules Curling Club from 1959-1979

Kilconquhar Loch itself is not deep and is fed by field drains and springs. The level of water is laid down by an Act of Parliament and controlled by a valve which allows the water to flow through the loch-run to Elie Harbour. The village of Kilconquhar would flood if this did not exist. Years ago, when Robert was young there were pike and perch in the Loch being caught by the locals. These have now gone as have the many species of duck and other birds using the water, one of the reasons for this could be the pollution of the habitat by overwintering geese. These have spent many winters here although

this has declined somewhat in the last year. There are a number of small wooden piers at intervals around the Loch and these were used years ago for duck shooting.

Broomlees



Broomlees Farm

The farm covers 200 acres and is on Elie Estate owned by the Nairn family for four generations. It lies to the South of Kilconquhar Loch and ground to the West is also farmed.

The farm is all arable producing crops of cereals, various vegetables and pulses. It is also the site of a number of interesting features, The Broomlees Tile Works was situated on the right hand side of the road between the Station and the village, now a wooded area. Drain pipes and tiles were produced here from 1835- 1863. Kilconquhar Station which was opened in 1853 was used to transport these all over the country. (The station was the main source of movement of products in and out of the area including, agricultural produce, potatoes, sugar beet and fertilizer from Broomlees). A wagon of rabbits used to leave here every week!

KILCONQUHAR CASTLE

Kilconquhar House was the seat of the Earl of Lindsay. In 1861 the mansion was the home of Sir John Trotter Bethune, Bart, a descendant of the noble family of Crawford. The house is situated on the outskirts of the village about half a mile to the north east of the loch. In the 1970s the house was sold to a development company.

Kilconquhar House was comprehensively destroyed by fire on the night of 13th January 1978. Trades people were working in the house which was otherwise empty. The fire started in the library which had beautiful panelling and also had a Calor gas cylinder in it. The water pressure in the fire hydrants was low and the only security was in Army Green Goddesses as the Fire Brigade was on strike. The house could not be seen from the road and the fire went unchecked through the whole of the roof. By the time it was discovered the house was totally burnt. The house was to have been converted into a hotel but instead a timeshare resort with cottages on the ground was created.



Lord and Lady Lindsay, Kilconquhar House

KILCONQUHAR STATION

Kilconquhar station opened in 1853 and was part of the East of Fife railway network. It became a busy station in terms of trade, army movements and holidays. It was an essential link for transporting goods. Hugh Sutherland, grandfather of Karin Kilborn became the Station master in the early 1900's after working in Gorebridge, Kingsbarns and Abernethy.

The family lived in the station house which still stands at the entrance to Shell Bay. Hugh had a good supply of snuff that was shared with gentlemen visitors to his office in the station! Hugh bought a coal merchant's business for his son Hugh Melville Sutherland and this business in turn supplied the station as well as local needs. Grandfather Hugh died in 1919 and the family moved to Cragard in Greenbrig Road, Barnyards where they lived and ran the Coal Merchants business from a large shed in the garden which still stands there today.

The railway line was closed in September 1964 when passenger services were withdrawn between St. Andrews and Leven.



Mrs A. Young outside Kilconquhar Station

NOTABLE PEOPLE FROM HISTORY

Sir John Bellenden appointed Lord Justice Clerk 1547, died 1576. He served under Mary Queen of Scots and James VI. He amassed a great estate by marrying very advantageously three times. By his second wife, his third son, William became the Vicar of Kilconquhar and was a classical scholar in Kilconquhar in 1591. Sir John's fourth son Thomas inherited from him the Barony of Carlowrie and Kilconquhar. Unfortunately he drowned.

William Dudingston 1740 – 1817. Middle child of five children born to James Dudingston and Margaret Gillespie. Joined the Royal Navy as a youngster, was commissioned as a Lieutenant in 1759 and was given command of His Majesty's Schooner 'Gaspee' in 1768. His claim to fame is 'his arrogance and over zealousness in carrying out trade law enforcement', to the extent that the citizens of Rhode Island attacked and destroyed his ship.

Henry Normand McLaurin 1835 – 1914. One of five children born to James McLaren (headmaster of Kilconquhar school) and Catherine Brearcliffe. Completed his medical degree at Edinburgh 1885, Service in the Royal Navy eventually took him to Australia. His key achievements of his very prestigious medical career was founding the medical school at Sydney University and being its Chancellor.

John McGhie 1868 – 1952. Although not born in Kilconquhar, when he married Agnes Burns in 1901, they began their married life in our village. Their first child Annie was born here in 1902. His pictures "Rest-time" with the artist's wife and baby, and "Curling" on Kilconquhar Loch date from this period. Many people in the village have one of the limited edition copies of the later picture. These were sold to raise funds for the "Hercules Curling Club".

RECOLLECTIONS

Mrs Sheila Peebles was born in the village in 1930 and her family lived in Lochside Cottage which was rented from Lady Lindsay:

She went to school in Kilconquhar and then went to Waid Academy when she was 12. She left at age 14, which was common then. The cottage was gifted to Mrs Peebles mother from a Mr. Cummings who bought it from Mrs. Baird who was connected to Elie House.



Lochside Cottage

She recalls that there was no electricity until the 1950's and it was installed before the water supply. There was a well near the War Memorial opposite St. Anne's. There was a standpipe at the wall of the churchyard. There were wells at different places in the village. Water would be collected two or three times a day, sometimes by the children and if it was icy weather, it was necessary to take a kettle of

boiling water in the other hand as well as carrying a bucket. She spoke of having a 'dry toilet' away down the garden. Water was taken from the Loch for washing clothes and laundry was done in an outhouse beside the house.

When she married her husband Fred, he worked on the estate and his wage was £6.00 per fortnight. Her weekly shopping bill was £1.25 and Fred said it had to last! Fred worked on Kilconquhar Mains Farm and the couple had a cottage there. Sheila and Fred had three children who attended Kilconquhar School and there are photos of them in this book.

Two of them, Dorothy Allan and Irene Hamilton have many stories of childhood in the village:

Dorothy was baptised by Reverend Robert Armstrong, but her earliest memories are of Sunday School and Church when Reverend Robin Mitchell was minister. She regularly attended Sunday School and still has several books received as prizes for good attendance.

She recalls summer Sunday School picnics which were spent at Dura Den in a field shared with cows! The children ran races, played games and got their picnic of sandwiches and a cake in a brown paper bag. Dorothy says that whatever the children had to drink was served in a big pitcher into mugs they took with them. She cannot ever remember it being wet and declares that summers always seemed to be hot and sunny with long balmy evenings which meant that the children could stay out until late to play.

Often she would stay overnight with Granny who lived in a small cottage at the back of the War memorial. It was a one bed room with a bed recess in the living room. How Dorothy loved to snuggle up

in that bed listening to the radio (Granny never did get a television.) and watching the fire burn down. The one disadvantage of Granny's cottage was that it had no inside toilet. Not good on a cold wet night, even less so in spring when there were numerous baby frogs and toads!

Dorothy remembers summer visits to Edinburgh:

Eddie Wilson would arrive at 7.30am in his big black taxi to transport the family to Kilconquhar Station to get the early train to Edinburgh. He would be booked to meet the evening train to take a bunch of tired but happy children back home, accompanied with an equally tired Mum and Dad.

Throughout her school days and to the present time Dorothy's closest friend was Susan Warren (Sutherland) who lived with her grandparents in Greenbank which overlooked the meadows at Barnyard. On summer evenings the girls could be found on the swings in the school playground singing at the top of their voices songs by the Beatles, the Searchers, Herman's Hermits and many more. It does seem that children were easily amused in those days. By the time Dorothy was eleven years old she listened to Radio Caroline, the pirate radio ship on a small transistor radio which had been a Christmas present. Sue Warren, recalls summers with sunny days which seemed to go on forever.

There was an annual Christmas party at the 'Big House'. Looking back, Sue says that it was a really kind gesture by Lord and Lady Lindsay, and the children looked forward to the 'big tea' there and watching the magician afterwards - a magical memory!

Dorothy's sister, Mrs. Irene Hamilton has many happy memories of Sunday School and the minister then was Reverend Mitchell.

After Sunday School, Irene joined the Youth Fellowship which was held in the old manse on the hill on Sunday evenings. These were good times. Irene recalls that the Women's Guild held summer sales of work on the first Sunday in June and tables and chairs were laid out on the lawn. Irene recalls life without electricity and mains water in the village. She was aged four years when the family moved to their cottage in Kilconquhar Mains.

She has memories as a child of playing and watching the harvest, the threshing in the field and crops being cut by hand and being built into sheaves.

Wilma Wilson has very happy memories of a childhood in Kilconquhar.

Wilma's grandfather Dave Leslie was the proprietor of the Commercial Hotel, now Kinneuchar Inn. Wilma's mother Dorothy Adams recalls that horses were kept in what is now a dining room of the Inn which had a cobbled floor. At the rear was a petrol pump.

Wilma's grandparents bought the house at 14 Main Street which was a pub called Copeland's – it had gone into liquidation. It was formerly called the Loch Tavern according to Agnes Stewart. It only had a bar counter and was refurbished to be a house by Dave Leslie. It was first rented to Hector and Mary, Mrs. Leslie's brother. Wilma lived in 14 Main Street from the age of seven.

She recalls as a child that the highlight of the year was going guising or "trick or treat" as it is known today. The children who all played together would spend ages thinking about what would be suitable

for costumes. The children met at Chris Cole's house near Cockie Chairlie's Way and she would serve "bangers and mash". She also wrapped up coins and put them in the mash. The children all had to do their party piece to make sure it was alright, then off they would go around the village holding their turnip lanterns. Wilma reports that the children would end up at her mum's house where there would be a tin bath full of apples for "dooking".

In the October holidays they went to pick tatties for farmer Bell. He would collect the children and take them to the field. It was back breaking work and fingers were always frozen, but the pay was good and the end of the week the children were handed a fat envelope. This hard earned cash would be spent on a day at the shops.

Mrs Patricia Aitken was born in the Old Farmhouse in 1938.

Her father was a chauffeur/handyman for Lord Lindsay. The house had a little cottage attached to it then. The family lived in various houses in Barnyards including a cottage next to the Lindsay Hall. Thereafter the family moved to Elie. After marriage, Mrs Aitken returned to the village, and St Margaret's in Main Street. Mrs Aitken's children attended Kilconquhar School and Sunday School and are in some of our photographs. The family remember the Post Office and Haddow's General store. They used the well at Laigh cottage which is opposite.

Daughter Yvonne said that there were only nine children in the class when she went to school. There was one classroom and a room for gym. Visiting teachers came to teach specialist subjects.

The Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 was celebrated in the old Manse with Lord and Lady Lindsay as the photograph on the next page shows. The children dressed up.



**Silver Jubilee Celebrations
with Lord and Lady Lindsay 1977**

Mr Donald Young lived as a child in Kilconquhar in one half of Bella Ramsay's cottage next door to Lochside:

His father was in the First World War. The photographs opposite show his parents at the cottage door and another of Donald with his brother. He recalls that the house was lit with paraffin lamps before electricity was installed. This was before running water was installed in the village. Donald speaks about having a pier at the loch. Ashes from the fire would go in the loch and there was a wash house near the foot of the garden. In winter when the loch was frozen, reeds would be cut.

In church local estates and farms had their own pews where the owners would sit, along with their workers and family. In those days there were thirteen gardeners at Balcarres. The church had been built to accommodate larger numbers.



The Young family outside their cottage door

Donald has kept old documents and we were intrigued by the Christmas postcard below which arrived safely from Elie!



**Postcard postmarked
Elie 22 December 1939**

POST CARD



*Working year
a Merry Christmas
and a Bright and
Prosperous New
Year
Yours sincerely
Hugh Montgomery
R.E.*

*Mr & Mrs Young,
Kilconquhar,
Dife.*

Ron Forgan's father lived in a cottage called Lochview, which is no longer there but which was situated below the church with splendid views of the Loch.

Ron was born in Corner Croft. His family then moved to a house in Barnyards and then moved to a house in Colinsburgh with mains water.

After leaving school Ron's dad known as 'Geordie' went to work in his grandfather's traction engine business in Kingsbarns where he earned twelve shillings and one penny per week.

In 1937 he applied for a job at Elie golf course as an engineer for the tractors. When war was declared he joined the RAF as an aircraft fitter. After the war he returned to work for the golf course. Some three years later he moved to British Coal where he became a manager.

After the war the government provided subsidies for growing crops and Ron's dad grew potatoes and vegetables at Sahara Park. He was assisted in this venture by Joe Archer and Harry Imrie. Harry later emigrated to Australia on the assisted passage scheme and Ron has kept in touch with the family.

Ron's family moved back to Kilconquhar in 1962/3 and Geordie bought Meadow Bank Cottage at the end of Barnyards with a view over the glebe ground now the Wildlife Marsh.

After Ron and Jean married they lived above the Galloway Library, Colinsburgh, where Jean was the librarian but later returned to Kilconquhar.

Mr Stuart Purves whose family home was St. Anne's has lived in the village since childhood:

He was born in the village, his family moved to Elie but then returned. He has a very clear recollection of past events.

He recalls that there was no running water and electricity until the late 1950s, early 1960s. He gives an account of the war time defences in the area, the wires across the Loch, the Home Guard defences at Robin Gray's cottage at the crossroads leading out of the village and concrete blocks in various parts which could have ropes attached to stop vehicles. These were beside the road at the Church, and at Bruce Square. There was a large beech tree on the road to Leven with machine gun placements. His father was in the Home Guard.

Father was a chauffeur for Lady Lindsay and he recalls that she owned a yacht called 'Selina' and when the rudder jammed he was called upon to carry out repairs.

Stuart speaks of young schoolboys from Lathallan school near Kilbrackmont who would come to church in Kilconquhar wearing their uniform of grey blazers, shorts and caps. There were two sisters, the Misses Skinner, who came to church in a little gig pulled by a Shetland pony called "Dolly" which would be tied up at the Inn and given a "moo poke" to keep it occupied (a feeding bag)!

There was shooting at the glebe land called 'the Middies' where there was a snipe bog. The guns would be placed behind the hedges. Lady Lindsay's game keeper lived in a house, part of a terrace no longer there, at the east end of the village.

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Irene Wallace