

Nigg - A Changing Parish

by Anne Gordon 1977

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Liz Whiteford (liz.whiteford@btinternet.com)

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Recreation

The first recreational use of the parish was when the Bishop of Ross chose it as the site of his summer palace, with the Hill of Nigg as his hunting forest (1), thus establishing Nigg as a desirable holiday venue with sporting interest attached.

Apart from this summer palace, there are no records of any pre-Reformation amusements. It is only after the Presbyterian clampdown on fun that information becomes available, and writing in 1841 James Cameron gave a singularly bleak picture of recreational activity, or lack of it: "Among adults amusements or games of every kind have almost disappeared; and now their only recreation, if such it may be called, seems to be absolute cessation from labour." He went on to say that though they had of late much improved in habits of enterprise and steady industry, they had at the same time lost much of the Highlander's free and joyous spirit along with his laziness and waywardness. He attributed this state of affairs to its being a time of transition that he hoped would lead to better times. (2)

But even from this drab account it appears that people had formerly enjoyed amusements of various sorts, and perhaps James Cameron was taking too gloomy a view. Although the only regular holiday was New Year's Day Old Style (12th January) the general impression gained from any other sources is that everyone grasped whatever chance of diversion came their way if they possibly could.

One of the most enjoyable days was when there was a fair or market. The only one within the parish was Hugh's Fair, sometimes called Rarichies Market as it was held from the early 1700's to about the 1850's at Wester Rarichie, after which it was moved to Ankerville. The fair took its name from Hugh Rose, its founder, who was a member of the Kilraveck family and Sheriff Depute of the Counties of Ross and Cromarty. (3) Although described in 1841 as dying away very fast (3) this is not borne out by the School log books of both Pitcalnie and Nigg Schools that show that it lasted till 1888 at least.

Held "for general purposes" (3) on the third Tuesday of November, it was a scene of bustle and activity, and all who could get there went to it. An idea of the extent to which people let their hair down on these occasions occurs in the Old Parish Church records. In 1782 when the site was still at "the Town and Village of Rarichies" there was a case of misbehaviour, explained away by one of the women involved who said "that promiscuous sleeping at fairs in the country is a common practice."

A man who died within ten years or so, used to tell of his father going to Hugh's Fair at Ankerville and being particularly intrigued by a woman who made toffee by working sugar in her hands. (4)

Fearn held a mid-summer market every July and this was a great attraction, particularly to those living in the east end of the parish. The Hilton School log book shows what absenteeism this market caused, especially as the children regularly took time off beforehand to gather whelks for it.

Another irresistible attraction was the feeing market held in Tain every February and July which is mentioned in the school log books till 1892 – although Nigg School, in 1885 at least, gave a half day for it, the Pitcalnie children just played truant. Cromarty was also a market town and doubtless was the equivalent to the Ferry people of Fearn market to those living at the other end of the parish.

Milton is understood to have held a fair on the sands and if this is so, it is certain that Nigg people would have gone there too, as the ford made it most accessible.

Something that had for long given great pleasure to Highlanders was dancing but it was something that was very disapproved of by the Presbyterian Church. In 1710 the Synod ordered all Presbyteries to intimate to congregations that there was to be no promiscuous dancing – but that did not stop it. (5)

Dancing took place at contracts of marriage and at weddings even though this resulted in the dancers being disbarred from fellowship meetings of their church; and a musician who was guilty of providing the music for such occasions was also in trouble, while a man who applied for Communion in 1780 was refused on the grounds that "he had lately been dancing at a wedding." (6)

But though the church might disapprove, people enjoyed dancing, and in February 1888 Nigg School log showed how fascinating it was: "Ferry children have been very irregular for the past three weeks ... An attraction there at present is a Dancing School where lessons in the 'art' are taught on Evenings." A man who died in 1975 had clear memories of this school, held almost up until the 1914-18 War in a cottage somewhere near Balnapaling. (7)

The Ross-shire Journal of 2nd September 1927 reports a dance that must have given entertainment and conversation to everyone in the parish, "The Misses Laurie, descendants of Annie Laurie who was made famous in Scots song, have been staying in the Bungalow at Nigg Ferry. They were delighted with the beautiful scenery and before leaving defrayed the expenses of a dance which they gave to their friends who were staying in Dunskaithe House ... and to as many of the local young people as cared to come. The dance was held in the twilight at Nigg Pier and the headlights of a local motor car provided sufficient light. Mr and Mrs Mackenzie, The Hotel, and their staff, purveyed excellent refreshments. Local pipers and the local band discoursed music for the dancers."

Dances came to be one of the most common fund-raisers; indeed, good causes served a double purpose by providing entertainment where it was needed, as well as raising money for the cause they served. Organisations like the District Nursing Association, the Rifle Club, the WRI and so on, all held dances. These were mainly patronized by the working folk, though the ladies of the district might well attend in the capacity of organizers. Country dancing used to be popular but is dying out fast, except among those of public school background who still love it, and among the older folk who still do these dances with remarkable verve and enjoyment as they amply demonstrate at the old people's Christmas parties.

The people of Nigg seem to have had a liking for athletic diversion from some time back. "Memorabilia Domestica" records how "John Balfour, minister of Nigg in 1729, came to Nigg and found the people addicted to the deliberate profanation of the Lord's Day, which was the day on which the parishioners assembled to exercise themselves in athletic games. They had a leader to whom they all looked up. Mr Balfour watched his opportunity and when selected a Commissioner to the General Assembly he sent for the ringleader of Sunday sports and told him that he left the east end of the parish in his charge and would hold him responsible that the people spent the Sabbath, not in games and rioting, but in prayer and reading and hearing the Word. The man told him that he must be aware that he was the leader of the games, so how could he stop them; Mr Balfour charged him before God to do so, so the man agreed, and from being the ringleader became a devoted Christian." (8)

Sports and "games" in the above sense continued to be popular, and as will be seen sports often were a feature of public holidays for royal occasions and so on.

There used to be Games in Tain, held in September, certainly until 1895 if not later, which lured the children of Nigg from school; and the Nigg School log shows that in 1902 a number of children were absent due to Cromarty Games, and this was mentioned again in 1907. In 1904 the Lovat Scouts held their summer camp at Fearn and held Games. The result was that though thirty-eight children came to Pitcalnie School in the morning, twenty-two of them slipped away at lunch time to join in the fun. Nairn Games were very popular too because sea transport made them easy to get to; almost until the 1939-45 War, the Watson boat "Ailsa" ran from Invergordon to Nairn for the Games, picking up passengers at Nigg pier on the way. It was no uncommon thing for there to be a delay in returning as the ship was often high and dry at Nairn with a falling tide, and there was a wait for it to come in and refloat "Ailsa." The Castlecraig Golf Club, to be mentioned later, may have had a hand in arranging these trips; certainly they organized expeditions to Nairn for local people, which were not necessarily for golf.

Weddings, funerals and baptisms were a great break in the routine of life and their recreational value was considerable; indeed, lykewakes often overdid fun and games and had to be controlled.

"Church entertainments" may sound a contradiction to what has been said about the Presbyterian attitude to amusements, but by the end of the 19th century the church contributed to various forms of entertainment, and first and foremost among these was the Church soiree. There were congregational and Sunday School soirees, and should a magic lantern show be included in the evening's programme, it was absolutely breath-taking. (9)

One of the first soirees was that of the Free Church Bible class in 1879 which was held in Nigg School and was thus mentioned in their log book. The arrangements for one held by the U P Church that same year make interesting reading: "The Managers ... and others interested met this evening to propose having a Soiree and to

consider and decide the necessary arrangements for the same. Present at the meeting about 120. All present are unanimous on having the Soiree in the Church on the evening of the 7th April current. Some discussion took place as to whether Tea should be given – a show of hands by a large majority decided that there should be a good cup of Tea as a refreshing beverage along with the usual “Baggies” of Buns, Biscuits, Fruit, etc. The Tickets are to be charged 1/- each for front seats and 6d. for back seats – Appointed Mr Jas. A Gair to order immediately 300 tickets @ 1/- and 400 @ 6d. The tickets to be distributed for selling by several parties in different districts of the parishes of Nigg and Fearn. The Expenses and all the tickets sold and unsold to be counted by Mr Andrew Vass and Mr D Gair after the Soiree is dismissed.

Mr McMartin, Minister, kindly offered to give a Pound note for tickets to be given free to all the children baptized by him who may be of age and able to come to the Soiree. Andw. Vass offered to get all the necessary dishes etc. from a friend at Tain who is to make no charge except for breakages. Extra cups, Pots, Pans, Baskets etc. to be provided by the congregation. Appointed Mr Mair, Baker and Confectioner, Tain, to provide the Baggies with Biscuits, Buns, Fruit etc. and to be the Leader of the Singing Choir. Appointed 4 young women to serve as Cooks and appointed from 20 to 30 young men to serve as Stewards. Appointed that the Stewards meet again on 31st inst. at _ past 7 o'clock P.M. to make further arrangements and to make general regulations.” (10)

Another church-inspired entertainment was for improvements to the Free Church. In 1891, Mr Linton, Castlecraig, “undertook to persuade – Stuart, Inverness, to give another of his popular lectures in the parish to help defray the works.” Unfortunately nothing is said as to the subject matter of the lecture. (11)

Money was again required for major improvements to the Free Church in 1907 and some young men offered to hold a Grand Concert in Tain, but it seems that this was an entertainment that got away, because while their kind offer was appreciated it does not seem that it was accepted. (11)

In common with the rest of the country, Nigg made the most of any royal and national occasions. Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887 was given as a holiday but unfortunately there is no record of how it was spent. One man, however, told of how along with people from Nigg Ferry he went to Cromarty as a small boy to celebrate this great day. He never forgot it – it was the first time he had ever seen squibs: a boy put five of them into a man's coat pocket, they exploded and the coat was burnt, and that was for him the Jubilee. (12)

The Jubilee of 1897 was celebrated in June when the school children of both schools had a picnic at the Ferry provided by the School Board and friends. It seems that a day was necessary for recovery as they did not resume work until two days later. (13)

Empire Day was used as a treat to reward the children of Pitcalnie School for good attendance, but was none the less welcome for that. The children met “at midday and after being treated to buns and lemonade, each one who had made 90% of the possible attendance for the year ending 28th February 1906 was presented with a suitable prize book.” (13)

Another national holiday occurred in the Coronation year of 1911, when the schools were closed for a whole week “as per the King's desire.” On June 22nd, the children were given a treat by being “marshalled in the playground, presented with flags, medals and brooches, then marched to Culnaha Par where after saluting the flag, taking part in Divine Service, they had tea, and then engaged in sports and had mugs and new pennies presented to them.” (14) Even the military approach to this occasion did not dim its appeal to the children.

By 1935 things were not quite so regimented for the Jubilee that year. This was marked by the children being “entertained in the Territorial Hall at one o'clock and presented with Jubilee medals and a new penny. They were afterwards taken by bus to the Picture House, Tain” – and a trip to the Picture House really was a treat! (14) For the Coronation in 1937 there was tea and sports, a Mug as a souvenir, and then at night the parish bonfire. This was built on the highest point with a barrel of tar in the centre to make sure of a good blaze, and at 10 pm it was an exciting and moving occasion as this, and all the bonfires in all the surrounding areas were lit simultaneously. As there is a view of seven counties around from this particular spot, it made it an unforgettable sight. The 1953 Coronation also provided another bonfire spectacle on the hill.

Royal weddings have all produced holidays but the most exciting Royal occasion was when the Queen reviewed the Home Fleet in 1957 in the Cromarty Firth. She did not land at all, but nevertheless this occasion produced the most tremendous local enthusiasm and children for miles around as well as adults went to vantage points on both Sutors. Shops released their staff for the afternoon, farm workers had the afternoon off, everyone was there, to see Britannia lead the naval ships in. What was a pity was that so few people realized that the Queen's departure would be much more spectacular than her arrival. She went out, not in Britannia, but on an aircraft carrier for which, as it sailed between the Sutors, aircraft were taking off in pairs, with the noise of their engines reverberating from the cliffs. It was very impressive.

When the Queen passed through the parish in 1964, all too briefly as she went from Tain to Cromarty via the old King's Ferry, all the children lined the pier and local people were issued with tickets to allow them on it to get a good view. This too caused great pleasure and enthusiasm, more so than the Royal visit to Highlands Fabricators' yard in 1974 when local people felt it was not them that she had come to see, but something that happened by chance in the parish.

Royal and national occasions are, of course, in a class by themselves, but the fact is that there were in the earlier days very few opportunities for entertainment of any sort, and though people had little enough time to spare they still enjoyed any break in their routine. Adults worked from morning to night, six days a week, and children either worked at home, or worked when they returned from school, and any excuse was good enough for them to play truant. This made the teachers' task very difficult but it is their exasperated record of absenteeism for this cause or that, which has provided a most valuable record of what was going on in the parish over the last hundred years.

Pitcalnie School's log books show, for instance, that the children were often absent for the Sacraments of the various churches in the parishes, and though this is strictly a church event it is being mentioned in relation to the effect of any form of recreation on school attendance. The Sacraments must be included in the sense that they were a change of routine and a chance of meeting and seeing something different.

Pitcalnie School closed on July 29th 1881 for the re-opening of the Free Church and the children took leave of absence for an induction in the parish in 1884. Soirees have already been mentioned, and the log books show that the children could be relied upon to be absent on the day of a soiree. No wonder, for without school transport they could not manage to walk to school during the day and also go to the soiree at night – and when faced with such a choice, the soiree won hands down. So many were absent on the day of a Free Church soiree in April 1886 that the following year the school accepted the fact and closed early to let them go.

Other attractions that lured them from their desks were the Franchise Demonstration in Tain in 1884 (13) and in 1887 the "novelty of the Channel Fleet" which they took time off to see in the Firth, and to see in its departure. (13)

A "great cattle show at Inverness" at the end of July 1892, a Volunteer Review at Invergordon in 1893, agricultural shows and Reviews in Tain, a farm show at Dingwall – in spite of the difficulties of transport, people, including the school children, went to them.

What was of the greatest help in going to these functions outside the parish was the attitude of the Highland Railway Company which did all it could to enable people to attend. The North Star and Farmer's Chronicle of 15th August 1895 carries an advertisement of the Easter and Wester Ross Farmers' Clubs joint Cattle Show at Invergordon, where there was to be a special feature of horse trotting, driving and leaping competitions, plus tandem driving and a pony race. For this, the Railway Company offered special return tickets at a single fare and a third from all stations between Inverness, Fortrose, Stromeferry and Golspie, and special trains ran that day from 6 am in the morning with homeward ones about 5 pm. A considerable gesture was that the cheap return fare could be used the following day for anyone unable to get home that night! So for those prepared to get themselves to the railway station, and they were plenty, the railway did its bit, even if it resulted in empty classrooms

The "School Treat" in whatever form, has always been very popular. One of the earliest of such treats was when the Ferry children were invited by Mr Romanes of Dunskaith to a Christmas tree entertainment in the evening. The Romanes's were a most kindly and generous family and their thoughtfulness to the school occurs again and again in the Nigg School log books. In 1909 Mr and Mrs Romanes of Pitcalzean gave a "Tree and Presents" at Dunskaith, and the following year Miss Romanes of Dunskaith gave tea and a Christmas tree. Because of this latter occasion,

attendance was very good for several months before – can it be that there was some sort of attendance condition attached to the invitation? In 1912 Mrs Romanes of Pitcalzean entertained the children to a roast beef and plum pudding dinner in the soup kitchen, after which they attended a carol service in the Pitcalzean chapel.

Miss Romanes gave a tree regularly for New Year's Day and also a summer picnic for the children during the summer holidays. This consisted of the usual sports – the only flaw for the winners was when they had to make a choice of prize from a religious text or a ball! The "maypole" which she had erected at Nigg Ferry for the sailors when here on manoeuvres was popular with the children too, until the time when it began to tilt and caused it to be taken down.

There were many other kindnesses from the Romanes family, including the gift of swings, a see-saw, climbing ropes and parallel bars erected in the Nigg playground by Mr G Romanes in 1911. In 1908 Mr R Romanes, local secretary of the Navy League, made arrangements for the senior pupils at Nigg to be taken out to visit the battleship "Majestic" and Miss Romanes gave them tea at Dunskaith when they got back from this exciting visit.

Little wonder then that when Miss Romanes was buried on 20th January 1911, the children were late at school through waiting to see the cortege depart, placing a wreath on the coffin themselves. (14)

But other people did kindnesses too and gave School Treats to the children. In 1910, Mr Henderson, Ankerville was responsible for the children at Nigg School being "taken in carts to Nigg Station and thence par train to Tain where they were shown the old Buildings and the surroundings. They had sports on the links and tea, etc. in the Oddfellows' Hall." What fun any treat was which involved a journey in a cart! Two years later, he organized a picnic for them at Dunskaith, and in 1914 came to the school himself and entertained them after school hours with his gramophone. He sounds a very kindly man.

A school treat that is still remembered is a party given by the Middletons at Pitcalzean when strawberries were served at tables out of doors. This most generous gesture was marred because there were so many wasps sharing the feast. Later on, the children amused themselves by throwing sticks at a pipe in the mouth of an Aunt Sally.

The Pitcalnie end of the parish does not seem to have had so many school treats as did the Nigg children, thanks to the Romaneses and others living at the Nigg School end of the parish.

Children's Christmas parties for all children of school age and below developed from the purely "school" treat. They have been given by a variety of people – Mrs Douglas, Nigg, Colonel Romanes, and during the 1939-45 War years, by the sailors at the mine base at Nigg. In 1946 the WRI took on this duty, (starting perhaps with too great a flourish as not only did they give this party, but also school prizes and a picnic for all children between the ages of 2-16 at Shandwick Bay).

The WRI continued to give the party until the late 1960's when the burden became too much for them in spite of joint fund-raising sales of work with the Hall Committee. It was felt that this was really something which the children's parents should undertake, and that is the present position – a committee of parents now raise funds and run an annual Christmas party in Nigg Hall for the primary children and younger.

The WRI were responsible for two alterations in the form of the party. It had been the custom to have the local teachers run the games, and well though they did it, it meant that it was a "school" function playing games learnt at school. The WRI arranged for different people to plan the programme which made it a more everyday party; and they eliminated the ubiquitous "baggie" in favour of their own choice of cakes and biscuits. The baggie was convenient, but benefited the baker more than anyone else, and for the one desirable cake or bun, there were always three which the children did not enjoy.

These were some of the treats given to the children, but they themselves contributed to public entertainment, particularly at Pitcalnie School, under Mr Campbell. This has already been mentioned in Schools, but is repeated here. In 1902, that school had a holiday one day to allow all the necessary moving of benches for a concert in the evening to raise money for an organ. The concert was given by adults, but the next year the children gave one themselves. There was another in 1904; that of 1905 was described as a "cantator" and by 1906 they had progressed to staging an operetta, the Sleeping Beauty.

Concerts have always been popular, and still are. One of the causes for which concerts raised money was the Nigg School soup kitchen. In 1909 Mr G Romanes took the chair at a concert for the initial expenses of this venture, and in 1917 the troops in the camps at Nigg held concerts, one each year, and gave a total of over £45 to the soup kitchen, as well as much enjoyment to the local people.

There have been concerts organized by the Girl Guides before the 1939-45 War, for the District Nursing Association, the WRI and other organizations. One particular concert deserves to be mentioned – it was for the Nursing Association and at the last moment the main performers fell out. Fortunately, the organizer knew that John Bannerman, of Mod fame and later to become Lord Bannerman of Kildonnan, was on holiday and he was asked if he would come. He did, and sang the night away in Gaelic to an entranced audience.

The presence of troops in the parish during both wars brought a considerable entertainment to the people, apart from the concerts already mentioned. In 1915 the school log books show that the children were allowed out early for the 3rd Scottish Rifles Battalion sports in June; in 1916 they went to the Scottish Rifles Regimental Sports and the Black Watch ones in July. In 1917 they were entertained by the officers of the Scottish Rifles in the YMCA Hut with a Darkey troupe, a cinema show and a present all round. And in June that year, both the Scottish Rifles and Black Watch sports came round again, but the best of all was to come next month. Bostock and Wombles circus came for the benefit of the troops but local people were allowed to go to it too, and there was a special performance for the children, who just had half an hour at dinner time so as to be allowed out of school in time to be at the circus by 3.30. The Ross-shire Journal reported that, "The performance of the fine specimens of lions was a source of wonder, as was also the ponderous hippopotamus." The hippo was indeed a source of wonder; older people still speak of it!

In the 1939-45 War the troops provided a lot of entertainment; as already said, the sailors at the mine base gave Christmas parties for the children; they joined in sports, came to local dances, and came to the little club held in the Middle Hall by the local ladies for their benefit. Visitors were welcomed to the ENSA shows, particularly at North Sutor, and generally the presence of these men, including large numbers of Norwegians, was a pleasure in the area.

Although the war brought a circus in 1917, this was not the only circus to come to the parish. A menagerie caused absenteeism in 1891 (13) and until 1933 Pinder Ord's small circus used to come to the dunes at Nigg Ferry. And for the children at the other end of the parish there were the "Shows" that came annually to the Green at Balintore. These were sideshows, eagerly awaited and great fun. A fun fair still comes there, but modern entertainments make it a less breath-taking affair than formerly.

There were certain visitors to the parish who may be included in Recreation, as their coming certainly gave pleasure and was keenly anticipated. One was the pedlar or chapman – he brought articles from the outside world, trinkets and fairings, things the parish craftsman did not make, ribbons and nonsense. Great excitement resulted from the knowledge that he was in the area! As long ago as 1787 there was George Rainy, a travelling chapman, (15) and there must have been many more. A pedlar who came round the parish within living memory was Willie Bowling who, along with his wife and children, appeared every Monday with a pony and trap. His wife had a pack – a big, red blanket which she tied in a particular way so that it was easy to open to show her wares, dishes, towels, bowls and so on.

Another visitor was the scissors grinder with his grindstone on a hurley, a little home-made cart. (16) Pipers were fairly common, playing from house to house for a few pence. One had a name that sounded like "Caernarvon." He was a familiar sight well into the 1930's and was sometimes given a penny to go away, poor man, but the most effective way of getting rid of his was by someone who felt sorry for him and offered him work. He was never seen at that house again. But while adults did not seem to enjoy his music, it was a great pleasure to youngsters who were distressed when he was sent on his way.

A Paddy-man, singing, dancing and twirling his shillelagh, came to the fishing villages, including Shandwick until about 1928. And a man with a dancing bear visited these villages also; he used to go to Cromarty into this century and this was another form of entertainment that easy access to Cromarty brought within reach of the people of Nigg. (17)

Another itinerant entertainer was poor Melodeon Nell, believed to be a woman of high degree fallen on evil times. She sang and danced as she played her melodeon, doing none of these very well but she gave pleasure and was happy doing so. (18)

What were known as "German bands" used to come by ship and play round the houses of Westfield, Culnaha and Bayfield mainly. It has been suggested that they were really spying but as this was about the time of the Boer War rather than the 1914-18 War, it seems unlikely. (19)

Some visitors came specifically to the schools. In 1909 "A. Duncan, school entertainer, gave a sleight of hand entertainment" to the pupils at Nigg School after school hours and at the beginning of the 1914-18 War they had a visit from A. M. Beedie, a conjuror. Was he perhaps "Happy Sandy" with his black bag of tricks, such a favourite with the children?

Others who arrived in the district from time to time were tinkers, begging for cups of tea and rabbit skins and selling clothes pegs, offering home made cures and bringing news of a kind, so that their visits were a feature of life and, in a way, looked forward to.

To go back to the beginning of this chapter, it was partly for the hunting in his Forest of Nigg that the Bishop of Ross came to Nigg in the summer months. Falconry played a part in later sporting activities as there was a "falkner" at Pitcalnie in 1665. (20-M.1083) The modern equivalent is shooting, which has always been in the hands of the lairds and larger tenants, who did not scruple to take children off school as beaters – both school log books refer to this in 1894.

Of the shootings mentioned in the 1898 Valuation Roll, those of Easter Rarichie, Broomton and the Loans of Rarichie were in the hands of the proprietor, Sir Charles Ross, who also rented those of Ankerville. The owner of Pitcalzean and Nigg hold the shootings there for Donald Cameron but, in the case of Culnaha, Pitcalnie and Castlecraig, the tenants had these rights themselves. The tenant of Castlecraig advertized its shooting in the "North Star and Farmers' Chronicle" of August 15th 1895: "To let, the shootings of the Farm of Castlecraig, Nigg, extending to 1300 acres. The right of killing Rabbits reserved. Excellent sport with winged game, wild duck and brown hares can be relied upon. For further particulars apply to J Linton, Tenant of the farm."

Wild duck shooting on inland water like the Castlecraig pond and loch was always good, and the proprietor of Pitcalzean at some point is understood to have made a small pond on the march with the golf course to attract wild duck there. Wildfowling is now very popular on Nigg Bay and brings shooting within the scope of many who would otherwise have no access to it. Reclamation of land is encouraging geese to the parish; they were unheard of there before the 1939-45 War, but their presence is providing another opportunity for local guns.

One or two farmers allow casual shooters, local and from the south, to have a free run over their farms, but others refuse to do so, partly because they themselves like to shoot, and partly because they fear their inexperience. To see the bags of some shooters from the south, laid out at the door of the Ferry Hotel, did not inspire confidence in their choice of target – curlews, song birds and all were in the bag.

Until the 1939-45 War, weekly shoots were a feature of life for those who owned or rented shooting. Guests often stayed on for dinner and bridge. It was all very pleasant ...

Game birds lead one on to ornithology, and Nigg Bay is regarded as being of national and international importance for waders and other specimens. There is much enjoyment to be had from birdwatching, as well as for botanists, in the parish.

Commercial fishing is discussed elsewhere, but there has always been some recreational fishing. Flounder spearing used to be a popular sport in Nigg Bay, said to be best about fifty minutes after high tide. Crabs come in with a May mist, called a cuckoo mist and during that month, can or could be hooked out from under stones along the shore east of Nigg pier.

Some people put out nets for sea trout and lines for flounders on Shandwick Bay, and on the east side of Nigg Bay; and before Brown and Root moored their hostel ships at the Nigg pier, it used to be lined with both children and adults in summer fishing for cuddies (saithe) and sea trout, and in the second half of August for mackerel.

There are good trout in Bayfield Loch, but an increase in weed has affected fishing there. Castlecraig Loch had to be stocked with trout but gave excellent sport until the embankment of an extension gave way and many fish were lost. Thereafter it was drained in the 1960's in the interests of good farming, but it was a great recreational loss.

As formal organizations began to develop, they contributed to the entertainment of the area. The IOGT or Independent Order of Good Templars was the only organization in the parish listed in the Easter Ross Almanack and Year Book of 1910. The Nigg Lodge, No 1214, met every Tuesday under Rev N D Mackay, the juniors at 7 pm and adults at 8 pm. The regalia, worn so proudly by the children, lay until recently in the loft of the Old Church, untidy and forgotten, but some of the better specimens were taken to Tain Museum. Children from Shandwick went to the branch in Hilton School which flourished for some time. A temperance organization as this was may not seem very recreational, but these weekly meetings were definitely enjoyed, particularly by young people, which was very possibly due to the regalia which they wore.

Then there was "Mr Mackay's Youth Club," a young men's club which the Nigg minister ran in the Manse outbuildings until shortly before the 1939-45 War. It was very successful.

Something else that the young men enjoyed was a Rifle Club which began after the 1914-18 War and was held in the Territorial Hall. It was only when the hall was demolished about 1945/6 that the club had to be disbanded as they lost their range and could not get a safety certificate to practise in the new hall in the former Middle Church.

The Territorial Army was active, certainly in the years between the Wars, if not before the 1914 War.

One of the most beneficial organizations was the District Nursing Association, formed in 1922, and lasting until the National Health Service took over its running. It did a tremendous amount of good and its fundraising activities such as concerts and dances, already referred to, gave a very great deal of enjoyment.

Ploughing matches were a feature of life, as old photographs show. The preparations and planning, the grooming, the pride and pleasure in good horses, the triumph, were all a part of it, and as they came at a rather dull time of year, the early spring, were all the more welcome. Jack Calder, now living at Lower Bayfield, was the champion in 1936, which was possibly the last ploughing match in the parish.

No one remembers a Flower Show in the parish yet the accounts of the Ferry Inn for 1894 show that a cask for 4/- was charged to Mr Burt, Craig Lodge, for "Flower Show Day." It is possible that this could have been Cromarty's Flower Show, or is it just that Nigg's Flower Shows are totally forgotten?

Uniformed youth movements existed too. In the 1930's there was an excellent Guide Company in Nigg, run by Miss Young and Miss Munro, both from outside the parish. The company was restarted by other leaders after the war but did not survive. The late Mrs Budge, Easter Rarichie, took an active part in promoting Guiding in the area. Miss Macdonald ran a Guide Company at Hilton School, providing an opportunity for Shandwick girls to join there, and there too the headmaster, Mr Crawford ran a Boy Scout troop for the three fishing villages in the 1930's. This died out, to be revived again along with Guides, Brownies and Cubs in the mid-1970's in the three fishing villages as a result of an increase in population. Oddly enough, the organizers are not newcomers, but usually local people taking the opportunity of new children's presence to get things going again.

The Women's Guild, a church organization, contributes to recreation by its monthly meetings and by having a regular summer outing.

Nigg WRI started in 1938 and lasted successfully until the early 1970's when with TV, people leaving the district, and finally industrial development, it went into abeyance for two years and closed finally in 1975. It formed a most important part of the social life of the parish with the monthly meetings, preparations for the monthly competition, the annual Bulb Show, encouraging handcrafts, evening classes, the summer outing, the children's Christmas

party, and best of all, the Social Evening. Nigg's was the most popular of all the area's WRI social evenings as Nigg invited men! Husbands, brothers, boyfriends and all who had helped in any way during the year came along and what a difference they made.

For a short time the WRI sponsored a drama group and for a little while a choir as well. Finally the institute won the Scottish competition for a village or District History held to mark the Golden Jubilee of the movement in 1967.

But the other end of the parish was not being neglected during this time as there they had the indefatigable Mr Crawford, headmaster of Hilton School from 1927-53. He encouraged local dramatics and the team he trained took part in the SCDA festivals with some success. It was thanks to him that much of the entertainment of that area existed. One of his favourite fundraisers for his favourite cause – the building of a hall for the fishing villages – was holding whist drives.

Other organizations also hold whist drives and they are as popular now as ever. In fact, it is one of the few games being played regularly in the parish. The common practice is to hold a series of perhaps six evenings' play with a cumulative prize at the end, in addition to the evening's prizes. Such whist drives seem to be very successful in one area for a number of years, then there is a fashion to go to them elsewhere; after a year or two, the pendulum swings and back everyone comes.

Formerly tea for these occasions was served at the table where people sat, involving tea cloths, setting and unsetting; but an innovation was made for a very successful series held in the Hall in the late 1950's and early 1960's – this was simply a buffet tea, making the whole thing much simpler and more sociable as people mixed together, and now it is established practice for whist drives in Nigg, if not elsewhere.

Football has always been popular at the Shandwick end of the parish where it was easier to join in matches and games with the men of Hilton and Balintore and to play regularly and successfully; but at the other end of the parish, for some reason, it does not seem to thrive. In the late 1960's the Nigg Youth Club were given a generous donation and at the same time given the use of a field at Bayfield for a pitch and some games were played there. When Highlands Fabricators came, Wimpeys' men, for several Saturdays, played games against a local team, with Wimpey in strips and the locals more informally dressed in jeans and jerseys. This fell away fairly swiftly and even although the site's bus company provided nets for the goals this did not revitalise the game and the pitch appears now to be used only by the primary schools in their school league.

About two years after Highlands Fabricators came they made a small football pitch behind Ivy Cottage for the men on their camp ships and in the new labour camp. The grass took some time to grow in the sandy soil and although now established, the pitch has been little used and not by local people anyway. Nevertheless, football in an ad hoc manner is always popular.

Clay pigeon shooting used to be much enjoyed but people had to go to Kildary for it, although in the 1939-45 War a range had been built between Shandwick and the Nose – indeed, the brick emplacements for it can still be seen. One of the hopes for benefits from industry was to be clay pigeon shooting when their sports club declared their intention of having a range near the Castle Craig new quarry, which local people would be able to join. Unfortunately the site proved too windy and the whole scheme was moved elsewhere.

The Territorial Hall has been mentioned once or twice; it was in 1919 that the Parish Council decided to obtain a hall for the parish through the County Territorial Forces Association, and they must have been successful as for many years the community life of the parish centred on the Territorial Hall. It was a wooden building, standing on the west side of the road, about a hundred yards north of the Old Post Office. It had no water or sanitation, and washing-up after functions was done in a big zinc bath, filled with water from the pump at PO House. The women doing the tea did their work behind a curtain in the hall, and the bath of water got steadily dirtier and crumbier and fuller of tea leaves, but no one was ever the worse and there was great cheerfulness among the women doing the washing-up. Without electricity, kettles were boiled on paraffin stoves and light came from paraffin lamps, and to make everything easier, functions were always held if possible on moonlight nights so that people could see their way home. Sanitation was simple – the girls went one way, and the boys the other, and once again, no one was any the worse.

The Territorial Hall was used until 1945 or 1946 when it was demolished and after a church union in 1950, the former Middle Church became available for secular use and was turned into the new village hall. A committee was formed and by dint of many money raising efforts, not only was the hall altered and equipped but much enjoyment given by the functions. It is a pity, however, that the hall is not much more used and even with industrial development it does not seem that this has increased its use – rather the other way, in fact, as the effects of shift work, for instance, prevent adults from attending functions.

With the new hall it was possible to form a Badminton Club which went very well but there was always slight contention as much was provided for this club (special lights, altering the stage, etc) while at the same time they wanted cheap rates, which other organizations did not have. This club died out about the same time that industrial development came; Rev J Keillor's Youth Club died on his departure from the parish, but by 1975 both these functions are being restarted more or less together in a Youth Club organized by some of the local mothers.

The Friendship Committee was formed in 1958 by some local women to provide coal for the older folk at Christmas, as well as giving them a Christmas party, Easter baskets and a summer outing. They also hold fundraising events like whist drives, so once again this is an organization with a double effect in recreation.

Nigg School, under its present teachers, Miss Ross and Mrs Forbes, has a "Monday Club" held once a week when the older children meet at school in the evening to play games, work for good causes, give entertainments and so on. They have raised money for a Guide Dog and given a party for the old people – it is one of the most enterprising and delightful features in the parish and is due to these two excellent teachers.

Country children were always good at amusing themselves. Not for them the modern cry of "There's nothing to do," or "If only we had a community centre." They wandered happily about, eating "cock's cheese" (skinned shoots of the wild rose) or "sookiesoorack" (sorrel) and buttercup roots. They chewed dulse and the stems of the seaweed that looks like a lion's tail and is called "tongued ware." They gathered cockles and whelks and boiled them in sea water on the shore, and those at Shandwick Bay paddled and made sandcastles. Local children did not make much use of the sea for swimming – they could not afford swimsuits – and it is a sad fact that until the 1939-45 War the wonderful beaches were really very little used. They will be mentioned later.

Girds were great fun to play with and if a blacksmith could be persuaded to make them for the children, they found endless amusement with this simple toy – just a metal wheel with a rod attached for steering. "Daddy Holmes," as he was affectionately known, was the smith at Culnaha and he still is remembered for the generous way he made girds for the young ones. Bowling hoops along with a stick was very popular, and many a barrel lost its hoops sooner than it should have.

"Hurleys" were little more than a box (or old pram frame) on wheels sometimes with steering ropes, but more often not – and children played for hours with them.

All sorts of games were played – Hop Scotch or Peetlie Pot; the boys played marbles and the girls played "Fivies" or "Fivacs" which was throwing up five white periwinkle shells to see who could catch them most successfully on the backs of their hands; sometimes the boys allowed the girls to join them in "Knucklers" played by flicking marbles off the knuckles into a hole; and balls and skipping ropes gave endless pleasure.

Children went birds' nesting, and searching for gulls' eggs, though this latter may be called domestic necessity as well as sport. The girls had "housies" and with a few bits of broken crockery in some corner or other, could while away hours and hours most happily. They played in granaries, jumping on the grain, which had the added advantage that this entailed outwitting the grieve or farmer who certainly did not approve of this entertainment. Nor was the fun of lying under the raised barrel of farm treacle and drinking it, popular with authority – but plenty did it. They climbed up the stacks and slid down, again hoping that no one spotted them as this loosened the thatching and roping so carefully put on.

They collected tadpoles, and rode on farm carts, and helped drive the sheep; everyone gathered on that great day in early summer when the farm horses went out for the first time in the year, to watch the exuberance with which these great animals kicked and jumped and rolled in their delight. The youngsters climbed trees and guddled in burns; there was a certain amount of cruelty to animals, unfortunately, but it was not viciously meant.

They watched their elders working, and in the fishing villages the boats and all that went into fishing was a constant source of enjoyment and occupation. Children were never bored.

The young men used to gather at the stable door on the farms and play Pitch and Toss, a form of quoits using horseshoes. The community centre was the stable door and there people sat, particularly in summer evenings, with the men possibly polishing harnesses, admired by the women and girls. There was flirtation, a good deal of teasing, all the gossip of the place. There was singing, and whistling too, a thing very seldom heard around a farm or anywhere else nowadays.

It was at the stable door that the best April Fool ideas were thought up, in the days when managing to make someone an April Fool was a high point of the year. But since the advent of TV especially, the 1st of April passes virtually unnoticed – and it used to be such fun.

Hallowe'en was another high point – all sorts of ploys and pranks took place, some of them perhaps over-stepping the bounds of wisdom – letting stock out of fields and so on, or in villages, putting a turf on top of chimneys so that the house was suddenly filled with smoke. But for weeks beforehand, people planned how they would dress up to make the rounds of their neighbours' cottages, and all who could bought in a little something to give to their "guizers" when they came. An organized Hallowe'en party in Nigg Hall in the late 1950's was great fun but helped to break the pattern of going round houses, and now it is very few who keep up the practice, welcome though they are when they come.

In winter time, when there seemed to be much more frost than now, sliding on pools and ponds was great fun; and if there was enough snow, every mother found children begging to be allowed to use her tin tray for sledging, although a piece of flat wood would be used if all else failed. Snowballing and snowmen amused everyone, except those who received the snowballs – but as said before, no one was bored.

Harvest Homes do not seem to have been a feature of the autumn in Nigg; there was one about 1924 at Castlecraig, but that is the only one that has been mentioned, although there may have been others.

The parish has two great recreational assets, both of which are under great threat at the moment. These are the beaches at Nigg Ferry and at Shandwick. The beach at Nigg had two sides, one facing south to Cromarty and the other westwards to Invergordon; this meant that it was almost always possible to get out of the wind. Until after the 1939-45 War, it was very little used for recreation, with only one or two of the better-off families going there to swim and picnic. People still remember the astonishment felt one particularly fine pre-war weekend when forty cars were seen at Nigg Ferry. After the 1939-45 War, however, a higher standard of living meant that four hundred cars could easily be expected on a fine Thursday afternoon (Tain's half day) or at the weekend, parked near the Ferry Hotel and on the dunes west of the White House.

The sea east of the pier was never considered safe for bathing, but whether the reason was tricky tides, sinking sands or the strong pull between the Sutors is not certain; and the beach on the upper reaches of the east side of Nigg Bay was regarded as dangerous due to sinking sands. Nevertheless, that left plenty safe sands and Nigg was regarded as the lido of Easter Ross.

Shandwick was a delightful bay, with rocks and a hinterland of meadow and cliffs. It too is very popular. Nigg has now lost its west-facing beach to Highlands Fabricators and although it is literally true to say that the area of beach has been increased due to reclamation – a claim made by a Councillor – this new "beach" is not accessible to the public and therefore cannot be regarded as "beach" in the recreational sense. The beach east of the pier – the part not regarded as being so safe – is still available but it has had for some few years an unauthorized caravan park without water, sanitation or scavenging services, so has not made things very pleasant for visitors. Thus Nigg's great attraction for a wide area is fast disappearing and will disappear totally if Cromarty Petroleum's approved plans come to fruition.

Shandwick Beach is now receiving untreated sewage from the new housing site at Balintore, which is regarded as a considerable hazard to health and it is very much hoped that something can be done to combat this risk.

A sailing school which was established at Dunskaith in the late 1960's was ended by development when Dunskaith was sold for industrial use; and an attempt to start water skiing also in the 1960's showed that the water was really rather too rough to make it a success. A new sport has been introduced by some young men from outside Nigg who come to the parish for hang-gliding. It is entertaining to watch but the local people have not yet taken it up.

Nigg at one time had a very good golf course, thought by some people who had visited many other courses, to be the finest natural one in the world. It was in existence by 1893 at least, as a private 9-hole course, but was extended to 18 holes about 1907. It was controlled by the Castlecraig Golf Club, consisting of about eighty members about 1910. When the Home Fleet came into the Cromarty Firth every spring and autumn for manoeuvres, the officers flocked to it and very largely kept the club going. It was for their benefit that it was open for Sunday play, a most unusual thing then. (21)

The golf club visitors' book gave the names of many of them who came to Nigg – Admirals Beatty and Jellicoe; Lord Fisher; Lord Louis Mountbatten; the late Duke of Kent as well as a Japanese prince who was there as a midshipman. Regrettably this book has been lost.

The 1939-45 War rang the death knell of this course. Several holes were taken to build the Nigg Camp which backed up the guns near Dunskaith Castle, leaving only fourteen holes and this, combined with the damage done by rabbits during the war years, ruined the course and although vigorous attempts were made to revive it they were of no avail and it became rough pasture. Since then it has been rezoned for tank storage and there is a further proposal to use it for an oil refinery.

During the War, the officers at North Sutor made a rough and hazardous little course on the slope above the cliffs for their own amusement.

Possibly the most unusual golf shot ever may have been one which took place on the Castlecraig Golf Course when the father of W Monroe, Tigh-na-mara, Nigg, killed a snipe with a golf ball.

Recreation - References:-

- 1 "Scots Magazine," article on the Gayre family
- 2 Sanitary Report 1841
- 3 New Statistical Account
- 4 Late Alexander Mackenzie, Lower Pitcalnie, Nigg
- 5 "Church Life in Ross and Sutherland," Rev Colin MacNaughton
- 6 Associate Church Session Minutes
- 7 Late J Ross, Pleasant Cottage, Nigg
- 8 "Memorabilia Domestica," Rev D Sage
- 9/16 "A Backward Glance," Class III, (1965), Hilton School
- 10 Minute Book of the Managers of the U P Church
- 11 Free Church Session Minutes
- 12/19 Late Tom Macleod, uncle of Miss H Macleod, formerly of Ivy Cottage, Nigg
- 13 Pitcalnie School log books
- 14 Nigg School log books
- 15 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 17 Miss Helen Macleod, formerly of Ivy Cottage, Nigg
- 18 "Down to the Sea"
- 20 "Old Ross-shire and Scotland," W MacGill. Numbers given.
- 21 "Easter Ross," A Polson

The Castlecraig (Nigg) Golf Club

The parish of Nigg had a very good golf course, thought by some to be the finest natural course in the world. It was in existence at least by 1893 (1) as a private 9-hole course, extended about 1907 to 18 holes and controlled by the Castlecraig Golf Club consisting at that time of about eighty members. The visits of the Home Fleet to Invergordon every spring and autumn brought many visitors and also caused it to be open for Sunday play. It was a mere ten minutes from Cromarty by ferry so it served the north side of the Black Isle as well.

In "Easter Ross," Alexander Polson, schoolmaster of Nigg, described the course thus:-

"There is a convenient little Clubhouse fitted with lockers. The course is an excellent one and is capable of great development and improvement. The soil is sandy and inclined to moss, making the surface rather soft. The greens are excellent and have been formed from the natural turf and are good evidence of what can be made of it by care and attention. The holes provide plenty of variety, both with regard to length and difficulty. There are two splendid short holes, surrounded by natural hazards, a ditch having to be crossed in each case. About eight of the holes may be reached by the long player with two strokes, but for the average player they mean three. Three of the holes are three shot holes, the others drive and iron or drive and pitch. The hazards throughout are natural, there being only one or two artificial bunkers. They consist of hillocks, ditches, sandy patches with bent and rough ground usually to punish the unwary player who leaves the fairway.

To take the holes in detail – the first hole is a three shot hole for the ordinary player, but may be reached by two extra good strokes. The fairway lies over undulating country with a wide sandy gully to trap a topped drive. The second or Sea Hole is a plateau, guarded in front by a deep gully, while beyond lies the beach. It can be reached by a drive and a short pitch. The third and fourth are new holes and still rather rough, but promise to become splendid holes. Here straight driving is essential as rough country lies on either side. The third or Quarry Hole usually requires three strokes and the drive must be carefully placed clear of a long ravine extending in the direction of the hole. Going to the fourth, rough ground and a road have to be carried from the tee, after which the passage is easy. The green lies on a low plateau. The fifth or Spion Kop, is one of the familiar kind where the green lies on the top of a steep hill or escarpment. This escarpment is the line of the old beach when the sea stood higher than it is at present. On the way to it the player has to carry a fairly high hill with his drive, and at the same time avoid a quarry on the right. The sixth is the Short Hole, a massive shot over a deep hollow and ditch with the green on the top of the bank beyond. At the seventh once more a ridge has to be crossed with the second. The eighth is flat, but two ditches have to be crossed on the way. At the ninth a ridge must be carried with the second, after which the green is within easy pitching distance. The outward half extends to 2600 yards and the Bogey score is 40.

Coming home, the way to the tenth hole lies over a series of hillocks with a burn on the right all the way. Three shots are usually necessary to reach the green. The eleventh, a short hole, is a tricky iron shot with a ditch in front and on the left, a wall on the right, and rough ground beyond. The twelfth is a drive and pitch with a burn to trap a topped drive. At the thirteenth or long hole we descend the old coast line and reach the older part of the course, where the ground is firmer. A big natural bunker has to be carried with the second shot. The fourteenth hole lies in a cup and provides an admirable approach shot. At the fifteenth and sixteenth we again cross the burn. The sixteenth green is an undulating one on the side of a hill and requires a carefully placed approach if the succeeding putt is to stay near the hole. The seventeenth may be reached with a good drive. The last hole lies over undulating ground, the green itself being in a wide hollow near the Club house. The inward half is 2455 yards in length, making the total length 5055 yards or just under three miles. The Bogey home is 40, making the Bogey for the round 80."

The golf club book was in the possession of Mr Alex Fraser formerly of Honeysuckle Cottage, who was one of the club's greenkeepers. He moved to Alness in the 1970's, and since then the book seems to have been lost which is a great pity as it contained the names of many notable people who played at Nigg.

If the reports of the Ross-shire Journal are anything to go by, the year 1931 was a busy one for the golfers at Nigg. In June that year the Maxwell Medal was played for and won by Mr Christopher Mackenzie, Nigg Ferry, and the Spring Handicap medal was won by Mr A Skinner, also of Nigg Ferry. In October that year, Sir George Dick-Lauder presented a solid silver quaich for the Castlecraig course. The first winner was Mr David Malcolm, Cromarty, with a score of 80 (16) 64.

Also that year, in June, the Ross-shire Journal reported that W Mackenzie, professional of an Australian Golf Club and a native of Nigg, won a tournament in Sydney. According to an Australian newspaper report he won the trophy in a field of “most of the leading amateurs and all the prominent professionals,” so the golf course at Nigg must have been a good training ground.

The 1939-45 War ended the golf course by taking several of the holes, and in spite of valiant efforts to restart it after the war, they came to nothing. It is understood that the various club trophies were handed out to people with varying degrees of association with the course, and that was the end of golf in Nigg. The course itself is constantly in the news as industrial ideas appear, and it is zoned for oil purposes now.

The Castlecraig (Nigg) Golf Club - References:-

- 1 Ledger of Ferry Inn, Nigg

Liquid Refreshments

Like everywhere else alcohol, principally in the form of ale, wine and whisky, played its part in Nigg. Nationally there was a great increase in alcoholic consumption in the 16th century and the resultant clamour for drink meant that rents were often paid in liquid form. (1) Whisky did not become popular until about 1750 but long before that the brewing of ale had become a thriving home industry with both men and women involved in the work.

By the end of the 17th century people might brew for themselves but were bound by law to give notice and pay duty. (2-M.311) It was normal practice for larger houses to have their own brew houses for household consumption. What is now the modern farm of Nigg included a kiln, brewhouse and brewery croft (3) and the old parish manse, in common with other manses in Scotland (4) almost certainly had its own small brewhouse also. The inventory of Alexander Ross Johnstone at Easter Rarichie in 1606 included "ane brewing cauldron" (2-M.425) and that of Mrs Grizell Forbes, Lady Kindeace, in 1738 showed that brewing was carried on in her household at Kindeace (Bayfield) (2-M.396) It was for brewing that she bought hops in 1757 from the Cromarty merchant, William Forsyth; 1lb cost her 1/6d (2-M.394)

Thus it was for domestic use, but people also brewed for sale and at least one early brewer is known. Hugh Munro was a "brewer" in the parish in 1709 with people coming to his house on occasion to get supplies. (5) Rules were laid down for the making and sale of ale. In 1665 the Justices of Ross met in Quarter Sessions and enacted that "till nixt Quarter Sessions the pryce of the aile sall be 14d for the aile and 16d for the beir and at the markets of faires 16d for the aile and 18d for the beir, the aile and the beir being guid and sufficient approven by the Cunsters (ascertainers) to be appoyntit in ilk parroch and quho ever does in the contrar sall be fyned 3 libs toties quoties qrof the third to the discoverer." (2-M.215)

The Session Minutes have frequent references to drinking and to ale itself, as in 1708 when a woman was delated for carrying a peck of bere (about 2 gallons) from Easter Rarichie to Shandwick to make ale. A rather old case came up the previous year when a man complained to the Session that 14 quarts of ale "went out of his house," implying that it was stolen, and implying moreover that an elder had something to do with the affair. The minister told him that he would be treated as a slanderer of an ordained elder if he failed to make his case, and unfortunately that is all there is about this intriguing matter.

There was so much drinking that an Act of the Estates in 1679 imposed penalties on those frequenting taverns and ale houses on Sundays. (1) Drinking itself does not seem to have been the sin, it was doing so on Sunday and it possibly was a result of this Act that a general warning was given to the congregation in Nigg in 1706. There had been a case of Sabbath profanation by drinking on Sunday by a man who not only drank ale, but carried six pints of it somewhere – so the congregation were told explicitly that "if any should drink to a Confluence of people or to excess alone on the Sabbath they shall be sharply rebuked;" and also if they should "bring ale from house to house." (5) Nevertheless in 1708 a woman had to stand before the congregation and be rebuked for drinking on the Sabbath.

This clamp-down on Sunday drinking, rather than drinking in general, is interesting and is perhaps a reflection of the days when people worked all day during six days of the week, and had little time for drinking until Sunday came round. Yet it is clear that drink was a serious problem always.

The Kirk Session realized, however, that there were exceptional cases where a drink might be justified on the Sabbath and therefore in 1705 they had ordained that changehouse keepers (innkeepers) must give out no more drink on Sundays than "one chappin in case of necessity." (5) A chappin is roughly one English quart, so this was a fairly generous allowance.

One of the consequences of the Union of 1707 was the raising of the former duties on liquor to the level of the rates in England and nothing angered the people more about the Union than this. The result was a lot of illegal brewing – there was a burst of it in and about 1746 when at least fifty people from various places including Nigg and Pitcalnie were in trouble for "brewing in secret places." (2-M.315) The sort of "secret places" were "in a High Room, in a bed room, in an Upper Room, in a garret, in a closet." (2-M.313)

This ale, locally brewed from bere or barley, was the people's drink, in homes both small and great, but wine was enjoyed by the upper families as well. This is clear from Lady Kindeace's transactions with William Forsyth – in 1757 she bought from him the following:

4 bottles claret and 2 sherry,	9/-
6 bottles claret and 4 sherry,	15/-
6 bottles Malaga	1/6 (2-M394)

She also bought two double flint wine glasses for 1/2 to enjoy her wine in. Her household inventory in 1738 included a silver tankard, three mutchkins (liquid measure, about _ pint), two silver jugs with cyphers on them, a punch bowl and spoon, and crystal decanters. (2-M.356)

Naomi, Lady Pitcalnie was also ordering generous supplies from William Forsyth, such as an order for 6 dozen claret, 2 dozen port and 1 dozen Malaga, much about the same time. (6)

Wines did not always come legally to these shores. It was smuggled in by the Hogshead and bottled at home into special bottles bearing the owner's name. One such bottle had the name on a little disc set into it, and similar bottles have been found in the Fearn area. (7) It was not for nothing that a fine tunnel was built from the raised beach to Kindeace (Bayfield House) coming up in the dining room, and known still as the Smuggler's Tunnel. It is properly constructed with slab walls and lintel stones and the exit (or entrance) in the house was only closed up this century by the late Mr Alex Mackenzie, Lower Pitcalnie.

When Honeysuckle Cottage was being done up by Highlands Fabricators to house two policemen in 1974, the contractors found a smugglers' hideaway. It was "cleverly concealed under the gable of the house at the sea end. Mr Fraser, who knew of its existence, told us it had probably been where barrels of whisky for export, and brandy for the local lairds, were cached away by freebooting members of passing trading sailboats back in the 18th century." So said the Hifab News, adding that the hideaway had been "well and truly bricked up during the reconstruction" – but what a pity it was that it was not photographed and recorded before this was done. Thus we do not know which of two uses it really had, a smugglers' cache or the site of a whisky still. Mr Fraser has said it was the latter and remembered its crocken stone that was unfortunately given away. This house had clay floors in all the rooms into the 1930's, except in the small kitchen where there was a wooden floor which had covered a hole where a still had been. (8) It seems that there is some confusion about these hideaways in this house, or else there were two, one in the gable wall and one in the kitchen. Either way, Honeysuckle Cottage was well sited for such purposes, lying as it does on the shores of the bay where ships could so conveniently load and unload.

Sunday was a favourite day for the "running" of goods and for carrying illegal liquor back and forth." (4) This may explain two cases of Sabbath profanation involving the Excisemen. In 1721 there was a "very gross Sabbath profanation" when Excisemen and soldiers pressed horses and carried goods through the parish in the time of divine worship (9) and then years later an Exciseman, living in the parish, forced the ferryman to take him over to Cromarty on a Sunday. The assumption must be that something was afoot, Sunday or no Sunday, and they had to take action. (5)

The nationwide taste for whisky began about 1750 and when heavy duties were imposed on wine in 1780 this made whisky even more popular and illegal distilling became prevalent. Nearly every Highland farmer had his own still and many were seized and destroyed in attempts to put down this practice. When the Illicit Distillation (Scotland) Act was passed in 1822 the people of Ross-shire depended entirely on illegal supplies and although the Excise Act of 1823 began the end of illegal distilling, it was by then a way of life in the Highlands and the Tain area was one of those where smuggling was most common. (1)

Nigg itself was famous for smuggling. One of the wells in the parish was on top of Nigg Hill, Tobar na h-eiteachan, described as "famous water, used by the Nigg smugglers" in Watson's "Place Names of Ross and Cromarty." (One must differentiate between the two forms of smuggling – one was bringing in goods illegally, the other was illegal distilling.) There was so much smuggling in Nigg, and it went on sufficiently long, for many people to have known of active stills. Nevertheless, they still don't like to give too much information!

One of the principal smugglers was John Matheson, a blacksmith at Wester Rarichie in the latter part of the 19th century. He made the pot for the group of smugglers he himself led and various tales are told of him. On one occasion when the guagers (Excisemen) paid him a visit, he quickly thrust his wife into bed with a cask of whisky and said she was great with child. The uncle of a man living in the parish was apprenticed to John Matheson as a blacksmith but used to be involved in his other activities as well. (10)

John Matheson's still is thought to have been somewhere near Port an Righ and in 1939 when coastguards were keeping a close eye on the coastline, one of them was shown where the bothy had been by a friend. Barley husks were still visible under the turf. It was possibly an underground bothy, as about 1967 a cow fell into a hole in that area, and this is believed to be the scene of John Matheson's favourite occupation. (10)

As already said, there was almost certainly a still at Honeysuckle Cottage. Alec Cumming, who died in 1974 at the age of about eighty-six, would tell of how he kept watch as a small boy while his grandfather worked at a still on the hill; and there were stills at the last three crofts on the hill, Cummings', Adams' and Francis Hendry's. (11)

A still is said to have existed at the mill at Balaphuile (12) and another was reputed to have been at the King's Cave which seems a most suitable choice as it has a large bank of sand at the mouth, which would have prevented the guagers, who often worked by sea, from observing what was going on. Other people speak of a Smugglers' Cave, not really a cave, but a hollow that was the site of a still; it was between two hillocks that were themselves between the fishermen's bothy and the King's Cave. (13) One woman is said to have helped her smuggling menfolk by carrying casks up the cliff on her back. (14)

The activities of the Excisemen have been mentioned in the days of smuggling liquor into the country; now they turned their attention to illegal distilling. By 1793 there was a Customs house boat with a master and six men stationed at Cromarty and all boats loaded with victual (grain) were stopped, however small the quantity carried, unless a clearance had first been obtained from Inverness. This caused a lot of delay and was a great grievance to everyone. (15) But by clamping down on barley being delivered without authority, smuggling was seriously hampered and a writer from Cromarty wrote, "From all I can learn, smuggling in these quarters, is knocked in the head." (15) In fact, smuggling still went on for quite some time thereafter and Excisemen were based in the area for a good many years. One of them, Alex Gibson, was buried in Nigg Old churchyard in the 1830's.

It was not all illegal, however, and there must have been some export of spirits to the south as in 1743 at Tain Burgh Court, "Denoon, carrier, confessed that he received a cask of spirits to convey to the ferry of Cromarty to be shipped to London ... at the Sands of Nigg he and accomplices pierced it with a gimlet and embuzzled 10 or 12 Scots pints," or about 5 gallons. The Baillie ordained "him to be in prison 8 days and then stand for an hour at the mercat cross with a paper on his breast inscribed 'For Breach of Trust.'" (2-M.254)

While the church disapproved of drinking there is an element of qualification in the following case: in 1821, the Associate Church reproved a man who "though he had often condemned those who illegally distilled ardent spirits ... was himself guilty of private and illegal distillation." At one time the beadle of Nigg Old Church had no qualms about alcohol and allowed a still to be lodged in the pulpit in return for a dram. S W Sillett tells of this in "Illicit Scotch" but another version has it that the still was below the pulpit rather than in it, which would certainly seem safer, and a repair to the woodwork on the side nearest the church door is believed to have been the result of the guagers opening it up to get at the still. (16)

Sunday drinking has already been mentioned, and drinking in general was a problem with all classes. There are repeated references to this in the earlier Session minutes in particular and even elders of the kirk were not exempt from the vice. In 1801 one of those in the Associate Church was dealt with according to the laws of that church because he frequented tippling houses; and a few years later one who drank too much was "excluded from his seat in Session and the actual exercise of his office." There was a case in 1821 of a woman being drunk – she was excluded from church privileges until she showed due repentance. (17) With these and many other cases, it is little wonder that the New Statistical Account, referring to the three small inns in the parish, said they were "in many cases an accommodation to travellers; but otherwise they are no blessing."

It seems likely that the present Nigg Ferry Inn is one of these three inns. There was a changehouse (inn) at “the ness” (ie Dunskaith) in 1731 (5) and the present inn has the date 1712 over a low door, so it seems a reasonable assumption that they were one and the same.

Another of these inns was the Pitcalnie Inn, in the house now called Lower Pitcalnie. William Henry of that inn had dealings with a merchant in Inverness in 1864, and was presumably the landlord. (18) In 1826 William Ross was described as “vintner at Pitcalnie,” which most probably refers to this inn as well.

The third inn is not known, but there was a “cellar” or licensed shop at Burnside, where alcohol was sold for consumption off the premises. This was one of the recognised stopping-places for funeral corteges passing that way to Nigg Old Churchyard. The men made sure that they had the price of a dram with them, and along with a biscuit from home, were enabled to continue on their heavy way refreshed. One of the owners of this shop, J A Ross, was described as a Merchant and Spirit Merchant in 1906. (19)

But as the Ferry Inn is the only one of these inns still in existence in the parish, it deserves a special mention. One of the landlords was Andrew Ross who was described as “innkeeper at Cromarty Ferry” in 1836. Another was George Ross, whose grandchildren are still living in the parish. They have a much-prized memento that shows that this was an inn at which there was room. During a storm on 27th May 1891, two bedraggled and soaking figures were “washed ashore” and went to Dunskaith House for help; they went to the front door and were promptly sent round to the back. Instead of going there, they went to the inn where the landlady was full of concern and took them in, dried their clothes and gave them a meal. It was not until she received an illuminated document some time later that she discovered that one of the men she had been kind to was Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of the Kaiser and grandson of Queen Victoria. He had been in the Cromarty Firth in a naval ship and had gone sailing with a friend when the storm overtook them.

In addition to this document, the family have in their possession George Ross’s Ledger for the years 1891-1906 which gives an idea of prices at that time:-

1891	1894
1 bottle whisky 2/6	1 bottle wine 3/-
1 bottle “best” whisky 3/-	1 gill aqua 6d
1 gallon whisky 15/-	1 gill ginger cordial 5d
1 bottle sherry 3/6	1 doz soda water 3/-
1 bottle ginger wine 1/6	1 gallon porter 2/-
1 gallon beer, 1/-	2/-
1 bottle lemonade 3d	
1 nip whisky 2d	
1 nip rum 3d	
1 gill brandy 3d	
_ mutchkin whisky 1/-	

The inn also provided meals; in 1893 Castlecraig Golf Club had lunch for sixteen people at 1/- each, plus 1 bottle of whisky at 3/-, _ dozen beer for 6/- and _ dozen soda water 1/6d. In addition, the inn kept a cow and sold milk as well as alcohol.

By 1914, Donald Maclennan was licensee and prices had risen slightly. He stocked three grades of whisky; brands such as Johnny Walker were 3/6 per bottle; the local Glenmorangie he sold at 3/-, and then there was “Plain” which he bought by the barrel, brought to strength, bottled himself and sold at 2/- per bottle. (20) His barrels of whisky came over from Cromarty in the ferry boat. (21)

By way of being an “accommodation to travellers” the inn had a stable at the side where those crossing the ferry might leave their horses till they returned.

The inn has had a number of landlords and under its present proprietors, the Patersons, provided many good meals and became a popular setting for wedding receptions until the arrival of Highlands Fabricators. Such was their impact that catering stopped as a result and considerable extensions were added in 1975. Up to seven

or eight barmen were working at any one time. No wonder that it was described in the East Ross Star of 3rd July 1975 as “the biggest licensed goldmine in Scotland!” The inn is certainly in the words of the NSA, still an “accommodation” but whether it is a blessing is another matter.

A proposal in the 1970’s to turn Bayfield House into a country club/Hotel naming it The White Lady after the ghost and using the Smugglers Tunnel for access, was approved by the planning committee but came to nothing. A small hotel or public house was included in the proposed Pitcalnie housing scheme, but that has been shelved meantime by the District Council. A hotel is included in proposals for the Shandwick area, something that is still on the cards.

Liquid Refreshments - References:-

- 1 “Illicit Scotch,” S W Sillett
- 2 “Old Ross-shire and Scotland
- 3 “Gayre’s Booke,” Lt Col G R Gayre
- 4 “Social Life in the 18th Century,” Henry Grey Graham
- 5 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 6 Pitcalnie Estate papers
- 7 Late Miss J Ross, Millbank, Evanton
- 8 Mr D Fraser, late of Honeysuckle Cottage, Nigg
- 9 “Church Life in Ross and Sutherland,” Rev Colin MacNaughton
- 10 Mr H Ross, Shandwick Shop
- 11 Mr Alex Fraser, formerly of Honeysuckle Cottage, Nigg
- 12 Late Alex Mackenzie, Lower Pitcalnie, Nigg
- 13 Misses Adams, Balaphuile, Nigg
- 14 Mr D Budge, Easter Rarichie, Nigg
- 15 Statistical Account for the parish of Cromarty
- 16 Mr H Fraser, late of Lower Bayfield, Nigg
- 17 Associate Church Session Minutes
- 18 Debtors’ List 1864
- 19 Ledgers of Milton Mill, Kildary
- 20 Mr Leslie Gilsland
- 21 Miss M Mackenzie, formerly of the Bungalow, Nigg

People

It is unlikely that the parish of Nigg will ever produce a more outstanding man than the Seer of Nigg, Donald Ross, known from the colour of his hair as Donald Roy, or the Red. (1)

Born in 1665, he was rather a wild young man in his youth, but became a devoted churchman as a result of certain unusual events. Robust and active, he was considered to be the best club player in the district, and though he went to church on Sunday mornings, he spent the rest of the day at this game. He was a farmer and had a small herd of black cattle and, when he came home on three successive Sunday evenings to find a black cow dead at his door, he considered this a judgement and gave up playing at the club for better things. (2)

This was in the late 1600's, and just after the Revolution in 1688 he became an elder. At this time there was, naturally enough, a shortage of ministers, and so it was necessary to use laymen to keep scattered congregations together. (3) The people liked to have simple teachers similar to themselves and some individuals became prominent by their piety. Their words were revered and they were credited with second sight. (4) They were "The Men" as opposed to mere ministers (4) and some of them became very powerful in the church. Donald Roy was one of them.

He is used as the archetype in one reference that speaks of The Men being "laymen of the Donald Ross of Nigg order, eminent for piety.... A moral and spiritual leaven of the value of which it would be difficult to overestimate." (5) Even so, strange experiences befell him. On one occasion, he found himself having blasphemous thoughts and accompanied by a dog, bounding along beside him and emitting flame, but he was given the strength to resist the evil. (1)

Donald Roy began his service as an elder in the time of James Mackenzie, who had been admitted curate under episcopacy in 1683 and who remained after the Revolution in the absence of anyone to take his place. He continues as an elder under Rev George Munro and became one of the "chosen generation" of men who arose during the ministry of Rev John Balfour." (6)

Along with the other elders, he helped John Balfour in the great Revival in Nigg between 1730-45 and understandably they were in demand in other parishes. On one occasion they went to Urray to address the people there on what might be called "elders day" or the "day of The Men" before Communion, because Urray apparently lacked elders of the necessary calibre. They were offered accommodation at the home of a Roman Catholic woman, something which Donald Roy's companions did not wish to accept. He, however, was sure that this was meant, so they went to her house. During their evening devotions, their hostess could hear them from her room and as their praise continued, twelve little images round her walls fell to the floor in turn. Donald Roy's convictions were proved right when she sent for them, and was converted. (2)

Donald Roy still kept a certain warlike spirit and, after assisting John Balfour in the Nigg Revival, "he had to assist him shortly after, in pursuing a band of armed caterans that, descending from the hills, swept the parish of its cattle. And coming up with the outlaws in the gorge of a wild Highland glen, no man of his party was more active in the fray that followed than old Donald, or exerted himself to better effect in recapturing the cattle." (2)

A man who could pursue armed caterans as readily as help in a religious revival was well able to deal with the heritors and the Presbytery when they tried to force an unwanted minister upon Nigg after the death of John Balfour. It was Donald Roy who declared to the Presbytery that the blood of the people of Nigg would be required of them if they should settle a man to the walls of the kirk and, after being an elder in the parish church for almost sixty years, it was he who led the resultant secession from it in 1756 and took his part in the formation of the Associate congregation. (2)

It was about this time, some seventy years after the Revolution, that one example of his second sight occurred. He was proofing (valuing) corn stacks at Castlecraig and as the day went on, it became very wild with heavy snow, and some men there went to suggest to him that he should stay the night instead of going home. They found him sitting and looking as if he were seeing some terrible event, crying out advice to a ship, and then calling out, "She's o'er, she's o'er. O, the puir widows o' Dunskaith – but God's will be done."

The men begged him to come to the house but he insisted that they must go at once to the burn of Nigg as enough ill had already happened that night, and found there a poor woman who had collapsed by the stream with cold and exhaustion. Thanks to Donald Roy, she was carried to shelter and recovered. Next morning, the rest of his vision was explained when a boat from Dunskaith was found wrecked and the bodies of some of the crew washed up on the beach below Castlecraig. (2)

On another occasion, a Cromarty man was called on urgent business to Tarbat, and called on Donald as he passed through Nigg, saying that he feared that he would see his wife no more as he had left her very seriously ill. Donald assured him that he would indeed see her, and that she herself would live to see the youngest of her children settled in the world. This also was true, the woman being the grandmother of Hugh Miller, from whom most of these tales of the Seer of Nigg come. (2) Hugh Miller was a great, great grandchild of Donald Roy (7) who seems to have married Jenny, a daughter of James Mackenzie, the curate of Nigg. (2)

This remarkable old man died in January 1774 aged 109 years, in the 84th year of his eldership, although the last part of this had been spent in the Associate Church and not in the parish church, to which he had previously given such sterling service. (2)

John Balfour was minister of Nigg from 1729-52. As said elsewhere he arrived to find much Sabbath profanation as the people spent most of Sunday playing athletic games. He bided his time in dealing with this matter but found an opportunity when he had to go away to attend the General Assembly. He simply told the ringleader of the games that he left the east end of the church in his keeping and that he was to be responsible for seeing that the day was spent in prayer and worship. The leader complained bitterly, but Mr Balfour charged him before God to do so and the man had to agree, going on from there to become a devoted Christian.

Thus John Balfour started his ministry in the way he meant to go on, leading to a remarkable Revival achieved by nothing more than sound parish work. This Revival, in which Donald Roy helped, came to its peak in the "Great Week" of 1739 when people were calling on the minister all day and every day for guidance and no less than ten praying societies were formed. (8) Documentary evidence of this Revival appears in various publications (9) and John Balfour wrote an article on it in *The Monthly History* in 1744 in which he was able to report that not one in forty of those who had "awakened" had fallen off. (10)

This was no boast on his part. It explained the enthusiasm with which everyone worked to improve the church during his ministry, and the necessity for more accommodation within it. Nor was the Revival influence a passing thing. For several years, the magistrates had no crimes to deal with in Nigg, the Kirk Session had very few discipline cases. The people became hard-working, and even during the troubles of the '45 all was quiet in Nigg. (8)

This was no mean achievement and the Secession which took place after he died was in many ways a testimony to his character and influence for good. (8)

Someone who did not live in Nigg but nevertheless played a valuable part in its affairs and history was Miss Rosa Williamson-Ross. She was ninety years old when she succeeded her sister as 13th Laird of Pitcalnie and 22nd Chief of the Rosses of Pitcalnie. She was the last of the original family of Pitcalnie, the last link with the old Earls of Ross. She devoted herself to sorting the Pitcalnie papers and well over three hundred legal documents and vellums, from the 15th century onwards, were taken to the Curator of Historic Documents in Scotland for safe keeping, and so as to be accessible for research. (11)

Her family owned land in Nigg for four hundred years and when she died in her 100th year in 1968, she left the land they rented to all her tenants, a wonderful gesture from a great and gentle old lady.

Although his claim to fame lay outside the parish of Nigg, a Dr Brydon lived for some time at Pitcalzean House, then called Westfield, and he is mentioned here to clear up a confused story. Variations are told locally of a painting called "The Lone Survivor," the picture of a grey horse and its rider. This horse is said to have saved Dr Brydon's life by protecting him from tribesmen's gunfire at the Khyber Pass when he was the only survivor, and in gratitude he took it home and it lived at Pitcalzean till its death when it was buried just inside the white gates. (12)

In fact Dr Brydon, 1811-73, was a surgeon in the Bengal Army and was the sole survivor of the retreat at Kabul in 1842. He retired in 1859 to Pitcalzean, but as his retirement only took place seventeen years after the famous retreat, the horse would have been too old to take with him. He did, however, ride a grey pony when in Nigg and this pony may well be the one he is said to have brought from India. (13)

An article in 1968 on military paintings showed Lady Butler's painting "The Remnants of an Army" depicting a single rider and a horse, with a caption saying, "The horseman is Dr Brydon and the original painting is in the Regimental Museum at Taunton." (14) It seems likely that this is the picture which is inaccurately called "The Lone Survivor" locally. Dr Brydon is buried in Rosemarkie churchyard.

Various early heritors deserve a mention, starting with George Ross of Cromarty. He made an immense fortune as an army agent in England and about 1765 he bought the Estate of Cromarty which included Castlecraig. He was a notable benefactor. He built the harbour, started the pork trade, built a brewery and also a hemp factory which employed two hundred people within its walls and as many more outside, providing home work for people in other parishes, including Nigg. So many Gaelic speakers were attracted to the area that he built a chapel for them in Cromarty, which made some impact on church collections in Nigg because their minister, Rev Lewis Rose, was frequently preaching at the Gaelic Chapel with the result that there was no collection on such days in the Nigg Church. (15 and 16)

Hugh Rose (Ross) also made an impact in the area. He was born in 1767, son of the parish minister of Creich and later Tain. He made a fortune in the Government commissariat service in the West Indies, returning to Scotland about 1802. He came to Ross-shire and bought Glastullich, Calrossie and Tarlogie, as well as Bayfield in Nigg. He named Arabella in Logie Easter after his first wife, Arabella Phipps, daughter of a rich West Indian planter. It was she who was murdered at Bayfield not so many years later.

Hugh Rose did much for road works, tree planting, draining and so on but was much resented as a parvenu by old families. He became addicted to legal actions and took forty years proving that the only son of George Ross of Cromarty, the former army agent, was illegitimate so that he, Hugh Ross, might claim the estate through his second wife, Catherine Munro, heiress of entail to the estates of Culcairn and Cromarty. It was then that he added the name of Ross to his own, styling himself Rose Ross till his death in 1846. (17 and 18)

Strangely enough, he had an earlier indirect connection with part of the property he ultimately acquired. At the end of the 17th century, a family of Reochs were tenants of Castlecraig, one of them, William, being a great-grand-uncle of Hugh Rose Ross. (18)

The name Little Kindeace was changed to Ankerville, when it was bought by Alexander Ross, who was known locally as Polander Ross because he had formerly been a merchant at Cracow. (19) Another source says that he joined the service of the King of Poland and became a Commissary thanks to his ability to out-drink the King. He came away with the plunder of the churches in the war over the Crown of Poland, purchased this estate of £100 a year, built and lived too greatly for it and died much reduced. (11)

One heritor became involved in a duel. In 1786 Ankerville, Cullisse and Old Shandwick were sold to William Ross of Shandwick. The owner of the estate went to India in the early 1800's and befriended two young men, distant connections of his by the name of Reid, who had unmarried sisters in Tain. On his return, he met the misses Reid and seduced one of them. A brother of hers challenged him to a duel which was refused on the grounds of his having a large family, but the other Reid brother was sent for from India, returned and called the seducer to account. Ross made a will entailing the estate with the apparent intention of excluding the distantly connected Reids. He was killed in the duel, Reid fled to India and never returned, but in the end the estate passed to the family meant not to have it. (17)

People - References:-

- 1 "My School and Schoolmasters," Hugh Miller
- 2 "Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland," Hugh Miller
- 3 "Church Life in Ross and Sutherland," Rev Colin MacNaughton
- 4 "Social Life in the 18th Century," Henry Grey Graham
- 5 "History of the Ancient Province of Ross," R Bain
- 6 New Statistical Account
- 7 "In the Footprints of the Creator," Hugh Miller
- 8 "Church Chronicles of Nigg," Rev J R Martin
- 9 They were "Revivals in the Highlands," Rev Alexander Macrae;
"History of the Ancient Province of Ross," R Bain; and the
New Statistical Account
- 10 "Revivals in the Highlands," Rev Alexander Macrae
- 11 Mrs Rosemary Mackenzie, Alderbrae, Tain
- 12 Mr Alex Fraser, formerly of Honeysuckle Cottage, Nigg
- 13 Late Eric Linklater, formerly of Pitcalzean House, Nigg
- 14 "Glasgow Illustrated"
- 15 New Statistical Account of the parish of Cromarty
- 16 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 17 "Reminiscences of My Life in the Highlands," Vol I, Joseph Mitchell
- 18 "History of the Family de Ros; de Rose; Rose of Kilravock," Eric H Rose
- 19 "Place Names of Ross and Cromarty," W J Rose

People's Names

The following names have been extracted from church records such as Communion and baptismal rolls, poors' lists, discipline cases and so on, as well as a few from the Poll Book of the combined Counties of Ross and Cromarty 1830. It is obviously not complete but can be taken as giving a cross section of the names in the parish from 1705 until the 1960's. The 1914 and 1965 figures come from Electoral Rolls.

		1914	1965
Ross	65	34	64
Roy (? Also Ross)	11		
Munro	16	9	14
Mackenzie	13	10	12
Macleod	12	11	12
Vass	19	No list	31
Fraser	16	6	8
McLeman	16		
Skinner	12	No list	7
Gair	10		
Henry	8	2	2
McWilliam	6		
Gallie	7		
McEan	6		
McKein	1		
Hossack	5		
Gow	4		
Sutherland	4	3	6
McAlasteraig	4		
McAlaster	1		
Rose	12	No list	3
Graham and Morrison	3	No list	
Taylor and Smart	3		
McCurchy	3		
Christie	3	No list	4

To the first column there must also be added two each of Allan, Rane, Duff, Fletcher, Gibson, Macdonald, Rioch, McConnachy, MacIntyre, McAndie, McCulloch, Macdiarmid, McAdie; and one each of Anderson, Bain (Ceannach), Cunningham (Calm), Dingwall, Donaldson, Denoon, Davisons, Dongal, Elder, Holm, Holmes, Miller, Murray, Mitchell, Matheson, McKay, McKeeman, McRobert, MacLean, McKinlay, McFinlay, McCurrick, Noble, Stephen, Stuart, Stewart, Tarrel, McAndrew, McHomas, McComash, McCandy, McFarquhar, McLea, MacInnes, McNaier, Macanear, Manson.

The 1914 list has 50 "others," including 2 Mackays and 6 Macdonalds. The 1965 list had 15 Robertsons, 9 Morrisons, 5 Mackays, four each of Bain, Beattie, Bremner, Christie, Corbett, Gordon, Smith; three each of Martin, Budge, Calder, Finlayson, Linklater, MacIntosh, Macrae, Paterson, Rose, Whyte; two each of Adams, Campbell, Clark, Dryden, Henderson, Matheson, Murray, MacCrum, Macgregor, MacRitchie, Ricketts, Rutherford, Scott, Shand, Stewart, Swanson, Tait, Tipping; one each of Forbes, Birnie, Cowie, Macdonald, Collyer, Cumming, Dick-Lauder, Finlay, Lunn, Marquis, MacAskill, Macfarlane, Mutinelli, Macpherson, Palmer, Robson, Rugg, Schoebella, Tonberg, while in addition the name Salvatore occurred in the parish but not on the electoral roll.

Ross is the principal local clan name, deriving from the Ross of Balnagown family (also Pitcalnie, Inverchassley and Shandwick). It was and is by far the most common name. Members of this family held land in the parish in 1333 and Rosses appear in all walks of life throughout the history of the parish since then. The name Roy, sometimes meaning "red-haired," was sometimes used in place of Ross.

Munro was also a common name, originating from the nearby Munros of Foulis, who owned property in Easter Ross. There were four generations of Munros who styled themselves "of Nigg." Mackenzie is another clan name

– it is said that much of the property acquired by the MacCulloch family passed later, through other hands, to the Mackenzies when they “leap-frogged” eastwards in the county over the Munros and Rosses. (1)

The NSA gives two groupings of the names Macleod, Vass and Skinner, in association with Ross. In 1841, Macleod, Skinner and Ross were the only names in almost twenty families of fishermen in Balnabruach and Balnapaling at that date, having originated in a community below Dunskaith Castle. In that area there were the following later:

1898	Macleod	12	Skinner	3	Ross	5
1919	Macleod	8	Skinner	3	Ross	5 (2)

At the same time as said, the NSA notes that the common names in Shandwick, originally from the same stock as above, were Vass, Skinner and Ross; later on, there were:

1898	Vass	13	Skinner	5	Ross	10
1919	Vass	15	Skinner	4	Ross	13 (2)

The decline in the number of Macleods at Balnabruach and Balnapaling may be due to a story that says they were originally MacLemans who changed their name to Macleod for 5/- a time to help Macleod of Cadboll in some vote. (3) Whether this is true or not is not known, but it was not uncommon for people to change their name to that of their laird for protection or any other good reason. The MacLemans themselves are believed to have come to the parish in a 17th century experiment of settling people from the Bass Rock in Cromarty and Avoch, with some coming to Nigg, (3) although this is not authenticated.

What is certainly true is that there were Maclemans in the list of “fishers at the paling” up to about 1800 but not thereafter, along with Skinners, a Roy (? Ross) and two McAlesterais. This may confirm that the MacLemans changed their name to Macleod, paving the way for only three names by 1841. The last Skinner in that area died in the early 1960’s; the last Macleods moved out due to industry in the early 1970’s; but a few Rosses still remain, (4) and a McLeman was ferryman in Nigg in 1917.

Various origins are given for the name Vass. Vasses (Wasses) are said to have been an English family settled in Inverness in early times (5); the name is also said to be derived from the Bass rock where some had been prisoners; and another version suggests that the name is of Norman extraction, originally being Vallibus or de Vaux. The de Vallibus family obtained lands in Ross, supporting both the Rosses and the Munros. (6) Parish records spell this name “Vause” in 1730 and “Vaus” in 1783, giving support to this theory. Shandwick Vasses, however, claim Norse descent.

Although this name is now confined to Shandwick and associated in most people’s minds with fisherfolk there, it formerly appeared at Nigg Ferry, Bayfield and Strath of Pitcalnie, showing that it was more widely spread than is nowadays realized.

From the end of the 17th century until shortly before the NSA was written, Pitcalzean was owned by Rev John Fraser, minister of Alness, and his family. This brought clansmen about and there were thirteen families of that name in Nigg, and the name continues to occur since then. (7)

The name Gair appeared in the parish in 1649, if not earlier. It was then that a Gair married a MacCulloch, as a fine tombstone in the Old Parish Churchyard bears witness. They were lairds of Nigg – the present farm, not the whole parish – and were a very active family, spreading out to other properties such as Culnaha in 1705 (8), to Rarichie in 1825 (9), giving their names to two wells and two fields on Rarichie, Ankerville and Cullisse. The name has now died out – one of the last Gairs was a fine-looking, bearded old man who had a croft on Easter Rarichie - but descendants of the original Gayres or Gairs of Nigg are still living in Easter Ross, although not now named Gair.

There are no MacCullochs left in the parish now but members of this powerful and respected family made a considerable impact not only in Nigg, but in Easter Ross generally. A MacCulloch appears at Shandwick in 1633, another at Pitcalnie in 1705, and one on what is now the farm of Nigg in the mid-1600’s, and still another at Bayfield in 1621. As said above, a Gair married a MacCulloch of Nigg and descendants of this line still survive.

The MacCullochs came from Wigtownshire in the time of the real Earls of Ross but, unlike lesser settlers, did not take Ross as a name themselves. They were for many years landed proprietors of consequence, but the last people of that name in the parish had crofts at Nigg Ferry as late as 1919, and one of them, Katy Rory MacCulloch, gave her name to a field on Pitcalzean still known as Katy's Park or Katy Rory's Field. (5)

The name Gunn was introduced from Caithness after Sir John Sinclair of Dunbeath bought Wester Rarichie and Cullisse. Local people referred to these Gunns as "Na Gaallich," the Caithness men, hence Gallie, which the NSA says was for two hundred years a "common and rather respected name" although by 1841 on the decrease. (7) Although there were a few of this name after the 1939-45 War, none now remain.

Rose was a name introduced when a Rose of Kilravock married the daughter of Sir John Sinclair and acquired her lands of Cullisse and Wester Rarichie as her dowry. As the Gunns came from Caithness, so did Roses come from Kilravock, although only a few of their descendants were there to tell the tale by 1841. (7)

There is a tradition of an immigration of Roses to Nigg even earlier than the Kilravock marriage just mentioned. Three Rose sons killed their much disliked step-mother and had to flee from Kilravock in Nairnshire. They came across the ferries of Ardersier and Nigg and, in the first house they entered in the parish, one of them fell in love with a maiden there. Thus they found friends and protection and their descendants were to be found in the area for a considerable time. (7)

The name "Ros" frequently appears in old records and is understood to be Rose rather than Ross. There were still Roses in Nigg after the 1939-45 War but there are none left now.

At the same time as the MacCullochs came to Ross from Wigtownshire, various other families settled in the area as well, including Denoons, Tarrells and Ferns or Fearn. The name Denoon has now disappeared but not without leaving a very permanent memorial in the shape of the belfry at the Old Parish Church built by David Denoon, mason, in 1730, almost certainly the mason of that name living then at Easter Rarichie. (8)

Fern or Fearn is another name no longer found in Nigg. The name is understood to have originated with the 12th Abbot of Fearn, Finlay McFead, a man of such outstanding qualities that the King ordered him and his descendants to take the name of Fearn as a surname. (6) Church lands fell into their hands and among their descendants were Andrew Fearn of Pitcalzean (6) and also Alexander Ferne there. (10-M.14)

The now uncommon name of Tarrel occurred in Shandwick in 1708 but does not seem to have been present in any numbers. There is still a Tarrell in the village of Hilton, one of the seaboard villages, however.

The names most frequently occurring in the 1974 Electoral Roll are given below, although it must be remembered that this list was made up after the lowering of the voting age to eighteen years:-

Ross	47
Vass	24
Mackenzie	19
Munro	12
Robertson	12
Macleod	10
Murray	7
Skinner	6
Campbell	6
Sutherland	6
Fraser	5

This shows that, in spite of emigration from the area and industrial newcomers arriving, basically the old clans are still the most common, with Vass, Macleod and Skinner well up. The exception is Robertson, a name that presumably came north with the Clearances.

Various foreign names like Mutinelli and Tonberg are a direct result of the 1939-45 War when German and Italian prisoners of war married local girls and stayed in this country.

By-names or nicknames have always been common, especially so in the fishing villages, but this was mainly due to the need to differentiate between people of the same name. The Kirk Session records of the Associate church and its Baptismal Register use the words primo, secundo, tertius and even quarto to indicate who was who, and even Valuation Rolls made use of nicknames. Referring to Nigg Ferry, the Roll of 1898 gives names thus, Andrew Ross "Berriman;" Alex Fraser, red; John Ross "Vat;" and Donald Macleod "Butler," and twenty years later, the same thing happened as well.

Another feature is patronymic nicknames, and a man who spent some childhood years at Nigg Ferry during the 1914-18 War remembered children known as Daanack a' Davie, Daanack a' John, Donnie a' Daanack, so there was no mistaking who they were.

People's Names - References:-

- 1 "Tain," R W Munro and Jean Munro
- 2 Valuation Rolls
- 3 Mr A Fraser, formerly of Honeysuckle Cottage, Nigg
- 4 They were
 - a) Arthur Skinner;
 - b) Miss H Macleod, Ivy Cottage, and Mrs Macleod, Shop House;
 - c) Rosses, living at Broomhill and at Pleasant Cottage
- 5 "Clan Ross," Donald Mackinnon
- 6 "Lowland Highlanders," Alan Robertson
- 7 New Statistical Account
- 8 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 9 Poll Book of the combined counties of Ross and Cromarty, 1832
- 10 "Old Ross-shire and Scotland," W MacGill. Numbers given

Place Names

For convenience of identification, place names are given under the titles of present farms or their equivalent estates:-

CASTLECRAIG ESTATE

Made up of four holdings, Dunskaithe, Culbin, Annat and Rhidorach. (1) By 1825 it comprised three holdings.

- Dunskaithe: the area from Nigg Ferry to the industrial quarry and the Blue Gates, an area called Castlecraig in 1825. (2) The change of name is made clear in a reference in 1908 to "Dunskaithe, now Castlecraig" (3); the buildings were at the old shepherd's cottage on the face of the hill. There is a reference in 1553 to "ye toune of Dunskyt" (4 – M673) while Dunskaithe was the name of the area close to Nigg Ferry, although shown on OS maps as the extreme westerly tip of sand at Nigg Ferry; this name is said to have been given to a village directly below the Castle. (5)
- Culbin: triangular area between the Blue Gates, the industrial quarry and Anne's wood (2); the buildings lay in the field surrounded by wood on three sides adjacent to the industrial quarry.
- Annat: the Castlecraig land lying east of Culbin. This name still applies to land immediately south-west of Castlecraig Loch on Pitcalzean ground.
- Rhidorach: the name occurs in 1730 (6) but it has not been located.
- Castlecraig: now the name of the whole area excepting Nigg Ferry. Referred to as "the Castle of the Rock" (7) and also as Tigh na Craig."
- Cromarty Ferry: the proper name for Nigg Ferry, called "Cromarty Ferry in this parish" in 1810-49 (6) or the North Ferry of Cromarty" in 1827 (8) as well as by the earlier name of the "ferry of Dunscathness" in 1800 (8).
- Balnapping: (Balnapellin, 1841 (9)), a former small fishing village lying between Nigg Ferry and Ivy Cottage. There is a reference about 1780 to "fishers at the paling," (8) and the derivation of the name is said to be from plots of land separated by palings. (1) This name seems to have superseded Dunskaithe for this area.
- North Sutor: the Sutors first appear in an Act of Parliament in 1593 as "craiges callit the Sowteris (10) and were called the "Sutters of Cromarty" by Thomas Pennant in 1769 (11). Sir Thomas Urquhart suggested that the name came from the Greek word Sutor, saviour or deliverer; it is also thought to have had something to do with the number of shoemakers or sutors in Cromarty. North Sutor was called East Sutor as late as 1893 (13) while South Sutor was called West Sutor, this being the common local use of east and west for places lying north and south. (12)
- Loch Annat: Castlecraig Loch, not drained. (14)
- Annat Burn: burn running to the Moray Firth from this loch.
- Blue Gates: the sharp bend on the Old Manse-Castlecraig road where it crosses the Pitcalzean-Castlecraig march; so called because there used to be blue gates there.
- Auldow: at the Blue Gates (14).
- Bognielan: east of Auldow (14).
- Anne's Wood: wood east of Castlecraig House.

- Latche Moss: lochan south of the trig point on Bayfield Hill. (14)
- Cascreetie: phonetic spelling; goat's road, a track leading to the shore from the east end of Anne's Wood. (15)
- Darling's Cave: a cave formerly inhabited by a family of tinkers of this name; below the east end of the field lying to the east of Anne's Wood. (15)
- Majieck's Point: extreme west of sand dunes lying to the west of Nigg Ferry.
- Shepherd's Hill: a hummock near Majieck's point, where shepherds sat to watch over their sheep. (16)
- Sproing: corner of the cliff below Dunskaithe Castle. (16)
- The Rocks: at Nigg Ferry, this always means the rocks below the Castle.
- The Docks: a lagoon in the saltings opposite the entrance to the Pitcalzean House drive on the low road.
- Blackspring: a spring to which offerings were made to encourage the flow of water, below the raised beach near Balnapaling; now the name of a cottage there.

NB The Castlecraig Estate was part of the Cromarty Estate.

PITCALZEAN ESTATE

Meikle Pitcalzean.

- Balnabruach: a fishing village running from the dyke at Primrose Cottage to, and including, Ivy Cottage. Originally called "Kindeis Wester" within the "barony of Ballinbreich," (1), and said to derive from "town of the brae." (17)
- Red House: a group of cottages on the seaward side of the road from Pleasant Cottage to Balnabruach; the name is only used for one cottage now called "Red House."
- Mullineoin: also spelt Mulinnonie in 1832 (18), a small farm lying between the fork of the low and upper roads. The name is said to come from a mill on the site and it adjoins the Dam Field at Nigg Farm. The name has been revived in a corrupted form for the name of a bungalow, Mulloine, on the other side of the road.
- Eagle Hill,
Cnoc-na-h-iolaire: the site of the present Mulloine bungalow.
- Cormack's Brae,
Stairack's Brae: the brae at Mulloine. Cormack was tenant of land there until the 1950's; Stairack was the by-name of a man living in a cottage that stood where Mulloine now stands.
- Westfield: a farm on the estate. Although its valuation in 1826 was only a sixth of the whole, it gave its name for some time to the estate, but the land has now reverted to its original name rather than the name of a small part.
- Carnjeek: phonetic spelling. A patch of waste ground between the Nigg march dyke and the bend in the road between the top entrance to Pitcalzean and Mulloine.
- Carriebochan or
Carboy Field: phonetic spelling. A small field above the raised beach east of Broomhill Cottage.
- Katy Rory's Field
or Katy's Park: a small field just north of the above, now incorporated with another field. Called after Katy McCulloch whom people still remember.

Bishop's Field: a long field north of the above, a relic of the Bishop of Ross's connections with the parish.

Ratch Field: lying between Mulloine and the top drive to Pitcalzean.

Knocknagrashack: the highest part of Pitcalzean Hill. (20)

There is some variety of spelling Pitcalzean. In one paragraph in Kirk Session records it appears with three different spellings; some variations are Pytcalline, Pitcolian, Pitkulan, Pitkayllian, Pitkelzean.

NIGG ESTATE

Bishop's Walk: the route, originally wooded, from the sea to Nigg House, early site of the Bishop's summer palace.

The Pot: stream running into the sea, forming the western boundary of Nigg Farm, and of the parish. This name does not usually apply to the stream above high water mark although on a map of 1763 (14) the name is used inland.

Culnald: also spelt Cullinould; a small farmstead lying east of the Old Manse, at one time on the Cromarty Estate.

Dam Field: north of Mullineoin Farm.

Porter Lodge Fields, east and west: these lie north and south of the old drive to Nigg House, opposite the house now called Tighna-Mara, and formerly known as the Entrance Lodge or the Lodge.

Cumming's Field: on the left of the road going uphill from Nigg Street (farm cottages).

Alec's Corner: the sharp right hand bend above Nigg Street.

The Ranges, The Targets: a high, man-made bank of Culnald, used as a rifle range for troops training in Nigg during 1914-18 War.

Whins of Nigg, The Whins: after turning right at Alec's corner, the Whins are on the upper slope.

Jock Kitchen's Croft: one of a group of small crofts on the opposite side of the road from the above. (15)

Torran: this place is not now known but is listed along with Culnald in a document belonging to the present owner, so it must have lain somewhere in this area.

Rait: not known, but according to the Poores' List of 1783 it must have been in the same area as Torran, or possibly nearer to Pitcalzean.

Balintonie: another name appearing in the Poores List of 1783 under Culnald.

Ferran: also not known, but the name appears in 1868 and 1908 as the "lands of Nigg called Ferran." (3)

Tore: lying between Nigg Church and Pitcalzean, on both sides of the road. (14)

PITCALNIE ESTATE

This covered an area from Pitcalnie House to Chapelhill, so that the name occurs still in very separate areas such as Pitcalnie Holdings near the Village Hall, and Pitcalnie School near the Chapelhill Church.

- Corncairn: also spelt Corrinacarn in 1769 (8) and Cornagarn in 1829 (6), this name appears to cover a large part of the Pitcalnie Estate according to the 1783 Poores' List, including Pitcalnie, Drumdile, Culderary, Hill of Nigg and "in the strath" as well as the rather puzzling "allopicken."
- Culderarie: the upper arable land of Culnaha, below the hill, and adjoining the farm of Strath of Pitcalnie.
- Culnaha: also spelt Culnahall and Cunahall; one of the farms on the estate still known by that name.
- Culdene: the name is not known now but appears in the list of places thirled to the Mill of Morvich that indicates that it was probably in the Culnaha area.
- Wanby: near Chapelhill Church. (21)
- Drumdil: from Blackhill to Balaphuile Mill. (22)
- Chapelhill Croft: believed to be Croit Bhreunan, the "little rotten croft," which lay below the Beetle ridge which derives from Drumdil. (1)
- Drumlile Burn: runs between Pitcalnie School and the County Council houses. (14)
- Old Houses Field: between Culnaha and the hill, so called because there were ruins of old houses there this century. (23)
- Dam Field: adjacent to the mill dam in front of Culnaha House.
- Culag Field: small field south of the right of way to the Hill. There is another field of this name just opposite, on Bayfield.
- Cellar Field: a field on the old Pitcalnie farm, across the road from the present Nigg Post Office, formerly the "cellar" where alcohol was sold for consumption off the premises.
- Schoolhill: a name no longer used; the slight raise from the present Nigg Post Office to the Old Post Office House which was formerly the parish school. (6)
- The Triangle: small fields at the roadside, near the right of way to Bayfield Loch.
- Allopicken: possibly Altopiken. This unusual name with a small initial letter occurs in the Corncairn list of poor in 1783. It is thought to be a place name, but could be an adjective.
- Knockgaishkack,
Cnoc Ghaisgeach: a hillock above Strath of Pitcalnie. (14)
- Auldglenn,
Auldglennan: at foot of the hill above Culnaha. Auldglennan is also the name of the stream down the hill to the Culnaha right of way. (14)

Pitcalnie also has varied spellings – Pitcalnei, Petcawny, Pitcallene, Petcalnie, Pitcalnie, and possibly Balcalnie.

BAYFIELD ESTATE

Formerly called Meikle Kindeace or Wester Kindeace (1); Muckle Kindeace (24) or simply Kindeace.

- Hill of Bayfield: a small farm or croft lying south of the north end of Bayfield Loch; a term also used for the hill land of the estate.
- Bayfield Loch: also called Adam's Dam, Loch Adamach, Kindace's Dam. (14) and Lochnigg.
- Big Moss: area of hill ground lying inland from Cavrekich. (15)
- Cavrekich: almost certainly the same place as Caverichie, Ca'Vriekick, Cawvreckich. A small firm lying to the west of the gully from Bayfield Loch, above the Moray Firth.
- Altnadavan: also Altdavan (6); a croft on the west side of the stream from Bayfield Loch to the Moray Firth (17) but also said to apply to a croft lying to the west of the one called Hill of Bayfield. This may be the same place as Altandown.
- Allt nan Damh: the stream running from Bayfield Loch to the Moray Firth (17) although some people locally say the name applies to a stream running from the hill towards Balaphuile.
- Francis Henry's Croft: immediately south-east of Altnadavan, a green triangle showing where there was formerly cultivation.
- Altnadorrán: local information places this as the upper part of the hill south of Bayfield Loch.
- Caanrigh: the latter part of the name is pronounced "ree." The ruins of this croft are still visible east of the march with Castlecraig, above the Moray Firth.
- King's Footpath: a path running from below Caanrigh to the sea, leading by the shore to the King's Cave.
- Tom MacAndy's Caw: a path at the same spot, called after a man who lived on this part of the hill. A Tom Macandie on the hill appears in 1863. (25 and 26)
- Jumpack's Roadie: another track in this area, named after a woman called "Jumpack" because she was always jumpin about.
- Car-nya-ka, Canyon: phonetic spelling – meaning the salmon fisher's road, the same one as the King's Footpath, used by salmon fishers to get to the bothy on the shore. (15)
- Culag Field: opposite the Culag Field on Culnaha.
- Store Park: the name of the field in which the storehouse stands.
- Dam Field: between the mansion house and the steading where a large mill dam lay. (17)
- Carse of Kindeace: Carse of Bayfield, formerly Mor'oich Cinndeis, or simply, A Mhor'oich. (1) See also under Ankerville.
- Cloancreich: this is or was a channel from Tobar na Creich to the Pot. Tobar na Creich may be a well at Bayfield Storehouse. (4-M.887 and 888)
- Oxenfurd: a name occurring in a Kindeace boundary case to do with carse ground there. (4-M.888)
- Kildeathies: lands of Killdeathies, commonly called Meikle Kindeace, 1751. (4-M.917)

ANKERVILLE

Formerly called Easter Kindeace or, as late as 1852, Little Kindeace. (8) Various spellings occur – in 1573, lytill Kyndeis, in 1595 Litill Kinteis, as well as “Chindise” in 1668. (4) The name Anchorvel appears in 1725 (28) and Ankerfield in 1805 (29). Mor’oich Cinndeis or a Mhor’oich may apply to Bayfield or Ankerville land, but tie in with the following as well:-

Morvich Water: part of Ankerville in 1664. (4 – M888)

Balchraggan of Ankerville: site of the Seceders’ Church at Ankerville. (4 – 105)

Knockbreck: east of Drumdile Burn, at the foot of the hill. This name comes under the heading of Ankerville on whose hill or common land it was formerly (14), although not now

Divil’s Hapshekke: part of a tangle of water lying north of Ankerville House in 1759, now drained. (27)

CULLISSE

Gair Field: first on the left going up the drive.

Doocot: name of a field second on the left going up the drive.

Dam field: lying east of the old mill dam.

Achinoe: a field name occurring four times as Big Achinoe, Little Achinoe, Easter Achinoe and Wester Achinoe, all running from the Dam field eastwards to below Easter Rarichie.

Gall Field: lies directly below Wester Rarichie farm steading, one field down.

Colmistie: a place believed to lie in the Cullisse-Rarichie area. (4–M.992)

Badwarranach: land lying between the marches of Easter and Wester Rarichie.

West of it lay:

1. Lands called Kyle or Wood
2. Arable lands called Poulnafallen
3. Field called Creitnaguie
4. Lands called Poundreach

These names date back to 1761. (30)

Spellings of Cullisse include Cullys in 1553, Coulouss in 1578, and Cullissie in 1872. (14)

WESTER RARICHIE

This or Easter Rarichie appear as Rofekeys in 1725. (28)

Croccan Ruadh: a mound, believed to be a cairn, through which the road has been cut, east of the old smithy.

Kraken Hill,
Crachan: a rocky spur known as .665, looking towards the Moray Firth. (14)

Crachanlea: lies to the east of Crachan.

Caanrugh: OS maps give this spelling as Caanrigh but the ending of this name is pronounced “rooie”, a small farm now ruined, lying east of the stream from Bayfield Loch to the sea, overlooking the Moray Firth. Spelt Cawnrie in 1908 (3) and Cainry in 1763 (14).

Struanmore Burn: between Knockbreck and Wester Rarichie. (14)

Lower Rarichie,
Balaphuille: from Bail’ a’ phuill, pool town. (1)

EASTER RARICHIE

An old name may appear in a charter of 1587 when Alexander Ross of Balnagown gave to his son, Nicholas, property including “two Reinferquharis.”

Kenneth’s Hill,
Cnoc Coinnich: the hill to the south of the farm house, there the former upper farm house (now a shepherd’s house) stands.

Fairyhill,
Well-wood Hill,
Cnoc coille na
Tobarach: the Danish fort.

Croik-ure: a hummock west of the Danish fort, close to the march with Wester Rarichie.

Croik Ure Field: in which the foregoing lies.

Danny Gairs: lies immediately to the west of the Danish fort, at its foot.

Broomhill: the hummock between Wester Rarichie farmhouse and the Danish fort.

The Toppie: knoll closer to the front of the farm house than Broomhill.

Auld Natoubrec: south of Croik-ure and the Danish fort. (14)

Coil Coorie Field: phonetic spelling – the upper part of the two fields lying east of the farm steading.

Claireach or
Keeper’s Fields: adjacent to Fearn Aerodrome.

Elder’s Field or
Widows Park: north of the road and south of the foregoing.

Grave Field: west of the cottages at the roadside, formerly the lower farm house. (31)

Smithy Field: east of the above cottages. (31)

- Port an Righ: a small natural harbour on the shore, pronounced Porth-an-drooie.
- Allt Dearg: a burn running to the sea south of Port an Righ.
- Guillam Burn: a burn running to the sea north of Port an Righ.
- Salmon Fishers' Park: lying inland from the Guillam Burn, a reminder of the presence of a salmon fishers' bothy at Port an Righ.
- Knocknadavan: land on the Hill, referred to in 1919. (32)

Spellings of both Rarichies include "Wester and Easter Rearchars" in 1568 and Rureichie about 1893.

OLD SHANDWICK

- Blarnasby: a small moor lying on its own between Easter Rarichie and Old Shandwick, near the sea. (4-M.889)
- Auchineleiss: believed to lie to the west of Shandwick, 1612. (4-M.992)

When the common land on the Hill of Nigg was divided among the proprietors, an account of their perambulation of their bounds was written out - the Decreet of the Division of the Hill of Nigg, 1770 - describing and naming places around the Hill. Some of these have been identified from an associated plan but the location of others is still not known:- Auldnaclasbuie, Clashbuy, Caberacack, Calmeckack, Croftnaleish, Calliereekack and Croftnagaanin.

The most obvious source of information on place names comes in the invaluable "Place Names of Ross and Cromarty" by W J Watson, although it is more concerned with meanings than location; a number of the names given appear on old maps and are no longer used; but the majority listed have been supplied by local people.

There is a certain amount of confusion in the parish over place names. Pitcalnie has already been mentioned in this context; there is Nigg the parish, as well as the farm of Nigg within it; Shandwick has a namesake in the parish of Logie Easter; and there is a Red House at Ankerville as well as the old fishing village of that name near Nigg Ferry.

For many years, the people of Nigg and Cromarty have had a friendly rivalry with each other, Nigg people referring to those from Cromarty as Crownpachs and to themselves as Niggers. It was with no little surprise that incoming Americans in 1971 heard how the local folk styled themselves.

Place Names - References:-

- 1 "Place Names of Ross and Cromarty," W J Watson
- 2 Outline Plan of Cromarty Estate, 1825
- 3 Locality of Stipend
- 4 "Old Ross-shire and Scotland," W MacGill. Some, but not all, numbers are given.
- 5 Late Miss C Ross, Seaside Cottage, Nigg
- 6 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 7 "Church Life in Ross and Sutherland," Rev Colin MacNaughton
- 8 Associate Church Session Minutes
- 9 Sanitary Report 1841
- 10 "The Black Isle, A Portrait of the Past," Elizabeth Marshall
- 11 "Beyond the Highland Line," A J Thomson
- 12 New Pilot of the East Coast of Scotland, 1792, M Downie
- 13 Descriptive Atlas of the World and General Geography, c1893, W G Blackie
- 14 Plan of the Hill of Nigg as divided, 1763
- 15 Mr H Fraser, late of Lower Bayfield, Nigg
- 16 Miss H Macleod, formerly of Ivy Cottage, Nigg
- 17 "Name Book of Nigg Parish in Ross-shire," 1872, Ordnance Survey
- 18 Poll Book of the combined counties of Ross and Cromarty, 1832
- 19 Mr Alex Fraser, formerly of Honeysuckle Cottage, Nigg
- 20 Decreet of the Division of the Commony of the Hill of Nigg, 1770
- 21 Map of Ross and Cromarty with the Railways (but not showing them).
- 22 Map of "Lot No. 3, Part of Pitcalnie called Strath, part of the Estate of James Ross, Esqr."
T Henry Johnston, 1812
- 23 Late H Rutherford, Culnaha, Nigg
- 24 Valuation Book of the County of Ross, 1826
- 25 Misses Adams, Balaphuile, Nigg
- 26 Debtors' List, 1864
- 27 Plan of part of ye Lands of Ankervil and Meikle Allan, 1759
- 28 Plan of the Moray Firth, 1725-30, Joseph Avery
- 29 Travelling Map of Scotland, 1805 (Tain Museum).
- 30 Plan of the Boundaries between Cullis and Meikle Allan, 1761
- 31 Plans of the Estate of Balnagown, surveyed by G Brown, 1808
- 32 Valuation Roll

The Population

As said in the chapter on early days, there is plenty of evidence to show that there were very early settlements, even from the days of the Bronze Age, on the lower land of the parish, where so long as it was not marshy, the land could be cultivated, the sea provided a living from fishing, and transport was comparatively easy.

The cottages that still remain near Nigg Ferry are regarded even now as belonging to the villages of Balnapaling and Balnabruach and Red House, although to the modern eye they appear to run into one another. It seems that the name of Balnapaling has superseded the earlier name of Dunskaithness for the area nearest to the ferry.

According to the NSA, the people of Balnapaling and Balnabruach originally colonised the land "at the foot of the hill, immediately below Dunskaith Castle." This could mean either the upper reaches of the golf course where foundations of early communities have certainly been found; or it could mean the sea shore below the castle where bracken-burning in 1958 revealed the remains of a cottage. Either way, there was no "plausible tradition as to the time or occasion of their coming," but come they did, moving at some point to the present site of the villages.

Settlements on this area were logical. The Cromarty Firth provided a trade and transport route with good sands for beaching boats. The ferry was in operation by the 1100's and in 1179 a royal castle was built on the crag of Dunskaith. A community of fisherfolk grew up, with little plots of land to supplement their living from the sea. By 1712 there was a laird's storehouse and a changehouse or tavern was established by 1731. It was a busy place.

The village of Shandwick, at the other end of the parish, had similar advantages. There was a good sandy bay for boats to land and a community of fishermen grew up, of the same stock, according to the NSA, as those at Nigg Ferry. A castle was built there about 1460, as well as a chapel, and below them there used to be many crofts on what is now an open field. (1) As happened at Nigg Ferry, there is the impression here of people tucking in under the lee of a castle for protection. The population of Shandwick is said to have increased with an influx of Rosses from near Ardgay during the Highland Clearances; many evicted people were waiting in the seaboard villages to take ship to America when a ship called the Linnet sank off Cadboll in 1843 and completely put them off undertaking such a journey. (2) This disaster is still talked of with awe, understandable if it had such an effect.

Meanwhile Shandwick and its neighbours of Balintore and Hilton in the parish of Fearn, had access to jobs on land associated with fishing. In the earlier 1800's there was an "extensive building for packing and preparing red herrings" at Balintore, but by 1841 it was disused. About 1880 the "Big Yard" for salting herring was opened at Balintore and again a welcome source of work was available.

But fishing was a fickle occupation and ultimately declined; the causes of this are given in the appropriate chapter. The population fell and naturally enough, there was a great reduction in the number of children from the old fisher communities. There were "fully 50" at Nigg Ferry in 1877 (3) all of school age, and 42 in Shandwick in 1886 (4) whereas in 1970 these two areas had 14 school children between them. (5) Local people seem very surprised when told of the number of fisher children that there used to be in these areas of present-day depopulation, not appreciating that the fishing communities alone produced about 100 children of school age less than 100 years ago.

These villages are now the only ones surviving in the parish, but time was when there were several more. The Bishop of Ross's choice of the present-day Nigg House as the site of his summer palace brought importance, people and new ideas into this part of the parish. A considerable establishment grew up around his palace, and close by it the parish church was built, a focal point for the whole parish. From the church came the name Kirkton of Nigg for this hamlet (6), though it must be said that this sounds very odd to local ears now.

At one time there was a considerable community around what is now the present Post Office at Burnside. The original parish school was sited on a rise above, known as School Hill; the smithy was nearby at Culnaha, (now the garage of the modern house known as The Old Smithy); the original Post Office was at Culnaha Cottage, then at the Old Post Office House (also the earlier site of the school). The cellar at Burnside in earlier days, the workshop belonging to Danny Ross the Shoemaker, the Free Church and its associated Manse, all were there and give evidence of a thriving village life that must have been centred at that point.

People often wondered why, until the building of the new Nigg road, there was a signpost at Ankerville cross-roads saying, “Ankerville _ mile,” pointing down the road that led to the apparently more important Nigg Ferry. It was simply a relic of the days when there was an Ankerville village which developed around the seat of a branch of the Rosses of Invercharron and from which Lord Ankerville took his title in the later 1700’s. After the secession from the parish church in 1756, the Seceders’ meeting house was built at Ankerville and the active life of the parish centred there for many years, and it provided a site for Hugh’s Fair after this moved from Wester Rarichie.

About 1905-10, the village of Ankerville consisted of a row of cottage running down a ditch opposite Ankerville House, gable end to the road; then a row parallel with the road; then some single houses which gave way to the yard of John Mackenzie’s threshing mill business, after which there were four cottages in a row, as well as the Storehouse. While some of these cottages were occupied by farm workers, most were inhabited by what an old man then described as “old cronies, looking like witches.” (7) As people died, however, the cottages were left unoccupied, the thatched roofs fell in and this village disintegrated. Across the road at Ashcroft there lived Wee Andrew the Dwarf who wrote poetry in praise of the countryside, but like all the other cottages, his disappeared too, leaving nothing but an apple tree to mark the site.

Improved transport methods may well have helped the decline of Ankerville village. It seems likely that it once had access to the sea via The Pot when roads were bad and everyone tried to carry goods by water as far as possible, but this ceased to be an advantage as harbours and roads were built, although the very fact of being on the road, as Ankerville was, was in itself an advantage.

There were considerable farming and crofting townships around the base of the Hill of Nigg, one of them being the “town and village of Rarichies,” as it was called in 1782 (8), where Hugh’s Fair was held for many years. Others were at Torran, Culderarie, and on Culnaha where a field is still called the “Old House Field” because an older generation remember the ruins of a considerable collection of cottages. (9)

An idea of places and numbers of people appears in the poors’ list of Nigg Old Church during the famine year of 1783. The list is in geographical order from Nigg Ferry round to Shandwick and is useful in locating place names, such as Rait and Tore, which are no longer used. Bearing in mind that it only refers to those people in the direst destitution, it gives an idea of the numbers of people there might have been and their distribution:-

Dunskaitness	12
Balnabruach	3
Pitcalzean	6 - including Red House and Balnabruach (sic)
Rait	4
Tore	13 - In the Nigg/Pitcalzean area
Culnald	18 + a family
Dam	1
Corncairn	36 - This is the Pitcalnie, Culderarie area
Kindeace	7 - Bayfield
Ankerville	30 + a family
Wester Rarichie	15 + a family
Easter Rarichie	11
Shandwick	11

Such then were the villages and townships of the lower land, but lying between Nigg Ferry and Shandwick there is the Hill of Nigg. There is little to show that people in early days were living on top of the hill – there are no cairns, hut circles or enclosures, such as are to be found in a parish like Edderton, for instance. Such foundations as are to be seen on the Hill of Nigg are those of crofts and farms of more modern date.

In old charters, the Hill is referred to as the Bishop’s Forest (10) and it seems likely that primitive people were unable to tackle it with the type of implements they had available, but by the times records are available, it appears that many trees had gone. In 1593 much of the commony was established on the upper land where those with the right thereto might have pasture for their animals and fuel for their homes. (11)

Settlement on the Hill does not seem to have been in any large numbers although people still speak as if it had been. The appearance of the land, grassy slopes, ruins and so on, make it apparent that where people chose to live was confined to the more kindly slopes above Pitcalzean, Nigg, Culnaha and Shandwick, as well as around Bayfield Loch and on some south-facing slopes above the Moray Firth cliffs, at Caanrigh and Caan ruidh.

It was when tree planting began to be an attractive proposition in the 1700's that enclosures of the commonty began, with considerable loss to the crofters affected. By 1841, there were 1000 acres of fir wood on the hill and only 100 acres of undivided common, (12) and at that date, too, there were only twelve families left on the hill. These are thought to have included Forbes at Port an righ; Ross; Tom Macandy near Castlecraig; Robert Adam near Bayfield Loch; Francis Henry near the loch also; William Cumming, Castlecraig; Donald Duff; Kath McCulloch; Donald Gair and Hugh Gallie. The last of these to leave the hill was Robert Adam who moved to Balaphuile in 1898. Others such as the Cummings had moved, but moved less far, going to the top of the hill to the Whins of Nigg, the slope above Nigg Farm, where the OS map of 1872 shows a dozen or so houses at that time. As late as the 1930's, there were three occupied houses at the Whins but all that remains of them is ruins, and the almost inevitable gean tree that so often grew alongside these houses.

The exception of this is the farm of Castlecraig – its farm house and buildings are on top of the hill with its land running down to the sea, whereas other farms in the parish are based lower down with land running up the hill.

The following table gives the population at various dates; the reference for the figures given; the increase or decrease; the number of years between each date as these are not constant; and the average increase or decrease per year for each entry:-

Date	Population	Reference	+ or -	No. of Years	No. per Annum
1755	1261	10			
1794	1133	10	-128	39	-3.28
1801	1443	13	+310	7	+44.29
1811	1349	12	-94	10	-9.4
1821	1436	12	+87	10	+8.7
1831	1404	12	-32	10	-3.2
1851	1457	13	+53	20	+2.65
1861	1253	14	-204	10	-20.4
1867	1158	14	-95	6	-15.83
1901	892	13	-266	34	-7.82
1911	827	13	-65	10	-6.5
1921	867	13	+40	10	+4.0
1931	726	13	-141	10	-14.1
1939	725	13	-1	8	-0.13
1950	540	13	-185	11	-16.82
1966	451	15	-89	16	-5.55
1975	422	16	-29	9	-3.22

It is interesting to look at each of these figures in a national as well as a local context:-

1755 – population 1261: The beginning of this century saw the end of the Seven Years' Famine in 1701, a disaster which had marked effects on the character and identity of the population with many dying, the rich becoming poor and land changing occupiers. (12) In 1716, there were 1000 in the parish over the age of 8 years. (17) Enclosing of land on Nigg Hill for tree planting begun by Balnagown in the 1730's and continued thereafter. Possible settlement of McLemans at Nigg Ferry in early 17th century. (18) Encouragement of flax growing. Breakdown of the clan system after 1745.

1794 – population 1133 (-128): Enclosures for fir planting continued, union of farms beginning. Famine of 1782/3. Herring failure in this period followed by a revival by 1788. Division of the Commonty of the Hill of Nigg among the proprietors in 1770. People began emigrating to America – Naomi, Lady Pitcalnie asked in 1773 that her tenants might be given what food they needed to tide them over the year in the hope that they would give up thoughts of going to America, at least till they knew more about it.

Introduction of potatoes; some kelp being made locally. (19) George Ross of Cromarty established a hemp manufactory there to make bagging for cotton and coal in 1773, providing home work for people in other parishes, including Nigg.

The Carron Ironworks in Glasgow were established in 1760, and the cotton trade there was employing 182,000 people, but weaving was still a skilled home industry. Up to 1780, towns existed to serve the country, but thereafter the position was reversed. (22)

1801 – population 1443 (+310): Famine in 1801; introduction of large farm system was just beginning in Nigg with removal of cottars in, according to the NSA, a cruel manner, yet many crofters remained as Kirk Session records, valuation rolls etc show.

The Industrial Revolution continued, with the introduction of power looms with consequent effect on hand weavers. The population of Scotland rose from approximately 1 million to 1 ½ million between 1701-1801 of whom 31% were on the land in 1800. (22)

In spite of general rural depopulation, this large rise of 310 in 7 years, or 44 per annum, in Nigg itself may be attributed to the revival of herring fishing, vaccination being introduced and the potato becoming a staple article of diet.

1811 – population 1349 (-94): Partial crop failure in 1808. The large farm system continued in the parish which, the NSA said, resulted in many families being driven from their homes, a few strangers being brought in to replace them and poverty afflicting those turned out. The NSA said this was another of the events that changed the character of the parish.

The Highland Clearances had begun; ship building was developing and by 1806 there were eight Scottish blast furnaces, and the Industrial Revolution lured people from small unprofitable farms and holdings. (23)

1821 – population 1436 (+87): Partial crop failure in 1818. Building of Parliamentary and local roads in this period gave work and made some forms of transport easier into the parish, and out of it. It was simpler for traders to bring vans with manufactured goods into the country areas on these new roads, thus reducing the need for local craftsmen.

1831 – population 1404 (-32): Revival of the herring fishing; during this period a building for preparing and packing red herrings was established at Balintore giving work to local people; over-dependence on herring resulted.

New inventions included Patrick Bell's reaper in 1827, and later Lord Tweeddale's unsuccessful steam plough. Nationally, people continued to move into towns, and local people began to emigrate again – it was in 1831 that an unmarried woman from Ankerville obtained a certificate of character prior to going to America. (8)

1841 – No figure: Cholera outbreak of 1832. Herring failure by this date along with the closure of the red herring yard caused great destitution. (12) Although many Nigg cottars were still spinning for the Cromarty manufactory, there was destitution and ill-health among artisans generally (21) and carpenters, smiths, tailors, shoemakers and so on would have been glad to take a quarter less in wages so long as they had regular work. Clothing was bought in shops and weavers had virtually given up by this time (12) apart from carrying out private orders for coarse woollen stuffs and blankets. (21) Better transport enabled people to import what they needed.

The Highland population peaked in 1841, in spite of the Clearances, thanks to vaccination and potatoes, which saved them dying from either smallpox or starvation. (24) Between 1801-40, 350,000 Scots settled in the Clyde Valley, ie between a quarter and a fifth of the total population. (22)

1851 – population 1457 (+53): Potato famine locally in 1851. Linen trade ending. Victims of the Clearances settling in the Seaboard villages.

By the 1850's the Industrial Revolution was well underway and attracted ever more people from the land. Standards were rising and poor quality or dirty goods, such as butter, were no longer acceptable and people were better to move out. (23)

1861 – population 1253 (-204):

1867 – population 1158 (-95): According to the Free Church Session minutes in 1867, the population of the parish was steadily decreasing through emigration, the removal of cottars and the like. Unlike the earlier NSA comments on this, it appears that the removals were now voluntary. Movement began off the Hill of Nigg. Opening of the Highland Railway in 1864 put Nigg further off the main highways, while increasing mobility out of the parish.

In the 50 years from 1861 on, 735,000 people were to emigrate from Scotland out of 4_ million approximately. (22)

1901 – population 892 (-266): 1884-88 saw revival of the herring fishing with 200 men from the Seaboard villages engaged in it. Building and then closure of the herring yard at Balintore; decline in herring also affected Nigg Ferry. Agricultural Depression in 1879; only 4_% of the population was left on the land by 1901. (22) Cheap imported goods became available.

Shipping companies developed along with ship building yards and every incentive was given to people to sail to new homes. The “Ross-shire Journal” for 10th September 1886 had advertisements from the Anchor Line offering steerage passages to America at £4, with pamphlets about land, etc free on application to convenient places, including Tain; the Allan Line offering assisted passages “to all parts of Canada, Manitoba, North West Territory and British Columbia” along with reduced railway fares to Glasgow and Liverpool; and the State Line also offered sailings.

1911 – population 827 (-65)

1921 – population 867 (+40): 1914-18 War. Union of small farms, ie Loans of Rarichie. Reduction in number of crofts, ie from 30 in 1898 to 18 in 1919 on Pitcalzean Estate alone. 127,000 on the land in 1921. (22)

1931 – population 726 (-141): Decline in white fishing; movement off the Whins of Nigg. Introduction of petrol engines and a few tractors used, but mechanization still not advanced. Unusually high movement of Pitcalnie School children in mid-1920’s, with 23 leaving in 1922-3.

In the 20 years after 1911, 630,000 emigrated from Scotland, leaving only 118,000 on the land in 1929. (22)

1939 – population 725 (-1): Failure of the Moray Firth white fishing by 1935. Mechanization of farms. 104,300 on the land in 1938. (22)

1950 – population 540 (-185): 1939-45 War and standstill of farm-workers during it. Farm mechanization. Virtual end of jobs in domestic service. Work on Hydro-electricity schemes attracted many people to them, and they did not always return. Emigration to Australia. Better educational opportunities such as University grants encouraged young people to leave rural areas.

1966 – population 451 (-89): Greatly increased farm mechanization. Domestic service a thing of the past. Work at Invergordon Distillery encouraged people to leave Nigg; construction work available at the smelter followed by jobs there.

1975 – population 422 (-29): (this figure is the household population, not including ship hostels, labour camp or caravans for workers) Introduction of Highlands Fabricators. 27 people left the parish as a direct result of industrial effects.

Promotors of industry blame unemployment and depopulation on farm mechanization that seems to be the scapegoat for everything, but as these figures show, the reasons are far more complicated and varied than that and very many factors have to be taken into account.

The Population - References:-

- 1 Mr W Skinner, Shore Street, Shandwick
- 2 "A Gaelic Dialect of North East Ross-shire, The Vowel System, General Remarks," Joseph Watson
- 3 Nigg School log book
- 4 Hilton School log book
- 5 The children were 3 Tippings, 1 Paterson, 3 Barkers at Nigg Ferry;
- 6 Vasses and 1 Ross at Shandwick
- 6 "The Queen's Scotland, North East," Nigel Tranter
- 7 Late Alex Mackenzie, Lower Pitcalnie, Nigg
- 8 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 9 Late H Rutherford, Culnaha, Nigg
- 10 Statistical Account
- 11 Decreet Arbitral of 1593 (Nicholas Ross of Pitcalnie)
- 12 New Statistical Account
- 13 Rev K Macleod, Tain
- 14 Free Church Session Minutes
- 15 Ross and Cromarty Public Health Department
- 16 Local count in 1975
- 17 "Church Life in Ross and Sutherland," Rev Colin MacNaughton
- 18 Mr Alex Fraser, formerly of Honeysuckle Cottage, Nigg
- 19 Pitcalnie Estate papers
- 20 Statistical Account for the parish of Cromarty
- 21 Sanitary Report 1841
- 22 "Scotland in Modern Times, 1720-1939," Agnes Muir Mackenzie
- 23 "An Old Highland Farm," I F Grant
- 24 "Scottish Farming," J A Symon

Appendix

The decrease in parish population is shown by the decrease in certain trades and crafts:-

Approx	1794	1860	1900	1966	1975
Blacksmiths	4	3	2	-	-
Wrights	8	3	-	-	-
Millers	7	2	1	-	-
Flax dressers	1	-	-	-	-
Coopers	2	-	-	-	-
Weavers	12	-	-	-	-
Tailors	9	2	1	-	-
Shoemakers	12	5	2	-	-
Boatbuilders	?	1	1	-	-
Shops	?	6	3	2	2

(1)

Though in no way complete, the following lists are given to indicate the numbers of people in trades and occupations at various times. The names from earlier dates have been gathered largely from church records – lists of elders, discipline cases, witnesses. At a later date, the source is baptismal registers, marriage registers, valuation rolls, etc. The dates are purely those where a reference has been found.

Blacksmiths

1709	Walter Ross, Easter Rarichie (2)
1729	Hugh Ross, Cullisse (2)
1730	Hugh Munro, Kindeace (Bayfield) (2)
1769	Hugh Ross (3)
1779	Aeneas Ross, Pitcalzean (3)
1789	Andrew Ross, Rarichie (3)
1794	-
1800	Alex Ross, Blackhill (3)
1811	Alex Ross (alias Reach), Culnaha (3)
1834	John Matheson, Rarichie (2)
1843	Robert Allan, Ankerville; at Cullisse 1854, (4) Pitcalnie 1839
1851	William Mackenzie, Pitcalnie (4)
1870	Robert Allan, Ankerville, ? son of above. (4) Smithy at Ashcroft 1872
1871	James Maclennan, Rarichie, journeyman (4)
1896	-
1919	Donald Holmes, Culnaha (5 and 6)
1898	-
1908	James Munro, Rarichie (5) Still there in 1919
1922	George Mackenzie, Wester Rarichie (7)

Cartwrights

1844	Alex Gillanders, Pitcalnie (8)
1846	Alex Fraser, Pitcalnie (8)
	James Fraser, Pitcalnie (3)
	MacKelvery, Ankerville (9)
	Jo Ross, Culnaha (9)

Wrights

1729	James Ross, Pitcalnie (2)
	Hector Fraser, Pitcalzean (2)

1768	James McNoul (alias Munro), "wright in Damm" (3)
177	William Roy, Drumdile (3)
1773	James McKein (alias Gibson), "wright in Damm," also farmer (3)
1777	William McCulloch, Lones of Rarichie (3) Alex Uain, Loans of Rarichie (3)
1785	Donald Smart, Rarichie and Ankerville (3)
1810	James Ross, wright at the Red House (3)
1823	Charles Ross, "wright and house wright in the Whins of Nigg" (3)
1824	William Ross, Pitcalnie (2)
1840	Andrew Gibson, Culnaha (2)
1843	Donald Ross, Rarichie (4)
1852	Hugh Macanear, Balnabruach (2)
Pre-1864	Andrew Gibson, Culnald (2)

Carpenters

1815	James Ross, Balnabruach (3)
1819	Andrew McLeman, "an carpenter at Balnabruach" (10)
1841	Donald McAndie, Pitcalnie (10)
1846	Andrew Ross, Balnapellin (4)
c1850	Adams, carpenter, cartwright and forester on the Hill of Nigg with five apprentices (11)
1851	William McDougall, Ankerville (4)
1873	Walter Vass, (? Easter Rarichie) (4)
1874	John Ross, Culnaha (4)
1878	Alex Gillanders, Ankerville (8)
1878	John Ross, Pitcalnie (8)
1898	
1919	John Ross, Carse of Bayfield (6)
1916	Donald Ross, Brae Cottage (5)
1923	Alex Mackenzie, Blackhill, later at Ankerville

Millers

1732	Simon Fraser, "miller in Pitkulan" (2)
1732	Donald Ross, Kindeace (2)
1775-	
1793	James Ross, Culless (3)
1784	John Miller "at the Kiln of Culless" (3)
1787	John Ross, Miln of Kindeace (2) ? not the same as above, as they appear in different Session's records
1809	William Ross, miller near Culliss (3)
1858	John Macdonald, Bayfield (3) James Fraser, Nigg (3)
1864	James Adam (4)
1876	-
1880	Alex McDonald, Wester Rarichie, meal miller (7)
1895	John Munro, Bayfield (7)

Sawyers

1835	Donald Macandie (later a wood merchant) (10)
1854	Thomas Easton, Castlecraig (10)

Tailors

1729	John Graham, Wester Rarichie (2)
1730	Kenneth Mackenzie, Easter Rarichy (2)
1732	Alex Dongual, Nigg (2)
1769	Donald Rioch, Corrinacarn (3)
1769	Alex McKein "in the Hill of Nigg" (3)
1770	John Gair, Lones of Ankerville (3)
1786	William McNaier, Pitcalzean (3)
1794	Donald Rose, Rarichies (3)
1790	-
1796	Donald Rioch, Culnaha (3)
	Donald Macillip, Rarichie (2)
1838	Hugh Gallie, "on the Estate of Nigg" (2)
1844	-
1853	Hugh Ross in Easter Rarichie (3)
1854	-
1870	Neil McLeod, Ankerville (4)
1898	-
1919	David Vass, 4 New Street, Shandwick (6)

Masons

1730	David Denoon, Easter Rarichie (2)
1779	John Holm, Nigg Ferry area (3)
	Andrew McCulloch (3)
1875	Alex Fraser, Red House (4)
pre-1885	Alex Ross, Nigg (22)
1905	Thomas Mackenzie (12)

Thatcher

1898	Donald Morrison, 6 Shore Street, Shandwick (6)
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Weavers (all appear in the Associate Church Session records unless otherwise stated)

1729	John McCurchy, Culless (2)
1763	-
1788	Thomas Gair, Toran
1773	Donald McAdie, Balnabruach
1776	-
1788	James Christie, Drumdil
1778	Donald Ross, Lones of Ankerville
1782	John Vause; "above Nigg" in 1793 and "in Pitcalzian" in 1798
1786	William Ross, Lones of Ankerville, and "near Ankerville" in 1800
1788	Alex Bain, Lones of Rarichie
1789	William McWilliam, Torran; and at Lones of Rarichie in 1807
1789	-
1807	Thomas McWilliam, Lones of Rarichie
1790	Thomas Gair, Rarichie)
1793	Thomas Gair, Pitcalzean) ? same man
1799	John Mackenzie, on "the ground of Culless"
1800	-
1805	John Mackenzie, above Nigg
1800	Donald Duff, near Dunskaithness
1800	-

1824	Alex McWilliam, Cullisse
1805	-
1824	Alex McWilliam, Wester Rarichie
1815	Alex Christie, Culnaha
1815	-
1831	John Mackenzie, "at the Woodside, Wester Rarichy"
1821	Donald Gow, Easter Rarichie
1824	Donald Gair, Easter Rarichie, formerly at Drumdile
1849	-
1852	Donald Fletcher, Little Kindeace (Ankerville)

Shoemakers

1706	Wm Ross, Little Kindeace (Ankerville) (2)
1731	Robert Ross, Pitcalnie (13)
1783	Francis Henry, Balcalnie (Pitcalzean?) and "at Pitcalnie" 1795 (3)
1779	William Hossack, Rarichie area, and ? at Ankerville 1790 (3)
1779	John Greasach, Ankerville (3) "Greasach" means shoemaker, so the surname may well have been different
1780	John Vause, Drumgilly (3)
1785	Thomas Hossack, Torran; ? at Culless 1793, Ankerville 1809 (3)
1788	-
1790	David McConnachy, Lones of Ankerville (3)
1789	-
1795	Donald Ross, Culnald (3)
1789	-
1792	John McDiarmid, Rarichie (3)
1790	Donald Vause, above Nigg (3)
1791	George Ross, Pitcalnie (3)
1797	-
1810	Donald Gallie, above Nigg (3)
1800	John Taylor, above Nigg; at Pitcalzean 1809 (3)
1801	Alex Ross, Cornagarn (10)
	Simon Fraser, Pitcalzean (2)
1804	Alex Fraser (son of the above), above Nigg, and ? at Dam in 1809, (3) and ? at Rait 1810 (2)
1805	-
1813	John Mackenzie above Nigg (3)
1808	-
1812	Alex Ross above Nigg (3)
1810	Robert Mackenzie, near Culliss (10)
1810	Donald Fraser, shoemaker in Inverness, formerly of Nigg (2)
1811	John Fraser "on the ground of Pitcalzean" (3)
	Andrew Taylor, Pitcalzean (2)
1812	Robert Mackenzie, Rarichy (3)
1821	-
1828	John Duff in the Strath of Culderary (3)
1823	John Gow, Cornacairn (10)
1827	Andrew Ross, Easter Rarichy (10)
1837	John Gow Ross, Pitcalnie (10)
1845	William Ross, Bayfield (4)
1848	-
1851	John Elder, Loans of Rarichie (3), and ? at Torran 1867 (14)
1857	Thomas Rose (4)
1860	Alex Ross, Broomton (15)
1874	David Ross, Ankerville (4)

1877 Donald Ross (2)
 1878 William Ross, Bayfield (8)
 1883 -
 1898 Finlay Vass, Shoemaker, Shandwick (16)
 1888 -
 1919 Donald Ross, Bayfield (8 and 6)
 1889 Donald Ross, Blackhill (8)
 1898 Donald Macdermid, Wester Rarichy (6)
 1907 -
 1909 Donald Ross, Culnaha (5)

Carters, Carriers

1851 John McKay, Balnabruach (4)
 191- Kennedy Vass, Shandwick
 1916 Donald Ross, Brae Cottage (5)
 1928 Andrew Vass, 18 New Street, Shandwick (7)

Boat-builders

1822 Donald McLeman, Balnabruach (10)
 1827 Andrew McLeman, Balnabruach (10)
 Hugh Ross (2)
 1845 David Macleod, Balnabruach (4))
 1871 David Macleod, Balnabruach (4)) ? same man
 1891 -
 1906 Dannie Macleod, Nigg Ferry (17)

Sail-maker

1855 Andrew Macleod, Westfield (4)

Cooper

1844 Donald Henry, Cromarty Ferry (4)

Ferryman and Boatmen at Nigg Ferry

1841 Donald Henry "boatman at Cromarty Ferry in this parish" (2)
 the same man as the cooper above?
 1843 Donald Ross (4)
 1844 James McRea (4)
 1847 William Skinner (4)
 1855 -
 1860 Donald Munro (4)) No address given but believed to be from
 1856 James Noble (4)) Nigg Ferry
 1904 Andrew Ross (7)
 1906 Donald McLean (7)
 19- - George Gibson
 John Skinner
 1913-
 1916 John Watson, Cromarty (who did not live in the parish)
 1917 D McLeman (18)
 Albert Watson, Cromarty, (who did not live in the parish)

Merchants (all general merchants/grocers, unless otherwise stated)

1659	? Donald Fuller, “mer(...) lands called Cul(nald)” (19-M.887)
1767	James Vause, Drumdil (3)
1799	John Rioch, “merchant on the estate of Pitcalnie” (3)
1801	John Ross, near Culnald (10)
1826	William Ross, vintner at Pitcalnie (2)
1837	William Anderson, Torran (3)
1842	Donald Ross, vintner at Bayfield (10)
1847	George Ross, Bayfield, merchant-farmer (10)
1851	John Gair, Easter Rarichie (3))
1857	-
1863	John Gair, Ankerville (3 and 14)) ? same man
1857	-
1869	John Ross, Bayfield (3)
1860	Six shops – at Nigg Ferry, Balnabruach, Bayfield estate, Burnside, Ankerville, Easter Rarichie (9)
1867	Finlay Macleod, Red House (also given as at Westfield and Balnabruach) (7)
1888	James Gair, Ankerville (7)
1890	William Ross, Shandwick (7)
1898	John Ross, Bayfield, ? same as above (6)
1898	John Fraser, Easter Rarichie (6)
1898	John Gair, Ankerville (6)
1898	John Vass, Baker, New Street, Shandwick (6)
1898	Finlay Macleod, Croft, Westfield (6)
	Jessie Munro, Nigg Ferry (20)
1898-	
1907	Murdo Fraser, Ankerville (5)
	Aunts of George Gibson (ferryman), Nigg Ferry (21)
1900	Alex McKay, flesher, 2 New Street, Shandwick (7)
1904	-
1906	J A Ross, Merchant and spirit Merchant, Nigg (5)
1906	John Vass, flesher, New Street, Shandwick (7)
19- -	Bella Macleod, Shop House, Nigg Ferry (8)
1919	Mrs James Ross, licensed shop at Bayfield (6)
1925	James Mackay, Burnside (12)
1935	Mrs Casey, Burnside

Chapman

1787	George Rainy (2)
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Hawkers

1927	John Mcphee (former stonebreaker) (12)
1927	Thomas Macalister (12)

Innkeepers

1836	Andrew Ross, innkeeper at Cromarty Ferry (2)
1864	William Henry, Pitcalnie Inn (14)
1891	-
1906	George Ross, Nigg Ferry Inn (also called Cromarty Ferry Inn) (17)
1919	Donald Maclennan, Nigg Ferry Inn (6)

Brewers

1709 Hugh Munro (2)
 1731 Thomas Ross, Pitcalnie (13)

Hostler

1873 William Gollan Macrae, ? Easter Rarichie

Fishermen in the Nigg Ferry are

1705 James McLeman, Dunskaithness (2)
 1730 David McAlesterraig (2)
 1730 David McAlesterraig, Dunskaithness (2)
 1730 Andrew Vause, Dunskaithness (2)
 1730 Andrew McLeman and his crew "in the fisher town of Pitkulen" (2)
 1730 David McLeman in Pitcalzean (2)
 1732 William McLeman, Pitcalzean (2)
 1732 Alex McLeman, Dunskaithness (2)
 1777 David McLeman "at the Paling," ie Balnapaling (3)
 1785 Andrew McLeman "at the Paling" (3)
 1785 John McLeman "at the Paling" (3)
 1785 Donald McAlesterraig "at the Paling" (3)
 1785 Andrew McAlesterraig "at the Paling" (3)
 1786 Finlay McLeman "at the Paling" (3)
 1789 -
 1793 James Skinner "at the Paling" (3)
 1790 -
 1797 William McLeman "at the Paling" (3)
 1790 -
 1797 Finlay McLeman, "at the Paling" (3)
 1790 Andrew McLeman, Balnabruach (3)
 1792 Andrew Roy "at the Paling" (3)
 1793 Donald Skinner, formerly in Shandwick (3)
 c1800 Finlay Macleod)
 John Macleod) Estimated date from 1832 entry
 Andrew Ross) in Parish Church records
 Donald Ross)
 1802 David McLeman, Dunskaithness (10)
 1805 John McLeman "at the pailing" (10)
 1805 Andrew McLeman, "at the pailing" (10)
 1814 Hugh McLaiman, Balnabruach (10)
 1826 James Skinner, Dunskaithness (2)
 1829 Donald McLaiman "at the Pailing" (10)
 1836 Hugh Macleod, Balnabruach (2)
 1844 Andrew Macleod, Balnabruach (4)
 1844 Finlay Skinner, Balnabruach (4)
 1844 John Macleod, Balnapaling (4)
 1846 Andrew Mackenzie, Balnapellin (4)
 1858 Finlay Macleod, Balnabruach (10)
 1859 -
 1862 William Macleod (4)
 1867 Andrew Ross, Balnabruach (4)
 1868 Andrew Macleod, Balnabruach (4)
 1871 Andrew Macleod, Balnapellin (4)
 1871 William Macleod "at the Ferry of Cromarty" (4)
 1873 Donald Macleod (4)
 1885 Andrew Mackenzie, Cromarty Ferry (7)

1890	Andrew Macleod, Lower Westfield (7)
1898	Hugh Macleod, Balnabruach (7)
1898	John Skinner, Westfield (6)
1898	William Macleod, Dunskaith (6)
1898	George Mackenzie, Castlecraig (6)
1898	Andrew Mackenzie, Castlecraig (6)
1898	William Ross, Castlecraig (6)
1898	George Gibson, Castlecraig (6)
1898	Donald Munro, Castlecraig (6)
1898	Andrew Macleod, Castlecraig (6)
1912	Andrew Sutherland, Nigg Mains (12)

Fishermen in Shandwick

1708	Alex Tarrel (2)
1765	Hugh Skinner (3)
1767	Nicholas Vause (3)
1773	Andrew Skinner (3)
1774	John Vause snr (3)
1774	David Vause (3)
1776	-
1799	Donald Skinner (3)
1782	-
1796	Alex Skinner (3)
1782	Finlay Vause (3)
1785	Hugh Kay (3)
1787	-
1793	William Skinner (3)
1787	-
1797	Alex Vause (3)
1787	-
1797	John Vause jnr (3)
1789	Andrew McCurrick (? McCurrich 1797, McCurish 1794) (3)
1789	James McComan (? McComash) (3)
1793	John Vause (2)
1797	James McHomas (? McComash above) (3)
1798	Andrew Masurich (3)
1800	-
1810	Andrew McComash (3)
1802	-
1813	Alex Vass (10)
1802	-
1813	Andrew Morrison (10)
1802	James McComash (10)
1805	William McComash (10)
1807	John Skinner (10)
1807	Finla Skinner (10)
1809	Donald Skinner (10)
1809	John Skinner (10)
1809	Alex Skinner (10)
1809	-
1818	William McComash (10)
1809	-
1829	Nicholas Vass (10)
1810	-
1830	Alex Morrison alias McUrich (10)

1811 Hugh Vass (10)
 1813 Hugh Vass (2)
 1813 William McComas (2)
 1813 Alex McComas (2)
 1813 John Vass jnr 3rd (3)
 1816 Andrew Ross alias McComas (2)
 1816 John Ross (2)
 1818 David Vass (2)
 1820 Andrew Ross (2)
 1822 Donald Vass (10)
 1823 Donald Morrison (10)
 1823 -
 1826 David Vass secundo (10)
 1823 Alex McOmash (10)
 1824 Donald Morrison (2)
 1826 John McOmash (3)
 1828 Hugh Skinner (3)
 1829 James Morrison (2)
 1829 -
 1836 Andrew Vass (10)
 1830 James McOmash (3)
 1830 John Vass quarto (3)
 1832 Andrew Ross (2)
 1834 William McOmash (3)
 1835 Andrew McOmash (3)
 1838 Alex McOmash (3)
 1838 Finlay Vass (3)
 1840 Alex Skinner (3)
 1841 -
 1866 Nicholas Vass (3)
 1842 John Vass (2)
 1849 D Skinner (2)
 1849 Alex D Skinner (2)
 1850 Andrew Morrison (3)
 1850 -
 1861 William Morrison (3)
 1851 Donald Ross or McComash (3)
 1851 Alex Vass (3)
 1851 John Skinner (3)
 1851 James McOmash (3)
 1852 Alex Vass jnr (3)
 1852 John Vass jnr (3)
 1852 William Skinner (3)
 1852 David Skinner (3)
 1855 -
 1865 John Vass (3)
 1858 Thomas Vass (3)
 1859 Hugh Vass (3)
 1859 -
 1863 Andrew McComash (3)
 1859 -
 1865 Donald Morrison (3)
 1860 George Johnston (7)
 1860 Andrew Vass (3)
 1860 Alex Morrison (3)
 1861 Kenneth Vass (3)

NB In all these names but particularly those from now on, there are repeated names but these are different people as is shown by their different wives in the original references.

1863	Andrew McOmash (3)
1865	Andrew Ross (3)
1867	Hugh Vass (7)
1867	Andrew Vass (7)
1867	Andrew Ross (7)
1867	-
1869	Andrew Ross (7)
1867	-
1869	John Vass (7)
1868	William Morrison (7)
1868	Donald Morrison (7)
1868	Kenneth Vass (7)
1869	Hugh Vass (7)
1869	Andrew Vass (7)
1869	Andrew Vass (7)
1869	Donald Morrison (7)
1870	Andrew Vass (7)
1872	William Ross (7)
1872	Andrew Morrison (7)
1873	Andrew Vass (7)
1874	John Morrison (7)
1874	John Vass (7)
1874	John Vass (7)
1874	John Vass (7)
1875	William Skinner (7)
1876	Finlay Skinner (7)
1876	William Morrison (7)
1876	Andrew Ross (7)
1878	Thomas Vass (7)
1879	Andrew Ross (7)
1879	Andrew Ross (7)
1880	Andrew Vass (7)
1880	William Skinner (7)
1882	Andrew Vass (7)
1882	David Vass (7)
1883	Finlay Vass (7)
1885	John Morrison (7)
1886	David Vass (7)
1886	James Ross (7)
1886	John Wilson (7)
1887	Finlay Skinner (7)
1887	Nicholas Vass (7)
1887	David Vass (7)
1890	Andrew Vass (7)
1890	Nicholas Vass (7)
1890	Donald Ross (7)
1891	Alex Morrison (7)
1891	David Vass (7)
1892	James Morrison (7)
1893	Alex Vass (7)
1896	Alex Morrison (7)
1896	William Skinner (7)
1898	William Ross (6)
1898	Andrew Vass (6)
1898	Andrew Skinner (6)
1898	John Ross (6)

1898	Andrew Ross (6)		
1898	Andrew Ross (6)		
1898	John Morrison (6)		
1898	William Morrison (6)		
1898	Hugh Vass (6)		
1898	Andrew Ross (6)		
1898	Chapman Smith (6)		
1899	Alex Ross (7)		
1899	James Ross (7)		
1899	Alex Morrison (7)		
1900	Donald Morrison (7)		
1900	Donald Morrison (7)		
1902	James Ross (7)		
1902	William Vass (7)		
1904	Nicholas Vass (7)		
1907	David Morrison (7)		
1908	Alex Vass (7)		
1908	John Vass (7)		
1908	Hugh Ross (7)		
1911	Donald Morrison (7)		
1912	Donald Morrison (7)		
1912	Hugh Ross (7)		
1912	John Vass (7)		
1913	Andrew Ross (7)		
1913	Donald Ross (7)		
1913	Kenneth Ross (7)		
1914	Alex Vass (7)		
1915	John Vass (7)		
1919	Nicholas Vass, William Ross, Andrew Vass, David Vass, Chapman Smith, John Vass, Donald Ross, John Skinner, John Vass, William Vass, Andrew Ross, Hugh Ross, Alex Vass, Alex Morrison, Andrew Ross and Andrew Ross.)))))	several of these have been mentioned already

The following lists have been built up from the sources already given and, although very inadequate, they are given to show the activities, population and viability of different parts of the parish.

HILL OF NIGG, including Annat and Rhidorach (now parts of Castlecraig), the upper land of all the modern farms, and the Whins of Nigg.

Farmers

Those in the Annat included:-

1706	David Ross or Rose
1730	Donald Grasich, John Munro, Alex McKeeman
1782	Reference to "a servant in Annat"

Rhidorach

1730	John Munro (possibly as at Annat)
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Hill of Nigg

1838	Hugh Munro
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1849 Reference to a labourer there
 1863 Thomas Macandie

Hill of Bayfield

1841 Francis Henry (1)
 1864 Robert Adam (also carpenter etc)

Altdavan

1833 John Henry

Caanrigh

1834 John Stewart

Hill of Easter Rarichie

1760 William Gallie (died that year)

Port an Righ

1841 Forbes (1)

Shoemakers (Hill of Nigg continued)

1790 Donald Vause, above Nigg
 1797 Donald Gallie, above Nigg
 1800 John Taylor, above Nigg
 1804 Alex Fraser, above Nigg
 1805 John Mackenzie, above Nigg
 1808 Alex Ross, above Nigg

Wright

1823 Charles Ross, The Whins

Tailor

1769 Alex Mckein "in the Hill"

Weavers

1782 John Vause, above Nigg
 1800 John Mackenzie, above Nigg

Other names occurring include – Thomas McWilliam, above Nigg, 1765; John Macleod, Alex Munro, John McLeaman at the Whins of Nigg, 1835; William Cumming, Donald Duff, Kath McCulloch, Donald Gair, Hugh Gallie on the hill, 1841; Mrs Macleod, Annie Henry, 1881; Jasper Graham, Hill of Nigg, and Widow Ross, Hill of Culnaha, 1882; Nancy Ross, above Nigg, 1890; Maggie and Grace Ross, The Whins, 1895.

NIGG FERRY AREA, including Dunskaithness, Nigg Ferry, Balnapaling, Balnabruach and Red House, an area that had 195 people in 1867. (8) Fishermen have already been listed separately.

Wrights

1810 James Wright, Red House
 1852 Hugh Macanear, Balnabruach

Weavers

1773 Donald McAdie, Balnabruach
 1800 Donald Duff, Dunskaithness

Sail-maker

1885 Andrew Macleod, Westfield

Cooper

1844 Donald Henry, Cromarty Ferry

Road Contractor

1840 William Ross, Red House

Quarrier

1864 Alex Fraser, Red House

Inn-keepers

1836 Andrew Ross, Ferry Inn
 1891 -
 1906 George Ross, Ferry Inn
 1919 Donald MacLennan, Ferry Inn

Carpenters

1815 James Ross, Balnabruach
 1819 Andrew McLeman
 1846 Andrew Ross, Balnapellin

Boat-builders

1822 Donald McLeman, Balnabruach
 1827 Andrew McLeman, Balnabruach
 1845 David Macleod, Balnabruach
 1891 Dannie Macleod, Nigg Ferry

Carter (Nigg Ferry Area continued)

1851 John Mackay, Balnabruach

Masons

1779 John Holm, Ferry area
 1875 Alex Fraser, Red House
 1905 Thomas Mackenzie, ? Ferry

Shops

1860 one shop existed
 1867 Finlay Macleod, Red House
 Jessie Munro, Nigg Ferry
 Aunts of George Gibson, Ferry
 19- - Bella Macleod, Shop House

ESTATE OF PITCALZEAN, excluding Balnabruach, etc, where there were 70 people in 1867.

Millers

1732 Simon Fraser

Smith

1779 Aeneas Ross

Weavers

1793 Thomas Gair (ex Rarichie)
 1798 John Vause (ex above Nigg)

Carter

1916 Donald Ross, Brae Cottage

Shoemakers

Pre-
 1804 Simon Fraser
 1811 John Fraser
 1826 Andrew Taylor

Tailor

1786 William McNaier

Wright

- Hector Fraser

ESTATE OF NIGG, which with Culnald and the Manse had 85 people in 1867. (includes Tore, Dam and Rait)

Tailors

1732 Alex Dongual
 1838 Hugh Gallie

Shoemaker

1809 Alex Fraser, Dam

Wrights

1768 John McNoul, Dam
 1773 John Mckein, Dam

Millers

- James Fraser

Mason

Pre-1885 Alex Ross, Nigg

Culnald

Shoemaker

1789 -
1795 Donald Ross

Merchants

1659? Donald Fuller
1801 John Ross

Wright

Pre-1864 Andrew Gibson

ESTATE OF PITCALNIE, including Pitcalnie, Culnaha, Culderary, Drumdile, Cornagarn, Blackhill, that had 109 people in 1867.

Wrights, etc

1729 James Ross, Pitcalnie
177- William Roy, Drumdile
1824 William Ross, Pitcalnie
1828 William Fraser, Pitcalnie
1840 Andrew Gibson, Culnaha
1841 Donald Macandie, Pitcalnie
1844 Alex Gillanders, Pitcalnie
1846 Alex Fraser, Pitcalnie
James Fraser, Pitcalnie
1874 John Ross, Culnaha
1878 John Ross, Pitcalnie
Jo Ross, Culnaha

Smiths

1794 Alex Ross, Blackhill
1811 Alex Ross, Culnaha
1839 Robert Allan, Pitcalnie
1851 Wm Mackenzie, Pitcalnie
1898 Donald Holmes, Culnaha

Merchants

1767 James Vause, Drumdile
1799 John Rioch, Pitcalnie
1826 William Ross, vintner, Pitcalnie
1850 John Ross, Pitcalnie

Inn-keeper

1864 William Henry, Pitcalnie Inn

Gardener

1816 Hugh Gair, Culderary

Weavers

1776 James Christie, Drumdile
 1815 Alex Christie, Culnaha
 1824 Donald Gair, Drumdile (later at Rarichie)

Shoemakers (Estate of Pitcalnie continued)

1731 Robert Ross, Pitcalnie
 1780 John Vause, Drumgilly
 1783 Francis Henry, Balcalnzie (?)
 1791 George Ross, Pitcalnzie
 1801 Alex Ross, Cornagarn
 1821 John Duff, Culderary
 1823 John Gow, Cornocairn
 1837 John Gow Ross, Pitcalnie
 1899 Donald Ross, Blackhill
 1906 Donald Ross, Culnaha

Tailors

1790 Donald Rioch, Corrinacairn
 1790 Donald Rioch, Culnaha

ESTATE OF BAYFIELD (Kindeace), excluding the hill ground but including the Carse of Bayfield. In 1867, there were 88 people on Bayfield including the hill.

Smith

1730 Hugh Munro

Shoemakers

1845 William Ross
 1878 William Ross
 1919 Donald Ross

Carpenter

1919 John Ross, Carse of Bayfield

Millers

1732 Donald Ross
 1787 John Ross
 1858 John Macdonald (died 1887)
 1895 John Munro

Shops

1842	Donald Ross, vintner at Bayfield
1847	George Ross, merchant-farmer, Bayfield
1857	John Ross, Bayfield
1860	Shops at Burnside and Bayfield Estate
1898	John Ross, Bayfield
1904	J A Ross, Spirit Merchant
1919	Mrs James Ross, licensed shop
1925	James Mackay
1935	Mrs Casey

ANKERVILLE (Little Kindeace), including Lones of Ankerville; there were 78 people here in 1867.

Shoemakers

1706	William Ross, Ankerville
1779	John Graasach, Ankerville
1788	David McConnachy, Lones of Ankerville
1790	William Hossack?, Ankerville (formerly at Rarichie)
1874	David Ross, Ankerville

Weavers

1778	David Ross, Lones of Ankerville
1786	William Ross, Lones of Ankerville
1849	Donald Fletcher, Ankerville

Smiths

1843	Robert Allan, Ankerville
1870	Robert Allan, ? son, Ankerville

Wrights

1785	Donald Smart, Ankerville (also Rarichie)
-	MacKelvery
1851	William McDougall, Ankerville
1878	Alex Gillanders, Ankerville

Tailors

1770	John Gair, Lones of Ankerville
1854	Neil Macleod, Lones of Ankerville

Mill Yard Owner

1898	James Allan, Ashcroft John Mackenzie
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CULLISSE, there were 92 people here and on Shandwick Hill in 1867.

Weavers

1729	John McCurchy
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1799 John McKenzie
1824 Alex McWilliam

Millers

1775 James Ross
1784 John Miller

Smiths

1729 Hugh Ross
1854 Robert Allan (formerly at Ankerville)

Shoemaker

1810 Robert Mackenzie, near Cullisse

WESTER RARICHIE, including Balaphuile where there was a meal mill and the millers given here are thought to have worked there rather than at Wester Rarichie itself.

Weavers

1790 Thomas Gair
1824 Alex McWilliam
1831 John Mackenzie

Smiths

1789 Andrew Ross
1834 John Matheson
1871 James MacIennan, journeyman
1898 James Munro
1922 George Mackenzie

Wrights

1843 Donald Ross

Tailors

1729 John Graham
1794 Donald Ross
Donald Macillip

Millers, ? at Balaphuile

1809 William Ross
1876 Alex Macdonald

Shoemakers

1779 William Hossack
1789 John McDiarmid
1812 Robert Mackenzie
1898 Donald Macdermid

EASTER RARICHIE, where there were 66 people in 1867

Smith

1709 Walter Ross

Tailors

1732 Kenneth Mackenzie
1844 Hugh Ross

Shoemaker

1827 Alex Ross

Carpenter

1873 Walter Vass

Mason

1730 David Denoon

Weavers

1821 Donald Gow
1824 Donald Gair (formerly at Drumdile)

Shops

1851 John Gair
1860 One shop here
1898 John Fraser

LOANS OF RARICHIE AND BROOMTON, where there were 62 people in 1867; including Torran.

Wrights

1777 William McCulloch, Lones of Rarichie
 Alex Uain, Lones of Rarichie

Weavers

1763 Thomas Gair, Torran
1788 Alex Bain, Lones of Rarichie
1789 Thomas MacWilliam, Torran and Lones of Rarichie
1789 William MacWilliam, Torran

Shoemakers

1785 Thomas Hossack, Torran
1860 Alex Ross, Broomton
1867 John Elder, Torran (? ex Rarichie)

Shop

1736 William Anderson, Torran

SHANDWICK VILLAGE, where there were 177 people in 1867. The fishermen have already been listed.

Tailor

1898 David Vass

Shoemaker

1883 Finlay Vass

Thatcher

1898 Donald Morrison

Shops

1890 William Ross, merchant

1898 John Vass, baker

1900 Alex Mackay, flesher

1906 John Vass, flesher

Carters

191- Kennedy Vass

1928 Andrew Vass

Appendix – References

- 1 “The Parish of Nigg,” Nigg WRI
- 2 Nigg Old Church Session Minutes
- 3 Associate Church Session Minutes
- 4 Free Church (Nigg) Register of Baptisms
- 5 Ledgers of Milton Hall, Kildary
- 6 Valuation Rolls
- 7 Baptismal Register of the U P Congregation
- 8 Free Church Session Minutes
- 9 Rev K Macleod, Tain
- 10 Associate Church Register of Births and Baptisms
- 11 The man referred to was the grandfather of the Misses Adams, Balaphuile
- 12 Baptismal Register of Nigg from 1901
- 13 Pitcalnie Estate Baron Court Book
- 14 Debtors’ List 1864
- 15 Associate Church Register of Marriages
- 16 Minute Book of the Managers of the U P Church
- 17 Ledger of the Ferry Inn, Nigg
- 18 Ross-shire Journal
- 19 “Old Ross-shire and Scotland,” W MacGill. Numbers are given.
- 20 Said by Miss M Mackenzie, formerly of the Bungalow, to have been there in her father’s day
- 21 Remembered by Miss M Mackenzie, formerly of the Bungalow
- 22 Gravestone in Nigg Old Churchyard
- 23 Statistical Account
- 24 New Statistical Account
- 25 Nautical Almanac, 1898
- 26 Mr H Fraser, late of Lower Bayfield, Nigg
- 27 Late Miss C Ross, Seaside Cottage, Nigg
- 28 Mr Leslie Gilsland

NB Certain of these numbers refer to the Special Appendix