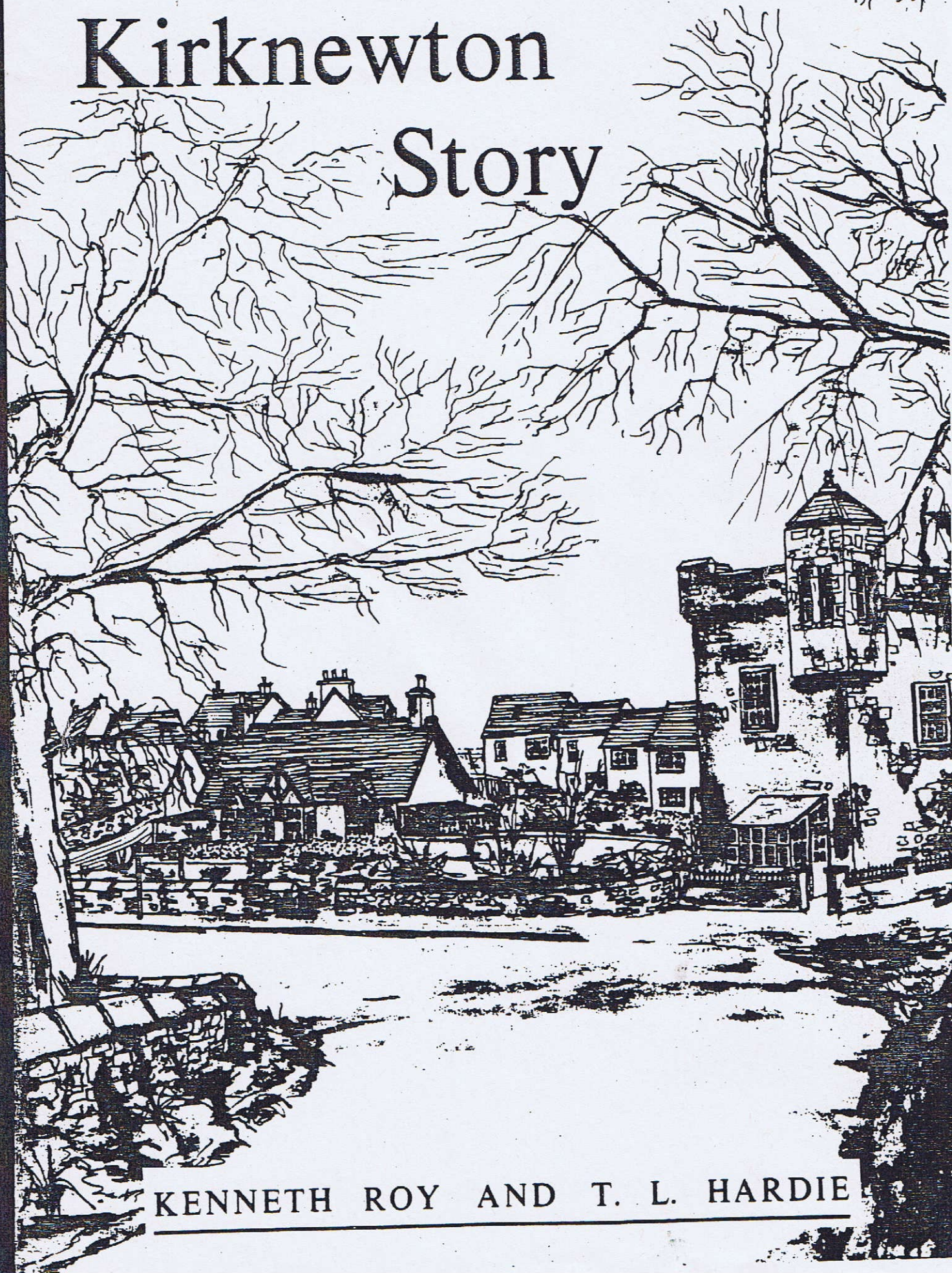


The Kirknewton Story



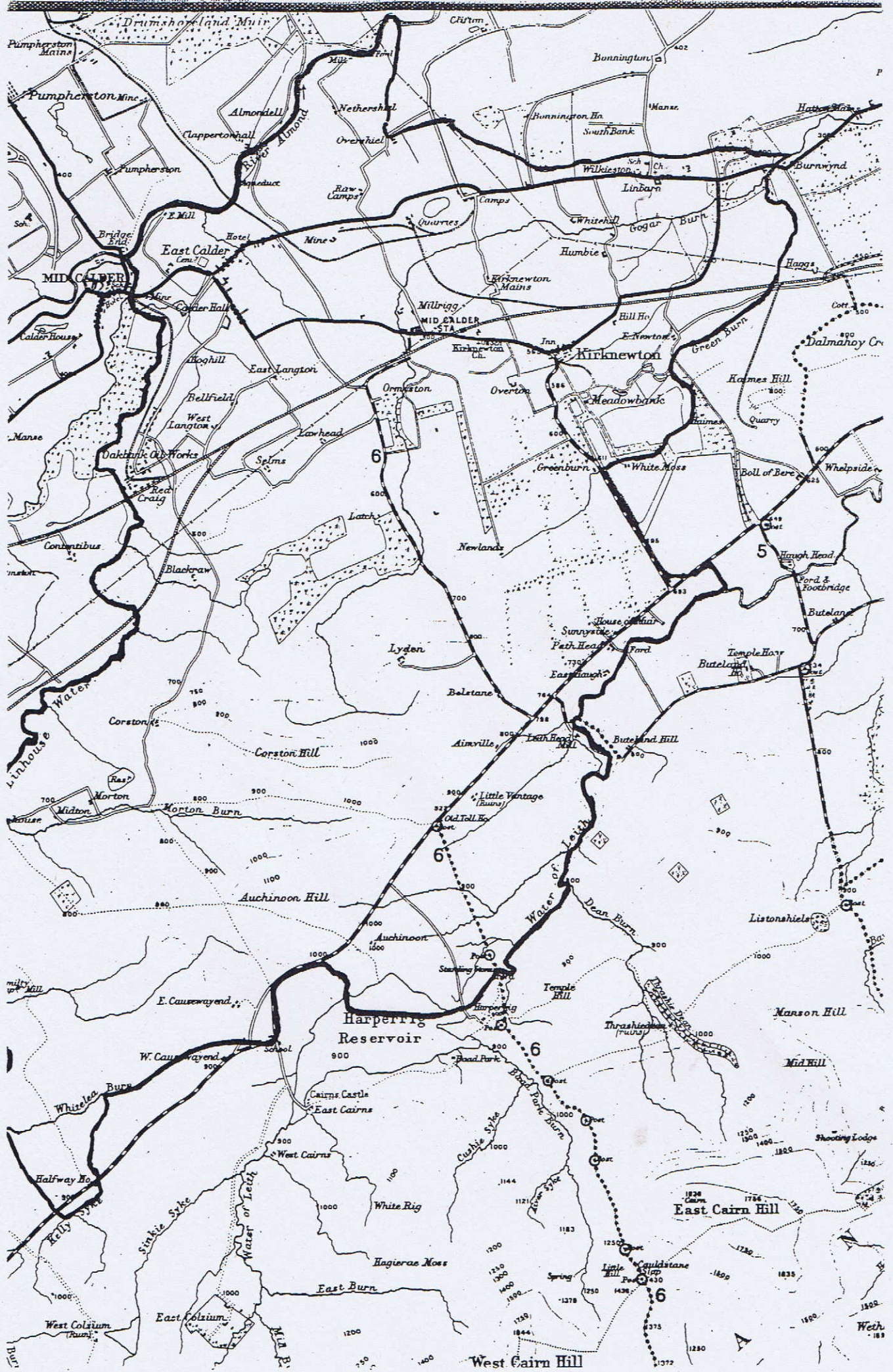
KENNETH ROY AND T. L. HARDIE

*This is an account of the life
and times, character and traditions,
of a Scottish rural parish through
the ages. It is the result of
several years of research into
the origins and development of
the village and parish of
Kirknewton, situated at the foot
of the Pentland Hills in
Midlothian.*

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A Kirknewton village scene by
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KENNETH ROY AND T. L. HARDIE

The
Kirknewton
Story

We have to thank the following for their help and guidance in the preparation of this book:—

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The Kirknewton Story is dedicated to the folk of Kirknewton past and present whose lives and struggles, joys and pleasures, have provided the material for their book. We offer our particular thanks to all those who have served on the committees of the many organisations which have played their part in the community life of Kirknewton over the years. Their names may not be recorded in the manuscript or indeed in any records which now exist, but their endeavours are none the less appreciated.

PREFACE

SOME two years ago, a group of villagers came together to compile a history of the local community. With the presentation in Kirknewton Church of a dramatised chronicle of some of the notable incidents and characters in the village's past, the project's first phase was completed. It, and the accompanying exhibition in the church hall devoted to photographs and other documents relating to old Kirknewton, evoked such an enthusiastic response that we were encouraged to embark on the next stage, a more considered and detailed history. For this, we have relied heavily on three statistical accounts of the parish (1793, 1845 and 1951), the minutes-books of local organisations, records of the kirk session and the recollections of older inhabitants. The result, which we now publish, is intended to stimulate the interest of present-day villagers in their eventful heritage. Hopefully, it may also serve as a tribute to the chairman of our organising committee, George Mulholland, J.P., who died on 7 April, 1974, before the work had been finished.

One final point which may avoid misunderstanding: although the parish of Kirknewton also includes the village of East Calder and the hamlet of Wilkieston, this volume — for reasons of space — is primarily concerned with Kirknewton itself. We have, however, devoted a chapter to Oakbank, because of its intimate association with Kirknewton.

Kenneth Roy and T. L. Hardie

June, 1974.

1. Look to the Pentlands

THE origin of the name Kirknewton is the subject of several theories. In his statistical account of the parish, James Turnbull suggests that its first spelling was Neutun, the prefix being added to distinguish it from a place of the same name in another part of the Lothians. Another possibility is that it derives from the 13th-century Vicar of the neighbouring Calder Cleir (East Calder), Count John de Lantoun, whose surname is said to mean "Kirktown." However, the most widely accepted explanation is that the village owes its name to the establishment of a settlement near the old church.

The church in question was founded in the middle of the 13th-century and, like its contemporary in Calder Cleir, dedicated to Saint Cuthbert. Officially designated as a "chapel of ease," it measured only thirty-six feet in length, eight and a half feet in height; its walls were three feet thick. Nothing remains of the tiny kirk except a wall which forms part of the enclosed tomb of the Maconochies of Meadowbank, in what is now the village burial ground. A memorial to Captain James Johnstone of Hillhouse, who died in 1782, is built into one side of the masonry and the tomb of the Cullens of Ormiston occupies the site of the choir (chancel).

For five hundred years, until the union of the two kirks in 1750, East Calder and Kirknewton enjoyed the status of separate parishes. The combined parish is bounded on the north by the River Almond, on the south by Harper-rig reservoir and the Water of Leith. Its highest point is Corston Hill, near Little Vantage on the stretch of the Lanark road known as the Lang Whang. The village of Kirknewton lies at a lower elevation, about 560 feet above sea level, and lower still is the area of the parish crossed by the road to Glasgow.

Geologically, the district is full of interest. Alexander Lockhart Simpson, in his statistical account of 1845, pointed out that there were specimens of nearly all the rocks to be found in the country, including extensive fields of lime, whin and sandstone and shale. On the north side of the parish, he reported, there were beds of coarse gravel and deep deposits of pure sand. To the south, the subsoil was yellow clay. At Ormiston and on the north side of Auchinoon Hill, there were coal seams, but neither justified commercial exploitation.

Several of the local resources did provide the basis for industry. A lime-work was established near East Calder, supplying the demands

of a wide area; there was a tile and brick-work on the land of Hare of Calderhall; and shale formed the raw material of Scotland's first oil boom.

Another natural advantage is a plentiful supply of excellent water. There were grain mills on both the River Almond and the Water of Leith.

Kirknewton parish is situated at the foot of the Pentland Hills, which were inhabited for many centuries B.C. by the Celtic-speaking race known as the Picts. Indeed, Pentland may have been an early form of the word Pict. The tribesmen had a firm hold on the area, building their camps and cairns on the top of bare hills, where they found pasture for their animals and land that could be worked for patches of crops. One of the most important of these camps was on Kaimes Hill, which was extensively excavated before the prehistorical traces were obliterated by quarrying. When the Romans conquered the area, it seems they asserted their military authority by setting up a camp on Kaimes and doubtless the observation post there served as a defence against the local warriors. The Romans were active in other parts of the area; Causewayend is believed to mark the end of a paved way built by them.

Of the Picts, little is known. Janet R. Glover, in "The Story of Scotland," describes them as "the most elusive of peoples" and Robert Louis Stevenson called the Pentlands "the howes of the silent, vanished races." One interesting speculation concerns the name of a well-known local farm-steading, which according to Will Grant in "The Call of the Pentlands" derives from the time of the Druids, the priests and learned men of Celtic Britain. The Druids accompanied themselves in their poems and songs with the harp; thus, Harper-rig. It would be naive to attach much credence to such an attractive legend.

The neighbourhood has many more recent associations. Much of it was once the barony of Calder Comitatus (Midcalder), a Royal hunting chase gifted by the Kings to the old line of the Earls of Fife. From them, it passed to the Douglass family, then to the Templars, and eventually to the Knights of St. John, who founded their main settlement in Scotland at Torphichen in 1124. The robed figures of the Knights must have been familiar in the district for many years prior to the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation had an immediate effect on local life. In the hall of Calder House, a few miles away, John Knox administered one of the first Protestant communions in the reformed manner: an event which drew many people from the surrounding area. The village's first Protestant minister — certainly the first recorded — was James Hamilton, who served here from 1573 to 1612. But by 1627, the parochial establishment seems to have been sadly dilapidated. His

Majesty's Commissioners for Plantation of Kirks, reporting in April of that year, commented of Kirknewton: "The kirk is ruinous, the roof already decayit."

The state of the church may have been a symptom of the disorderly condition of the parish generally. In 1600, for example, a band of "disobedient and unanswerable thevis," Scotts, Armstrongs and Elliots among them, had "slain and dismembered divers of His Majesty's good subjects" while stealing fourscore oxen and several horses from the land of Harper-rig. Not for nothing did the Cauldstaneslap, the hollow between the East and West Cairn Hills, become known as the "thieves' road."

The Cauldstaneslap was one of Scotland's droving routes. In many parts of the Highlands, beasts were bred for the markets of the south, gathered into enormous herds and driven by various roads to cattle trysts at Crieff and Falkirk. Some of the cattle sold there returned to the Highlands, but most continued on their journey south, chiefly by way of Linlithgow, Ecclesmachan, Uphall, Midcalder and then through the parish of Kirknewton over the Cauldstaneslap and onward to their destinations.

It was a remarkable scene, as hundreds of cattle, footsore and bleeding from their journey, were driven by hardy men of the north, shouting and cursing in the Gaelic tongue. The Gray family, formerly of Harper-rig, have described how as recently as the end of the 19th-century, the cattle crossed the Water of Leith, east of what is now Harper-rig reservoir, and continued up the slope towards the pass. The entire slope was covered with the mass of cattle resting for the night, the drovers lying with their animals while the owners slept in the relative luxury of the farm house.

The drover's life was wild and hazardous. As he returned from market with a pocket-book full of bank notes, he risked assault and robbery, and there were many encounters in the Cauldstaneslap in which blood was spilled and cattle or money stolen by raiders.

Even the existence of a strong castle failed to deter the cattle thieves. Named after the Cairns family who were lairds there as early as the 12th-century, the castle dated back to the 15th-century, when Sir George Crichton, High Admiral of Scotland, acquired the land and appointed himself warden of the passage between the hills. Evidently, he afforded the drovers very limited protection against the freebooters.

In 1872, a house was built adjoining the castle by W. H. Hamilton, a solicitor. Of the castle itself, only the ruins remain.

The Pentland Hills are celebrated for their association with the Covenanting struggles. Those who resisted the Church's moves to episcopacy in the second half of the 17th-century hid in the hills and held meetings there. In June, 1684, it is recorded, 300 men and

women assembled at "Caldstaine-slope or some other place thereabout."

Nowadays, the Cauldstaneslap forms part of the right-of-way from Kirknewton to the village of Carlops at the other side of the Pentlands. It is a walk of some ten miles. Happily, a plan to run a highway between the hills came to nothing, and the Cauldstaneslap remains "a province of nature sacred as yet from steam and even from wheels," as John Geddie wrote in "The Water of Leith" (1896).

In "The Call of the Pentlands," Will Grant gives a vivid description of the somewhat bracing pleasures of this part of the country:

"It was a grey, frosty morning in mid-winter when we made our way to the Old Lanark road by Belstane Farm from Midcalder Station. Hoar-frost lay upon the sides of the winding road and under hawthorn hedges green leaves lay in abundance. At the old Toll House of the Lang Whang we joined the right-of-way over the Cauldstaneslap. The path runs by the side of a dry-stane dyke to the Water of Leith, which we cross by stepping stones; then the friendly path leaves us and we begin the approach to the hills over the heathery moorland. It is biting cold in the Cauldstaneslap today."

Equally evocative is John Geddie's recollection of the Lang Whang at its most desolate:

"If the time be winter and there has been a fall of snow, you may find, although the day be well advanced, that no dint of wheels, no footprint, has yet sullied the white hap of this half-deserted high road. After leaving Currie and Balerno Brigs behind on its westward way, it gets nothing to feed it except a few inconsiderable crossroads and cart tracks to hill farms."

It would, however, be wrong to imagine this as the quiet road under the hills, for it has a history rich in incident. Legend tells, for example, of Captain Will Baillie, an 18th-century gypsy-robber, who rode in scarlet, a sword by his side, a pack of greyhounds following him.

By the beginning of the 19th-century, the days of the stage coach were at their peak. Three coaches a week started from the Grassmarket and Princes Street for Lanark by the Lang Whang. The first change of horses took place at Tarbrax, 24 miles from the capital, but there were frequent halts to pick up and put down passengers. Among the local wayside rests were House on the Muir, Little Vantage and Half Way House. At these taverns, there would be a respite for refreshments and a brisk exchange of news, before the journey resumed. Doubtless, the guard of the coach would have his blunderbus at hand, in case of attack by Captain Will or his gypsy friends.

Long before the days of the stage coaches, indeed as far back as the Covenanters, the inn of Boll O' Bere just outside the parish was the setting for Penny Weddings, which were arranged for the farm servants by the gentry of the district. According to custom, each guest brought a penny for the bridal couple and, in this way, a well-liked servant was provided with the means to furnish his house.

Such a dwelling would, however, be of spare and humble means, compared with the mansion-houses of the area, of which Hatton was one of the most impressive. J. R. Findlay wrote:

"It (Hatton) is a striking example, substantially intact and perhaps unique in its form and scale, of the Scoto-French mansion or chateau of the 17th-century, superinduced on a much more ancient tower. It descended from the old family of the Lauders of the Bass to the Maitlands of Lauderdale who held, also, large estates on the Water of Leith — among them, Auchinoon, Ravelrig and East Hailes. Charles, Lord Hatton, the brother and successor of the Duke of Lauderdale, and his grandson, the fifth Earl, who had sat as a judge with the title of Lord Ravelrig, were its later builders. It was the scene of splendid hospitalities, which came to an end when the eighth Earl, "Citizen Maitland," sold the estates at the end of the 18th-century, as tradition asserts in a fit of pique and rage after having lost heavily in a night of play with the Prince of Wales. Hatton has its ghost; but it will be haunted more persistently by the memory of Bothwell waiting here for Mary Stuart's message from Linlithgow, and of Francis Jeffrey writing his essays in the 'little gilded closet' of the old house."

Much later in its history, Hatton was the home of the Whitelaw family, one of whose members, Willie, became a prominent Conservative politician.

Another notable mansion was the 13th-century Lantoun (later, Langton) House, about a mile from Midcalder Station. Originally the residence of Count John de Lantoun, it went through a long succession of owners before the Earl of Morton purchased the estate in 1734. A century later, much of the house was demolished, apparently because the stones were needed for ploughmen's cottages and for increasing the outhouse accommodation. It is now in ruins.

Some illustration of the change in the ownership and character of the parish's principal estates can be found by studying the following list of the chief landowners in the middle of the 19th-century:— Earl of Morton; Earl of Buchan; Col. Stuart Hare (Calderhall); Archibald Wilkie (Ormiston Hill); A. Davidson (Hatton); Alex. Maconochie (Meadowbank); Alex. Croil (Linburn); Heirs of Major Davidson (Causewayend); William Swanston (Little Vantage); Humphrey Graham (Stewart Hill); James Gillespie (Burnhouse);

George Glendinning (Milrig); and Alex. Johnstone (Hillhouse).

Of these, Hatton was destroyed by fire in the 1950s; Milrig broken up into smallholdings; Calderhall converted into a hotel and subsequently demolished; the land of Stewart Hill became part of the RAF (later US forces) base; and the only estates still in the possession of former owners are those of Morton and Meadowbank. Part of Linburn underwent an imaginative change of use when a training centre was built there for the men blinded in two World Wars. It is close to the hamlet of Wilkieston, so named after Captain Wilkie of Ormiston.

2. The unco guid

THE Presbyterians fought for many years, in some cases sacrificed their lives, to establish their form of church government in Scotland. In 1690, they succeeded finally in doing so. But the length and bitterness of the struggles had left their mark, for the ministers and elders ruled over communities with a rod of iron, never hesitating to assert the kirk's powers of moral censure.

The kirk session of the 18th-century played the role of dedicated guardian of public decency. Sinners were brought before it, tried and often harshly sentenced. Those with hitherto unblemished records escaped with a private rebuke, but serious or habitual offenders were compelled to sit upon the penitent's stool on a Sunday morning and confess their misdemeanour. In Kirknewton, as in most other parishes, such acts of public humiliation were common.

Fortunately, the proceedings of the Kirknewton session were faithfully chronicled and the records, dating back 300 years, have been preserved for posterity in the Scottish Records Office in Edinburgh, where they can be readily consulted. In these yellowing tomes, the misdeeds and frailties of the local inhabitants are monotonously logged. Much of the writing is barely legible, but the affairs of 1703-4 are boldly and clearly penned, and as an indication of how the session went about its business, we can do no better than to quote, with the minimum of editing, the following extracts from some of the minutes of that period:

5 May, 1703: Session met after prayer; all present. Walter Nisbet was rebuked for not appearing at the last diet. The session further were informed that he was drunk on the 22nd or 23rd day of April. He denied his drunkenness any of these times. The persons following were given up as witnesses: George Bishop, servant to James Libberton; James Smith, servant to James Libberton; James Black, servant to James Morton; also John Cochran, session clerk.

The same day: Margaret Clark acknowledged her sin of bringing in water on the Lord's Day. The session, considering she was privately rebuked formerly for the same sin, order her to be publicly rebuked upon Sabbath next.

9 May (Sunday morning service): Collection, 16s. 10d. Margaret Clark was publicly rebuked for the sin of Sabbath breaking.

30 May (Sunday morning service): Collection, 14s. 2d.

The same day: Session met; finding Walter Nisbet's drunkenness

three times clearly proven and in respect that he was privately rebuked for his drunkenness before and hath not amended, order him now to be publicly rebuked on Sabbath next.

The same day: Patrick Gibson and Andrew Morton appointed to visit the upper end of the parish to see who bide from the Church.

13 June: No sermon, the minister being at Ratho.

20 June: Walter Nisbet publicly rebuked for his drunkenness.

29 June: Session met after prayer. Those appointed to visit the upper end of the parish reported that they found several needlessly at home who yet usually attend the ordinances. The minister said he would rebuke these persons when next he visited that part of the parish. George Anderson and John Aikman appointed to visit the *under* end of the parish.

14 July: Session met after prayer. The minister said he had rebuked those persons in the upper end of the parish who were absent from the kirk.

29 October: Session met after prayer. Margaret Stewart, being cited, did appear. Margaret Rule, being solemnly sworn, declareth she heard Margaret Stewart call Alexander Waddell filthy dog and that she said it twice. Margaret Stewart, being again called, was exhorted to repentance for her sin, which she confessed. The session ordained her to appear publicly next Lord's Day to declare her grief for the same.

31 December: Session met after prayer. Humphrey Montgomery appeared, acknowledged his being guilty of uncleanness to Janet Gilmour. Being questioned whether he was married to Janet Gilmour, answered he was. Being asked by whom, answered by David Murray, an Episcopalian. Being questioned if he has any proof of her former husband's death, answered he had none as yet. The session, considering the weightiness and difficulty of this business, cite him to appear before them on Wednesday next.

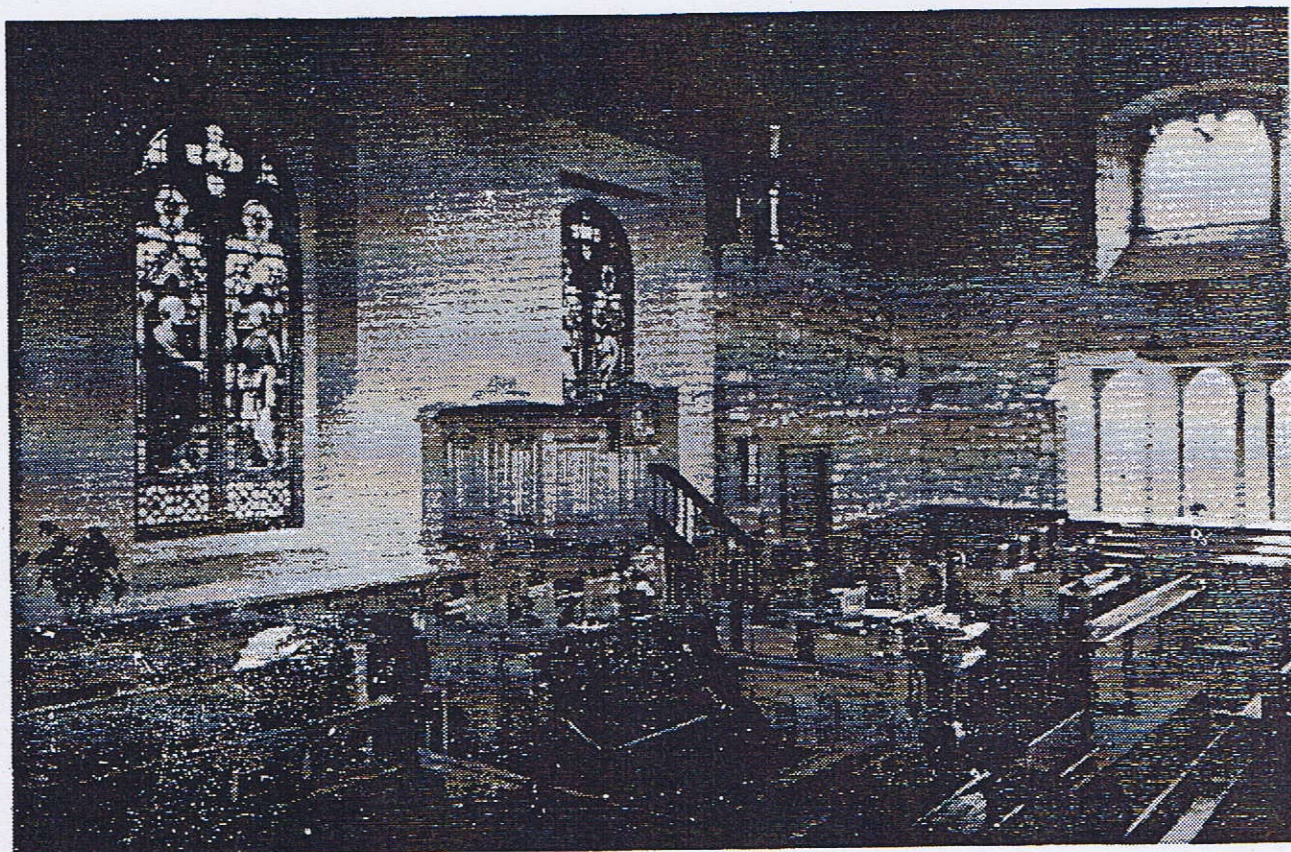
14 January, 1704: Session met after prayer; all present. John Boyd, officer to the session, and his wife, Marion Aikman, having on the Sabbath, 3rd January, after sermon, travelled to Liberton parish to friends, the session laid it before them. The session, considering this is the first fault to their knowledge, gave them a rebuke.

So John Boyd and Marion Aikman were admonished in the comparative privacy of the session meeting. But many others were not so lightly dealt with: Walter Nisbet, drunk; Margaret Clark, who took in water on the Lord's Day; Margaret Stewart, who called Alexander Waddell a filthy dog; Humphrey Montgomery and Janet Gilmour, guilty of uncleanness in living together; all those who "bide needlessly from kirk." The roll-call of wrongdoing for 1703-4 was fairly typical of the offences with which the session dealt year after year.



▲ The graveyard today—with the remains of the old kirk. Left: tomb of Dr. Cullen. Right: the former burial ground of the Maconochies. In the background is Smiddy Brae.

Interior of the present Kirknewton Church.





▲ *Kirknewton (formerly Meadowbank) House before demolition of the East Wing.*

A typical agricultural scene Overton Farm.



There were times, however, when the minister and elders were not inspecting others, but others inspecting them. On Wednesday, 27 May, 1713, the Presbytery of Edinburgh, led by the Moderator, John Guthrie, came to Kirknewton to undertake the periodic parish visitation, an occasion for a detailed interrogation of the kirk session. The minister, John Thorburn, preached before the Presbytery and congregation on his text, Romans Chapter VI: "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

After divine worship, which in those days lasted for several hours, the interviews began. With his session and congregation absent, Thorburn was closely questioned about the elders. The following record of the proceedings is taken from the session minutes.

Do you have a session? — The session consists of James Maconochie of Meadowbank, John Gray, William Anderson, John Bunkle, Archibald Napier, John Anderson and James Cunningham. They officiate both as elders and deacons and have particular bounds assigned them for their more particular inspection.

Be the members of session grave, pious and exemplary in their lives and conversation? — I know nothing to the contrary and do hope they are so.

Do the members of session worship God in their families? — I hope they do. They are frequently exhorted to.

Be they careful in their attendance on God's ordinances and diets of session? — Yes.

Be they diligent and impartial in the exercise of their offices? — Yes.

Do they visit families and exhort them to duty in so far as is incumbent upon them? — I hope they are not negligent in that matter.

How do the people profit by the ministry? Do they attend upon Gospel ordinances and are they obedient to the Church's discipline? — They do attend the dispensation of Gospel ordinances and submit to discipline and I hope they are getting good thereby.

At this point, the minister was requested to leave and the elders were called, "all except James Cunningham, whose excuse was made." First, they were asked if, to the best of their knowledge, the minister preached doctrine agreeable to the Holy Scriptures and Confession of Faith. They answered that he did. Then:

Does he keep much at home in the attendance of the work of the ministry or does he occupy himself in unnecessary diversions therefrom? — We have no complaint of him in this matter.

Does he lecture and preach in the forenoon and afternoon of the Lord's Day, both summer and winter? — Yes, except for some time

in the winter, when the day is short.

Does he read a large portion of scripture every Lord's Day and expound the same? — Yes.

Does he have week-day sermons? — Frequently, except in seed time and harvest.

Does he administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at least once in the year? — He has several times celebrated that Holy Ordinance but does it not every year.

Does he visit the sick and pray over them? — Yes.

Does he keep sessional meetings frequently and is he impartial in the exercise of discipline against offenders? — Yes.

Does he keep family worship and is he grave, pious and exemplary in his life and conversation, and is he one who rules well over his own house? — We know nothing to the contrary.

Having completed its questioning of the session, the Presbytery recalled the minister and the interrogation resumed:

How often do you keep session? — Ordinarily, once in every 14 days.

Do you have a parish bailie prosecuting the laws against immorality? — None at present.

Are there any papists in the parish? — There are no papists at present.

Are there any in the parish who dissent from the meetings of public worship? — None.

Do you have a poor's box in the parish? — Yes.

Two members of the Presbytery, Thomas Paterson and Neil McVicar, then reported that they had inspected the Kirknewton session book. Their conclusion was that "the session observe the Act of the General Assembly against blottings-out in the book and be careful the same be more accurately written and not so curtly."

Having considered the answers, the Presbytery recommended that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper should be administered in the parish at least once a year; the session should be provided with a bible and Confession of Faith and printed Acts of the General Assembly; and efforts should be made to find a magistrate to prosecute the laws against immorality.

Despite the Presbytery's apparent unease about some aspects of the ministry, John Thorburn remained pastor to the Kirknewton flock until 1744, when he was succeeded by Alexander Bryce. It was during Bryce's ministry that Kirknewton united with East Calder and in 1750, when the enlarged parish came into being, the present Kirknewton Church was built to serve the two villages.

Union between the two kirks had been contemplated as early as 1627, when as a document of the Maitland Club reported: "Thair has bene, thir dyveris yeiris bygane, purpose of uniteing Calder Cleir and

Kirknewton, and that most commodiouslie." When union was eventually accomplished, Kirknewton's 333 souls joined East Calder's 620 to form a stronger parish. But also, it seems, a deeply dissatisfied one.

Unrest within the Church of Scotland, especially about the power of patronage held by the landowners, led to the establishment of various breakaway sects, including the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers. Each set up a meeting-house in the parish in the second half of the 18th-century and between them, attracted, it is believed, nearly a third of the adult population.

That the dissension was a significant one, and worrying for the Church, is reflected in the comments of William Cameron, parish minister, in his statistical account of 1793:

"These establishments must be a heavy burden upon poor people, but they are productive of worse consequences, in directly counteracting the design of Christianity, which is to make men live together as brethern and in supporting superstition and fanaticism which are mistaken by many for religion, and maintained with a violence and flaming zeal proportioned to the ignorance of their deluded votaries."

The strength of the sects was symptomatic of a wider reaction against the kirk and its friends, the landed proprietors, with whom it had close institutional ties. In 1792, there were civil disturbances in the Lothians, and it is reported that the "respectable inhabitants" of Kirknewton met and resolved to declare that the working-class reformers were "infidel and senseless." Cameron swiftly lent his weight to the denunciation:

"We are desired by God to obey civil government. But is this the prevailing disposition of these times? Is there not a most boundless and unexampled lust of slander and defamation of dignities gone abroad over the land? Is there any man exalted to public honour and office who does not immediately become the butt of general abuse? If any man has signalised himself by his merit, do we not see in his inferiors, whom he has left behind, an envious disposition to traduce his character, to blast his praise, to dwell upon and exaggerate his faults, and as they cannot reach his eminence, they endeavour to pull him down to their own level? Of all others, this seems to be the most prominent fault of the present age, namely an unbounded licentiousness and a contempt of public order and subordination of all laws, both divine and human. In some we perceive a daring spirit of irreligion and infidelity, an avowed disregard of all religious institutions and establishments, while a vague principle of honour is substituted for the fear of God. We see even the lowest and most ignorant of the people leaving their necessary

duties and employments for the purpose of reforming Government, debating and deciding on the most abstruse points of politics and religion in the most dogmatical manner, and thus kindling in their minds a spirit of discontent, distrust and sedition against the national establishments of both church and state. Those sceptical and infidel opinions, those licentious and democratical principles, which have been gradually gaining ground in this country for many years past, are now insensibly pouring back their concocted poison into the very vitals of public liberty, and threatening its dissolution. Such are the prominent and portentous evils of these times, which must give serious alarm to every sincere friend of religion, country and good government. Instead of clamouring incessantly for political reform, it would become us much better to endeavour reforming the great corruption of our manners and morals."

Just as the clamour for political reform persisted, so there were renewed demands for change and greater democracy within the national church. A group at East Calder seceded and opened a separate place of worship in 1776. Later, this became the United Presbyterian Church and, later still, the United Free.

Throughout decades of bitter division, the Parish Church at Kirknewton does not seem to have been materially affected. Believing the existing building to be "mean, shabby and incommodious," the kirk session in 1871 found remarkably little difficulty in raising the large sum of £1,825 to carry out an extension which Alexander Lockhart Simpson, late parish minister, had clearly considered necessary long before this:

"The fabric is plain and substantial, and sufficiently fitted to answer the practical purpose of its erection, while it is certainly to be regretted that the structure had not been planned with a little more regard for the very conspicuous situation in which it stands, and the importance of the Parish Church as a feature in the landscape."

The church itself was greatly enhanced in appearance over the years. Two stained-glass windows dedicated to Henry Wallis Smith, minister from 1862 to 1885, gave fresh dignity to the interior, and the removal of the gallery created a more spacious atmosphere without destroying the intimacy which is one of the kirk's most attractive qualities.

In 1929, the United Free kirk at East Calder became part of the Church of Scotland and so the two villages again went their separate ways. But only briefly. The charges were re-united in 1943 and have remained together ever since.

3. Earning and learning

FOR centuries, agriculture provided practically the only means of livelihood in the parish. The methods employed were primitive and the people had poor returns for their arduous hours of labour.

Yet Kirknewton was no less backward than many other rural communities and in some respects slightly ahead of the times. Many Scottish farmers were still using the old-fashioned Scotch plough in the 1790's, when the lighter, more efficient plough invented by a Berwickshire farmer, Small, had been generally adopted in this area. There was a remarkable improvement: the old implement required four horses to pull it, the new one only two. Previously, great quantities of land had been ploughed with pitiful results; with the gradual refinement of techniques, however, local ploughmen took an increasing pride in their work and instituted an annual match which has survived to the present day.

In other ways, progress had been even more retarded. Until the middle of the 18th-century, the medieval 'run rig' system of farming continued to be practised. By this method, each farm was let among a number of tenants who cultivated alternate ridges and divided the produce, sharing the good soil and the bad. The farmed area can be visualised as a vast, open expanse, unfenced and with few trees; there was no drainage or ditch-digging; during the winter, cattle and sheep fed on such grass as could be found between the cultivated ridges. Among the tenants there was constant quarrelling.

It is likely that several local place names derived from the 'run rig,' such as Staney Rig (because of the stony nature of the ridge in this area) and Mil(e)rig (because of the length of the ridges cultivated there).

For the tenant farmers, and their labourers, living conditions were miserable. Their cattle were kept in the same house, a hovel of stone and turf, crudely protected against wind and rain. The people slept on beds of straw on an earth floor. At their meals, they ate together out of one dish, their food consisting of a monotonous diet of porridge and pease-brose. Their clothing was of the coarsest wool; shoes were worn only in times of severe frost.

This was the lot of the peasant farmer not only in Kirknewton but throughout Scotland until at least the closing years of the 18th-century. But then, according to the local minister, there was a distinct change in social habits. In his statistical account of 1793,

William Cameron wrote:

"About fifty years ago, it was usual for the most substantial farmers to appear at church and market in home-spun cloth and plaiden hose. Now their menial servants and cottagers are equipped in English broad-cloth, silk and satin. This turn for finery is a great loss to them, as they live up to their wages, notwithstanding their being so high. Thus they enter into a married state, with their whole substance upon their back, especially women; and when sickness, or any misfortune, prevents their daily labour they immediately sink into the depths of poverty."

Cameron's version must, however, be viewed in its proper perspective. No doubt the minister could live fairly comfortably on his stipend of £48 a year: but what of the labourers of the field, earning from 1s. to 1s. 2d. a day in summer, 10d. a day in winter? Or the women who carried dung in creels on their backs for a derisory 6d. a day? Sixpence bought half-a-pound of butter, but little else.

If a minority did choose to starve rather than forgo their wardrobe of silk and satin, their prodigality could be readily forgiven, such was the unrelieved drudgery of the peasant's existence. In most respects, standards had hardly altered in half a century. The tenant farmer's house now consisted of a two-room "But and ben," the servants living in a kitchen of rough walls, barely equipped with a few benches, boxbeds and, perhaps, a large table. The farmer's private apartment, though scarcely designed for gracious living, was usually a little more tolerable.

Cameron reported that in the summer the farm workers were able to live comfortably on what seems, even by the standards of those days, a pittance. In the winter, however, there was less opportunity for employment, and often the women could find no work but spinning and earned only 3d. or 4d. a day. The more privileged of the lower classes enjoyed a greater degree of security and a marginally higher income. Man-servants were paid from £6 to £10 a year, with a pair of shoes and a cart of coal in the half-year; if the servant lived in his own house, he was given 6½ bolls of meal and an allowance of 6d. a week "kitchen money" for the butter, milk and beer which he would have received free as a boarder in his master's household. The wages of a maid-servant were £3 a year. Masons and bricklayers earned from 1s. 8d. to 2s. a day, slaters 2s. 6d., tailors 8d. with victuals.

The paucity of these wages did not prevent some of the workers falling into what the minister regarded as licentious and dissolute ways. Of particular concern was "the almost universal use of tea and spirits of an inferior quality" which in his view greatly hurt the

health and morals of the lower people. To distract attention from such intoxicating tastes, and overcome the indolence which he saw around him (especially among women and old people), Cameron firmly believed that manufacturing industry must be attracted to the village.

The manufacturers never came, but the industry of coal-mining almost did. In 1793, Cameron welcomed the recent formation of an association of country gentlemen "to explore the ground in this and some neighbouring parishes, in search of coal." The search concentrated for a while on the land of Leith-Head, but was eventually abandoned.

Down on the farm, there had been a revolutionary change in attitudes and techniques. In the latter half of the 17th-century, the Scottish Parliament had passed various acts for the proper division of land, but in Kirknewton as in most other areas, the old system of "run rig" persisted, especially on poorer ground. Eventually, however, inclosing became fashionable among the main landowners of the district, who let their farms on this basis. Cameron noted:

"The appearance of the ground, particularly towards the south side of the parish, which was formerly bare and barren, is now greatly altered both in soil and climate, by means of the improvements. The best and most extensive improver in this respect here is Mr. Maconochie of Meadowbank, who has greatly beautified the more unfertile parts of his estate with complete inclosures for pasture and with belts of plantation, variegated with every kind of wood suited to the soil."

At one time, the people had sown nothing but poor, grey Scots oats, for the land would bear nothing more profitable. Now, with sensible cultivation, crops such as potatoes, turnips and cabbage were being raised for the first time, although some of the tenants were mistrustful of the new ideas and preferred what Cameron called "their old, absurd and unskilful practices." Among the local lairds who most encouraged a policy of diversification was the Earl of Morton.

There was a pressing economic reason for the tenants to husband their resources more sensibly. The rent of land had increased from 10s. an acre in 1773 to between 20s. and 40s. in 1793, meaning that greater productivity and variety had become necessary for survival. Wheat was introduced to the moors, where it had never been seen before; and a great deal of milk, butter, cheese, eggs, poultry and veal was daily exported and sold in the Edinburgh market.

Understandably, the changes were unpopular with the people. With every step forward, fewer workers were needed. The result was a steady depopulation of the area; the number of people, excluding those six years of age and under, resident in the parish fell from

1,157 in 1755 to 942 in 1786 to 812 in 1792. Cameron gave as the reasons the near attraction of Edinburgh, the monopoly of farms, the use of the two-horse plough (requiring only half the number of labourers) and the laying of more and more grass for hay.

Some detailed information is available about the census taken in 1792. Females (417) outnumbered males (395), but animals outnumbered both: 261 horses, 533 black cattle and 1,563 sheep. Among the humans, there were 67 single male servants, 42 single female servants, 50 farmers, four house carpenters, four tailors, four smiths, four masons and two divinity students. Between the two villages, there were 175 inhabited houses, giving an average per house of between four and five people, excluding infants.

In a sharply class-divided society, the heritors wielded enormous power. While they lived well in country mansions, the majority suffered fevers and rheumatism, which Cameron saw as "the diseases occasioned by the poorer people in their cold, damp houses." Infection spread rapidly because friends, "from mistaken notions of sympathy and charity," insisted on visiting the bedrooms of the sick.

Despite the prevalence of such distempers, longevity was common. Cameron refers to one native of the parish who had followed his usual occupation in the fields and retained full possession of his mental faculties, until a few days before his death at the mighty age of 106. For the poorest of the poor, however, life could be nasty and brief. Although malnutrition was widely in evidence, in varying degrees, only twelve people were regularly in receipt of parish charity, which ranged from 2s. to 4s. a month and was intended, as Cameron emphasised, "only as a help to those who cannot entirely support themselves." These meagre rations were subsidised by the weekly collections at the kirk.

The kirk was also responsible for the upkeep of the village school and the appointment of the master. It was the fervent wish of John Knox and his reforming followers to establish a school in every Scottish parish, but long after Knox's death, a substantial number had made no provision for education. Kirknewton's school came into being earlier than most, but by 1627, according to a report of that year, it was "lykelie to dissolve the next terme for want of maintenance." The next record is for 1649, when William Wallace was appointed school-master at an annual salary of 40 merks, about £2 sterling. In addition, he carried out the duties of session clerk, for which he enjoyed several useful perquisites; for proclamation of parties to be married, he received the equivalent of 5p., for proclamation of parties to be buried, slightly more.

The parents paid for their children's education. As the Editor of the Statistical Account of Scotland, Sir John Sinclair, wrote:

"The people at large were led to look on education as worthy of a price, and that price, to the extent of their ability, was actually paid by them; and thus learning came to be so prized that its cost was estimated among the regular expenses of a family."

In 1845, the charges for Kirknewton school were: English reading and grammar, 2s. 6d. per session; writing with the above, 3s.; arithmetic with the above, 4s.; French, taught singly, 7s.; Latin, 7s.; French and Latin, 8s.; mathematics, singly, 5s; mathematics with any other branch, 2s. 6d., in addition to the fees of that branch. The children were taught in what is now Kirknewton Church Hall; where the school was situated before the 19th-century is not known.

In his statistical account of the parish published in 1845, Alexander Lockhart Simpson reported that the number of scholars attending was more than 100, double the roll of 1793. Simpson wrote:

"The instruction afforded includes the higher as well as the more ordinary branches, and is conducted according to the most improved system, and in the most efficient manner The provision made for the education of poor children is very satisfactory. The kirk session is authorised to recommend such as they believe to be proper objects; and for these the teacher receives, and the heritors pay, half-fees."

Besides this and a similar school at East Calder, there were schools in the two villages "for the instruction of females in the branches peculiar to their sex." Simpson believed, however, that educational facilities were still not sufficient; in the extreme south-west of the parish, the distance from any of the existing establishments was fully four miles, and for this reason a school in the neighbourhood of Causewayend could be expected to attract between 25 and 30 scholars. Such a school was eventually established.

Likewise, a small school operated at Sunnyside for some years, and pupils from the remote hill farm of Liston-shiels attended there. One former pupil has recalled the story of how, as she set out for school in the morning, she was given a hot, hard-boiled egg, which was passed from hand to hand during the walk, providing warmth during the journey and a meal later in the day.

The village schoolmaster of the late 18th-century was under-privileged financially. His salary of £12 a year, exclusive of £2 for carrying out the work of session clerk, was only a quarter of that of the minister's and not significantly more than the amount paid to a servant. By 1845, his status had improved, but to what extent is not specified in the statistical account of that year.

Other salaries are given: £5 to £7 annually for the unmarried farm servant, with bed and board; £15 for the married farm servant,

with a house and a small garden, 6½ bolls of meal and an allowance of potatoes and coal; 9s. to 10s. weekly for labourers. The minister's stipend had increased from £48 in 1793 to £102 with allowances.

In 1845, there was an important change in the administration of the parish. A meeting took place in Kirknewton manse, attended by some of the principal landowners of the district, namely: The Earl of Morton; Alexander Maconochie (Meadowbank); Archibald Wilkie (Ormiston Hill); Alexander Johnstone (Hillhouse); and Alexander Croil (Linburn); They, with other members of the kirk session, were obliged by Parliament to establish a Parochial Board for the dispensation of poor relief. Thus, the kirk's ages-old responsibility for this matter was ended, and the heritors were compelled, by statute, to contribute to the welfare of the needy.

Simpson has much to say on the subject of the poor. That year, the number on the permanent poor roll, including children of widows, was 51; the average number receiving occasional relief was 15. A common allowance to paupers on the permanent roll was 5s. or 6s. a month, in some cases rising to 10s. or more. Simpson wrote:

"It cannot be said that there is very much remaining of the old Scotch indisposition to seek parochial relief, nor much evidence afforded in this way that it is considered as degrading. Honourable exceptions do, however, occasionally occur. In the support of the poor, all classes are creditably alive to the duties of private charity, and by none are they felt in a better spirit, or discharged with greater kindness, than by neighbours themselves in the humbler walks of life, and often but a little way removed from the condition of those with whom they are ready to share their own scanty supplies."

Supporting the statutory provisions, there were four friendly societies. Two gave help to members laid off work by sickness or accident, the others — known as "dead societies" — provided, by a sort of mutual insurance, the means of meeting funeral expenses. Beyond this, the sum usually allowed a grant to the family or relations of the dead.

The population of the village by 1845 had declined to about 200; East Calder had 370 inhabitants; Wilkieston, 77.

Agriculture had made considerable strides, even if living conditions reflected the progress only marginally. Simpson reported that two-thirds of the lands were being tilled, the rest in permanent pasture. There were between 500 and 600 acres under wood. Farming was conducted "according to the most approved principles," and although there was no standard system of cropping, the pattern generally followed was: first year, oats from lea; second, potatoes or turnips; third, barley or wheat; and fourth, hay or pasture. Peas and beans were grown less commonly than before.

Other changes began to make their impact on the local scene. With the coming of the railway and the steamship, and the introduction of toll charges, the days of droving declined and that part of the drove road between the Lang Whang and the Cauldstaneslap, once alive with the sound of cattle, was gradually left to the stillness of memory.

In 1847, the railway boom hit Kirknewton itself, with the building of the line from Edinburgh to Glasgow, via Midcalder Station. The influx of railway workers into the area caused acute overcrowding, but this was of little significance compared with the challenge of accommodating hundreds of shale workers and their families some years afterwards.

The approach of asiatic cholera in 1848 resulted in careful precautionary measures. A special meeting was called in the village; the streets were thoroughly cleaned and emergency medical supplies prepared; iron bed-steads were to be borrowed from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. In the event, the parish seems to have escaped the worst of the outbreak.

In the minister's opinion, Kirknewton of the mid 18th-century was entitled to be described as "an informed, intelligent and well-disposed community": a remarkable transformation from the ignorant and dissipated peasantry depicted by the Reverend Cameron only 50 years previously. Or could it be that his successor in the pulpit was merely a less vigilant watchdog of public morality?

Apart from the local hostelries, of which there were seven (including inns at Burnwynd and Little Vantage), the most thriving centres of community life were the smiddies. At the Burnwynd smiddy, for example, hammers were clattered on anvils for much of the 18th and 19th centuries; here, all the news and tittle-tattle of the countryside were exchanged.

There is a fascinating tale associated with the smiddy here. In his book, "The Call of the Pentlands," Will Grant refers to the ballad of "Robin Tamson's Smiddy," by Alexander Rodger of East Calder. Robin rarely had an idle moment, as farmers brought their horses to be shod and ploughmen their implements of husbandry to be repaired. Occasionally, though, there was room for a romantic interlude. The song tells the story of the young ploughman who is sent by his mother to have the mare shod and makes love to the smith's daughter. When the smith finds them together, the ploughman remarks: "Gude man, I've ta'en your bairn — ye can tak ma mither!"

It is an amusing song and Will Grant is right to find it an honoured place in his racy history of the Pentland country. In one important respect, however, he has got it wrong. For the place which inspired Rodger's song, the smiddy which he visited as a boy, was almost certainly not the smiddy at Ninemileburn, as Grant claims,

but the local one at Burnwynd.

Rodger, it may be remarked in passing, was one of several local poets who chronicled the incidents and characters of the district over the years. Among the others were James Ovens of Oakbank and Alexander Campbell (1870–1941), who lived in East Calder and was employed at the Pumpherston Oil Works for 45 years. Campbell's poems included "The Kirknewton Play" and "Kirknewton Kirk."

The disappearance of the smiddies robbed the village of much of its colour, but this was merely one of the many signs of a fast-changing rural scene. At one time, Kirknewton had a number of weavers, and the hemp-yard well, situated by the burn-side to the south of the village, was the place where not only the weavers, but the whole village, obtained their water. It, too, vanished long ago.

Naturally, the children of former generations lived closer to the soil than their counterparts of today. They could hardly have avoided doing so, for the horses and carts trundling through the village streets on their way to the fields or the Edinburgh market were a familiar sight. The youngsters went regularly to the local farms to help with the chores and watched the labourers plough, sow, harrow, roll, reap, stook, stack and thresh – to name a few of the numerous operations involved in cultivating the land. Then there were the threshing mills, the first of which in these parts was installed by Mr. Waugh at Easter Newton Farm in 1790, not long after their introduction in Scotland. Another source of interest was the water-mill at Leith-Head, where the corn was ground for all the farmers of the district.

Nowadays, mechanisation has increased the efficiency of the farms, but to the point where few manual workers are needed. Indeed, agriculture plays a much less significant part in the economy of the area, although much of the landscape is still dominated by it.

4. Men of renown

KIRKNEWTON has been the home of several distinguished men from the worlds of the law, medicine and the church. Pride of place among them must be reserved for the Maconochie family, descended from the Campbells of Inverawe, who were driven from their lands in Argyll during the Covenanting troubles. In 1689, they obtained compensation for the loss of their estate and with this money bought from Lord Balmerino the property of Kirknewton in the Muir. There they built a house and from the formation of the land named it Meadowbank.

The first member of the family to achieve public distinction was Allan Maconochie (1748–1816), who was appointed a Professor of Public Law soon after his 30th birthday and at the early age of 48 became a Judge in the Court of Session, taking the title of Lord Meadowbank. He married Elizabeth Welwood and they had two children.

As proprietor of one of the district's principal estates, Maconochie appears to have adopted a fairly enlightened attitude, planting trees on the more unfertile parts of the land and encouraging a positive policy of agriculture among his tenants; it was said that of all the local landowners, he was "the best and most extensive improver." It was, however, as a member of the Scotch Bar that he earned a wider reputation for good works. After his death, the following tribute was paid to him in the House of Lords by Lord Brougham:

"He was one of the very best of lawyers, one of the most acute of men, a man of philosophical mind, a man of great reach of thought, of large general capacity, of great experience, and without exception, the most diligent and attentive Judge I ever remember in the practice of the Scotch law."

His son, Alexander Maconochie (1770–1861), followed him into the profession and married the eldest daughter of Robert Blair, Lord President of the College of Justice. Alexander was, successively, Sheriff of East Lothian, Solicitor General and Lord Advocate. In 1819, only three years after his father's death, he was raised to the Bench and became the second Lord Meadowbank.

Almost immediately, he found himself immersed in political controversy. The last years of the 18th-century had seen rumblings of revolt by the labouring classes against the establishments of church

and state; a reform society calling itself the Friends of the People had been formed in Edinburgh. By 1820, this tentative radical movement had reached its second peak, and violent demonstrations took place in many parts of Central Scotland.

At Ayr Circuit Court, Lord Meadowbank heard a case in which two working-class agitators were charged with stealing guns. One was acquitted, the other sentenced to 14 years' transportation. Lord Meadowbank declared: "Let these misguided men not delude themselves. They have no chance of success." It may not be entirely co-incidental that, at this time, Meadowbank House was armed with handgrenades. Fortunately, they were never required.

A close friend of the Maconochie family was the literary luminary of the time, Sir Walter Scott. Unlike John Buchan, who mentioned Kirknewton by name in his book "Salute to Adventurers," Scott included no direct reference to the village in his novels, but it is reasonable to assume that he visited Kirknewton from time to time.

In 1827, at a public meeting called for the establishment of a professional theatrical fund in Edinburgh, Lord Meadowbank made an important statement about the authorship of the Waverley Novels. Until then, it had been known to only a close and privileged circle that Sir Walter — lately ruined financially — was the author of these much-acclaimed works. Sir Walter explained how the secrecy was dispelled:

"Just before we sat down to table, Lord Meadowbank asked me privately whether I was still anxious to preserve my incognito on the subject of what were called the Waverley Novels. I replied that I was indifferent on the subject. Lord Meadowbank was thus induced, while doing me the great honour of proposing my health to the meeting, to say something on the subject of these novels, so strongly connecting them with me as author that, by remaining silent, I must have stood convicted, either of the actual paternity or of the still greater crime of being supposed willing to receive indirectly praise to which I had no just title. I thus found myself suddenly and unexpectedly placed in the confessional — and had only time to recollect that I had been guided thither by a most friendly hand."

Once the truth was out, Lord Meadowbank had this to say:

"The clouds have been dispelled, the darkness has been cleared away, and the Great Unknown — the minstrel of our native land, the mighty magician who has rolled back the curtain of time and conjured up before our living senses the men and the manners of days which have long passed away — stands revealed to the hearts and the eyes of his affectionate countrymen. We owe to him as a people a large and heavy debt of gratitude."

It was reported in the Press that Lord Meadowbank's speech on the subject concluded to "loud and rapturous applause."

The following year, his Lordship was again much in the news, but in a more sensational way. On Christmas Eve, William Burke came to trial in the High Court in Edinburgh charged with the murder of Margery Campbell or Docherty, in the notorious body-snatching case.

Lord Meadowbank, one of the Judges hearing the trial, had the unpleasant duty of proposing sentence:

"In the history of this country, nay in the whole history of civilised society, there never has been exhibited such a system of barbarous and savage iniquity, or anything at all corresponding in atrocity, to what this trial has brought to light. Had one individual been found so utterly divested of all human feeling as to have been guilty of the offences here brought to light, your Lordships might well have been amazed and horrified. But it is almost beyond conception to imagine that there should have existed in this great and populous city, a number of individuals, both male and female, leagued and combined together, for the purpose of sacrificing their unoffending fellow citizens for the sordid purpose of selling their bodies after murder. It is inexpressibly horrible. I have therefore only farther to suggest to your Lordships that the prisoner be detained in the Tollbooth of Edinburgh till the 18th day of January next, when he shall suffer death on a gibbet by the hands of the common executioner and his body thereafter be given for dissection."

Trials as unusual or dramatic as the body snatcher's were rare. Often, the life of a Judge could be rather monotonous, as Lord Cockburn in his book, "Circuit Journeys," illustrates of a sitting of the High Court in Glasgow when he and Lord Meadowbank were the presiding Judges:

"We had our public dinner today (28 September, 1838). About 50 attended, including Meadowbank's wife and her sister and daughter. Excellent turtle and venison We had 81 cases to try and this took six entire days. There was a Sunday in the middle of this which was spent by Meadowbank at Garscube. The great majority of the cases were thefts and I do not think I ever saw so many cases so devoid of interest."

The Garscube to which Lord Cockburn refers was Lord Meadowbank's other home, near Tarbet, Argyllshire. Cockburn describes it as "very hospitable, with the air and the reality of luxury in everything about it."

The Maconochies — or Maconochie Welwoods as they now are — have given no more sons to the Scottish Bench. Succeeding generations have, however, contributed in other ways to the public

service, and the family's connection with the Meadowbank estate has been maintained to the present day.

William Cullen, another notable personality of the parish, was the son of a lawyer and his own son, Robert, became a High Court Judge. But Cullen himself won world-wide fame in quite a different speciality, that of medicine. Born in Hamilton in 1710, he was acknowledged as the greatest medical reformer and teacher of his time. Beginning his career as a ship's surgeon, he settled down as a general practitioner in his native town, but subsequently taught in the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and for twenty years occupied the Chair of the Practice of Physics at Edinburgh. According to the Edinburgh Medical Journal for 1866, Cullen taught the subject "with a degree of power, vigour and originality that has never been equalled."

Cullen spent the last twelve years of his life as proprietor of the estate of Ormiston Hill and took great pleasure in relaxing there from the labours of his profession. In a letter to a friend in 1778, soon after purchasing the estate, he wrote:

"Every man that has acquired wealth is entitled to have his hobby, nay his hobby-horse. I say this to tell you that I, though late, have got my hobby, too. I have got a farm and, if the public would not laugh, I would call it a villa. It is truly a scheme of pleasure, not of profit. I hope indeed to make two stalks of corn grow where one grew before, but I believe this to be of more benefit to the public than to myself and my purpose is purely the beauty of strong corns and fine grass. I have a brook, a wood and very fine prospects and I shall bring out more pleasure ground than anybody expects. This language will show you that I am at present happy."

Although he lived much of the time at his town house in Edinburgh, Cullen devoted a good deal of his leisure during the summer and autumn to improving the estate of Ormiston. His biographers, Thomson and Craigie, speculate on the reasons for Cullen's strong attachment to the place:

"The love of the country, the pleasure of contemplating woodland scenes, cultivated fields and thriving pastures, of beholding rural occupations, is a passion common to many orders of mankind. It was not, however, only as an intellectual admirer of the beauties of rural scenery and the tranquillity of a country life that Dr. Cullen became the possessor of Ormiston Hill. He had, as Professor of Chemistry, delivered a course of lectures on agriculture, in which he brought forward not a few new ideas on the nature of soils, the nutrition of plants, on manures and their mode of operation, and the adaptation of crops to suitable soils. He had never ceased to feel the desire to subject his theoretical

doctrines to the test of actual trial. This long cherished hope he thus expected to carry into effect and so far as difficulty was concerned, Ormiston Hill afforded ample opportunities. The spot, though not devoid of beauty, is not exactly the region upon which a farmer who takes pleasure in rich remunerative crops would have chosen to expend money and labour. But even its natural difficulties acted as a salutary excitement to the active mind of Dr. Cullen."

Cullen's house lacked any kind of architectural beauty, and when he became proprietor of the estate, he placed over his front door an inscription the significance of which the local minister, William Cameron, was in no doubt. "The place was in such a ruinous state, so comfortless and unpromising," wrote Cameron, "that he placed over the front door, the words *Est Ulubris*." But Cullen's biographers strongly disagree with Cameron's interpretation:

"The house may have been ruinous and comfortless and the general aspect of the place may have been unpromising but this was not the meaning of Dr. Cullen. Mr. Cameron has altogether mistaken both the original meaning of these words and their application by Cullen. To anyone who understands the lines, and the Epistle of Horace at the close of which the words are introduced, it must be superfluous to observe that what Horace meant was that discontent and dissatisfaction, restlessness and murmuring, are not alleviated or removed by changing place and residence, but that in the most deserted and solitary places, if the mind is right, tranquil and properly trained, happiness is within everyone's reach. It is as if Dr. Cullen had said, 'You need travel neither to France, to Spain, to Germany nor to Italy, in steamships or by railway to seek to live properly. What you seek is here at Ormiston Hill, or wherever circumstances may place you, if the well balanced mind fail you not.' These are probably small matters, yet they may not be wholly insignificant if they illustrate the character of a man such as Dr. Cullen was."

Some of the pleasure Cullen derived from Ormiston Hill is vividly illustrated in this letter he wrote in 1782 to a doctor friend whose daughters had just spent a holiday at Ormiston:

"My amusement is a little farm and a little pleasure ground. If your daughters had not seen the shabby figure of them, I should have made a fine picture to you. But I beg you will not mind what they say. They have no feeling for the beauty of a field that was a heath now brought to a rich pasture, they were not so long with me as to have the pleasure that I have in seeing a tree grow ten feet in three years. I have done a great deal but it is all levelling work. Other people cannot know what earth has been moved. But I have had some amusement in the turning of every

shovelful. I hope to go on for some years yet but my greatest pleasure is to get a visit from an old friend I had a visit this summer from my good friend Alexander Wilson, Professor of Astronomy at Glasgow. I was very intent on pointing out to him the singular growth of my balsam poplars, but when I turned about to see his look of complacent satisfaction, he told me gravely, 'Cullen, I believe the barometer does not stand so high here as at the seashore.' However, I shall go on teasing my friends. For God's sake, let's meet before we die."

So, despite its elevated situation and northern exposure, Ormiston Hill remained the delight of William Cullen throughout his closing years. He died in 1790, aged 79, and in compliance with his wishes his remains were laid to rest in the burial ground at Kirknewton. As his biographers stated:

"In this spot, remarkable only for its peaceful and retired situation, remote from the noise and bustle of towns and not much disturbed even by the noise of agricultural industry, were deposited the remains of William Cullen, most judicious and intelligent physician of his time in Scotland."

Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, in a tribute, said: "Cullen comes before us as a phenomenon in medicine. He was an original from the beginning to the end of the chapter." But at the very end of the chapter, what became of his beloved Ormiston?

Thomson and Craigie:

"A prominent feature in the life of Dr. Cullen was great generosity. It was inseparable from his nature. Regulated by financial considerations, and kept in due relation to his means, this would not have been injurious, but it must be allowed that even this virtue, carried to extreme, was in his case productive of effects which after his death caused a sufficient amount of evil. Dr. Cullen had been throughout his life indifferent to pecuniary matters and though for several of his concluding years his revenues must have been considerable, it was found after his death that nothing was saved. The consequence of this was that not long after his death, it became necessary to dispose of Ormiston Hill, which thus in 1792 passed into other hands."

Cullen's tomb — alongside that of his son, Lord Cullen — remained unmarked for many years, until the Royal College of Physicians set up a fine stone in his honour. Thereafter, several dozen students from the College annually visited the graveside and solemnly drank a toast to the revered doctor's memory.

Several of Kirknewton's parish ministers have also given noted service. Alexander Bryce, minister from 1745–86, wrote several scientific papers, which were published by the Royal Society of London. He also prepared "A map of the North Coast of Britain

from the Raw Stair of Assynt to Wick in Caithness, with the Harbours and Rocks and an Account of the Tides in the Pentland Firth," which was afterwards published by the Philosophical Society and was then the most accurate map of the area. His son was Major-General Sir Alexander Bryce, Inspector-General of Fortifications, and his twin-brother, James, a surgeon in Edinburgh. A plaque dedicated to him in the kirk reads:

"Here lie the remains of the Reverend Alexander Bryce, who was Minister of this parish for forty years and one of the chaplains in ordinary to His Majesty. He was a man of true piety, of great benevolence and of general science. He died in 1786, aged 73, universally regretted."

Bryce's successor, William Cameron, who served from 1786–1811, had an important share in the preparation of the Paraphrases, two of which – the 14th and 17th – are his own composition. He was also the author of a volume of poems published after his death. In 1793, he compiled a highly contentious statistical account of the parish.

Cameron was followed by Alexander Lockhart Simpson, and to him belongs the credit of being Kirknewton's longest-serving minister (1812–62). He was convener of the Church's Home Mission Scheme for 16 years and entrusted "with many missions and negotiations in which her highest interests were concerned." In 1849, he was Moderator of the General Assembly. He died, aged 77, holding the office of Principal Clerk to the Assembly.

5. The first oil boom

THE development of the shale industry in the second half of the 19th-century had a profound effect on the life of the neighbourhood. The rock-like substance known as shale, of which there were rich deposits in the area, lay undisturbed beneath the earth's surface for millions of years, an apparently useless resource until it was demonstrated that by blasting it from its bed and heating it at high temperatures, it could be made to yield valuable quantities of oil. In 1863, on the estate of Hare of Calderhall, the Oakbank works were established and the parish of Kirknewton saw for the first time the disagreeable results of industry. A rural landscape was grimly transformed.

The industry owed its existence to the enterprise of a Glasgow chemist, Dr. James Young, who proved that oil could be obtained from "cannel coal" in the Bathgate district and when this source ceased to be profitable, turned his attention to the less lucrative but more plentiful supplies of shale. "Paraffin Young," as he became known, collected many thousands of pounds in royalties from rival companies who were anxious to develop his ideas, and he had no hesitation in going to court to defend his patent rights.

There were no easy profits. Shale, producing only 25 gallons of crude oil per ton, gave a fraction of the yield of coal. Moreover, because of the thickness of the seams and the steep angles at which they lay, shale mining could be a difficult and dangerous job. Even when the shale had been brought to the surface, the most crucial part of the operation still lay ahead. The shale was taken to a retorting plant, where it was broken into small pieces and heated in tubes at temperatures of up to 500 degrees Centigrade for about 24 hours. During this prolonged exposure to the action of heat and steam, the shale yielded vapours which, on cooling, formed crude oil.

The Oakbank Works of the Midcalder Oil Company were among the first to be opened. By 1865, there were more than a hundred works in operation in the Lothians, particularly in the Calders district, but shale was so much poorer than "cannel" coal as an oil-bearing material that it was quickly evident fortunes would be lost as well as won. Not long after the industry was established, the products of the American oil fields started to provide fierce competition. To compete with the flood of cheap petroleum on to the British market, the local firms were forced to cut their prices.

The price of burning oil fell from 3s. 6d. per gallon in the 1860s to 10d. per gallon in 1875.

In a pamphlet on the progress of the Scottish shale industry, H. R. J. Conacher wrote: "The tale of works abandoned, of new works started and quickly stopped, shows the severity of the times." By 1873, there were only 30 works left. That the industry was able to survive at all, Conacher believed was due to the ability of its technical and commercial men who devised improved processes, obtained new products and found new markets. As the value of burning oil declined, more attention was given to lubricating oil, paraffin wax and other products.

In the search for economy, constant efforts were made to reduce the high labour and fuel costs of the retorting process. Here, men from the Oakbank works played an important role. One of the earliest advances was achieved by the Oakbank manager, N. M. Henderson of Broxburn, in 1873. Although the oil yield does not seem to have been much improved, Henderson's retort had the critical advantage of halving the consumption of coal.

Ten years later, there was a further improvement, with the development of the Young and Beilby retort. Its co-inventor was Sir George Thomas Beilby (1850-1924) of Oakbank works. By 1889, of 5,000 retorts in use in Scotland, about half were by Young and Beilby, the rest by Henderson. At Addiewell, Uphall, Hopetoun, Clippens, Pumpherston and Oakbank, as well as at the smaller works of Hermand and Tarbrax, the Young and Beilby was used.

Conacher wrote:

"While the yield of crude oil showed no marked difference, that of sulphate of ammonia was in some cases almost doubled. As competition in the oil and wax markets increased, ammonia grew in importance because it was a product not marketed by the petroleum companies and was not liable to the severe fluctuations in price which prevailed in the oil market."

In 1885, the local works were acquired by the Oakbank Oil Company, who operated a crude works and a refining plant for the manufacture of the finished products. The company's policy was forward-looking: in 1902, it built a new crude works near Winchburgh, which was the first to be wholly powered by electricity; and between 1915 and 1917, it sank pits at Westwood, doubtless in response to the high wartime demand for shale oil products.

Indeed, the Oakbank company was one of the few which withstood the competition from the United States. The others who were still in production at the beginning of the 20th-century were: Broxburn Oil Co. (formed 1877), taking over works operated since 1860 at Broxburn and Roman Camp; Caledonian Mineral Oil Co. at Tarbrax; Clippens Oil Co. (1872) at Straiton; Dalmeny Oil Co. (1871)

at Dalmeny; Linlithgow Oil Co. (1884) at Linlithgow; New Hermand Oil Co. (1872) at Breich; Pumpherston Oil Co. (1883) at Pumpherston and Bathgate; James Ross and Co., Falkirk, at Philipstoun; Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Co. (1852) at Bathgate, Addiewell, Uphall and Hopetoun.

Although there were fewer plants, the output was greater and the industry more efficient. In the peak year of 1910, Oakbank and the others produced a total of 273,000 tons of oil. After the First World War, however, the remaining firms – reduced still further in number – continued to face economic difficulties and in 1919, they amalgamated to form Scottish Oils Ltd., a subsidiary of the British Petroleum Company.

According to Scottish Oils, the products which the industry could offer were:

- (1) Motor spirit of most excellent quality.
- (2) Naptha for dry cleaning and india rubber manufacture.
- (3) Lamp oils with a 75-year record of safety.
- (4) Power oil for the farm tractor and the fishing boat.
- (5) Lighthouse and long burning oil for the important duties of lighthouse and railway signal lamps.
- (6) Fuel oil for furnaces and diesel engines.
- (7) Gas oil for the manufacture and enrichment of gas.
- (8) Batching oil for the spinner, the weaver and the rope-maker.
- (9) Cleaning and lubrication oils for machinery.
- (10) Paraffin wax for candles, tapers, and matches, for water-proofing and electrical installation.
- (11) Candles of every kind.
- (12) Sulphate of ammonia to manure our fields in peacetime and provide explosives in war.
- (13) Paraffin coke, the smokeless fuel.

The industry's most durable products were, however, the thriving little communities which grew up around it. At one time, shale oil employed 10,000 men: in Kirknewton parish alone, between 1851 and 1891, the population rose from 1,630 to 3,352 – an increase almost wholly attributable to the demand for labour created by the oil works.

The Irish influence was strong: so much so that the Uphall works were nicknamed "Paddy Mulhern's Oil Works" in honour of a foreman who made his substantial presence felt. At Oakbank, as at the other works, the employees also included settlers from various parts of Scotland and local inhabitants who gave up their labours in the fields for the more rewarding, if less healthy occupation of mining.

It was, on the face of it, an unpromising social mixture. The village itself offered few creature comforts, consisting of about 160 houses arranged in the familiar "miners' rows." Space was at such a premium that as one worker vacated a bed before his shift, another who had just finished work took his place. Despite the primitive living conditions, the dirt and danger of the work and the insecurity of the industry, Oakbank developed its own lively social traditions and sustained them through the worst of times. The mine claimed several victims and in 1921 a disastrous fire occurred in the village in which three people lost their lives and 57 were made homeless. Ten years later, in a ruthless act of rationalisation, Scottish Oils closed their works at Oakbank. In less than an average lifespan, the foundations on which the village was created had been pulled away. Yet the community survived.

Fortunately, shale continued to be mined and refined in neighbouring parishes and work was fairly readily available there. Sometimes the going was tough; in the 1930s, the remaining men in the industry were given one idle week in four — the so-called "Spreadover Scheme" — to allow the works to continue without further loss of employment. Decline was inevitable, and by the early 1950s, there were only four works left, as well as the central refinery at Pumpherston.

Oakbank had withstood the loss of its only source of employment and remained virtually intact, with only a negligible drift in population. In his statistical account of 1951, the minister, James Turnbull, recorded that the village still had a branch of the Women's Rural Institute, claiming 40 members; a Burns Club which had been active for many years; a junior football team; a branch of the Old Age Pensioners' Association; and rifle and bowling clubs. Seventy-three pupils attended Oakbank Primary School, which had a head teacher and two assistants. There were two shops.

Significantly, half of the 82 members of Kirknewton Church woman's guild were said to come from Oakbank: an illustration of how close the links were between the two villages. Church members who lived in Oakbank traditionally worshipped at Kirknewton.

As living conditions deteriorated, the people were encouraged by the local authority to accept the offer of new houses in East Calder and elsewhere. Most left reluctantly and vowed to continue their association with the village. Today, Oakbank presents a curious picture. The houses have been demolished and the mountain of spent shale is being removed for export to the Continent, where it will be used in road construction. But in this otherwise deserted village, with the shops long closed and boarded up, the Institute still stands, a busy community centre during the winter months; and the bowling green and football pitch are well maintained. Oakbank, it seems, is determined not to die.

6. People at play

AT one time, the great social event in the village was the Kirknewton Play, an annual pageant of extraordinary spectacle. Although there is no record of its origin, it was certainly flourishing in the second half of the 19th-century: an antidote, doubtless, to the poverty of the age.

The local poet, Alexander Campbell, left a full chronicle of the Play. This is the scene he recalls: first, the blast of a bugle and the sound of pipes and drums in procession through the village. Upwards of eighty horsemen, "with swords and banners gay," head for Meadowbank House, where gingerbread is distributed to the assembled children. From there to East Calder; on the way, the blacksmiths of the Raw leave their smiddy, the quarry men their "pinch and barry" to exchange the gossip of the day. As the poet observes, "twa or three by ordinar' folk are here frae Edinburgh," savouring the rustic humours of such characters of the parish as Apple Davie, Auld Robertson, Sandy Mackay, Geordie Law of the Langton Farm, Jess Emslie, Keekum Sooth, Willie Gidlet, Postie Robbie, Ceelie Karr, Frickle Watson and Leather Jock. What a colourful gallery of worthies!

Next, the pageant calls at the great house of Calderhall, where Colonel Hare dispenses "plenty of meat and drinks and mony a halesome dainty," before delivering a stirring homily on the need for patriotism. The procession moves to Wilkieston and the halls of Dalmahoy, then back to Kirknewton and, weather permitting, an evening of dancing on the village green.

Campbell's poem ends with a lament for the demise of the pageant, but some of its customs were maintained in an athletic meeting which took place annually in the early years of the present century. Traditionally, Kirknewton Gymnastic Games were held on the first Saturday of August. The day began with the arrival of the visiting band at Midcalder station shortly after 10 a.m. The band played its way to the village, going from there to Kirknewton (formerly Meadowbank) House. It also visited Ormiston, Oakbank, East Calder and, finally, Milrig.

After this whistlestop tour of the parish, the band was dispatched to Games Park for the serious business of the day. By noon, the competition was under way.

The organisers depended on the local farmers to provide a field



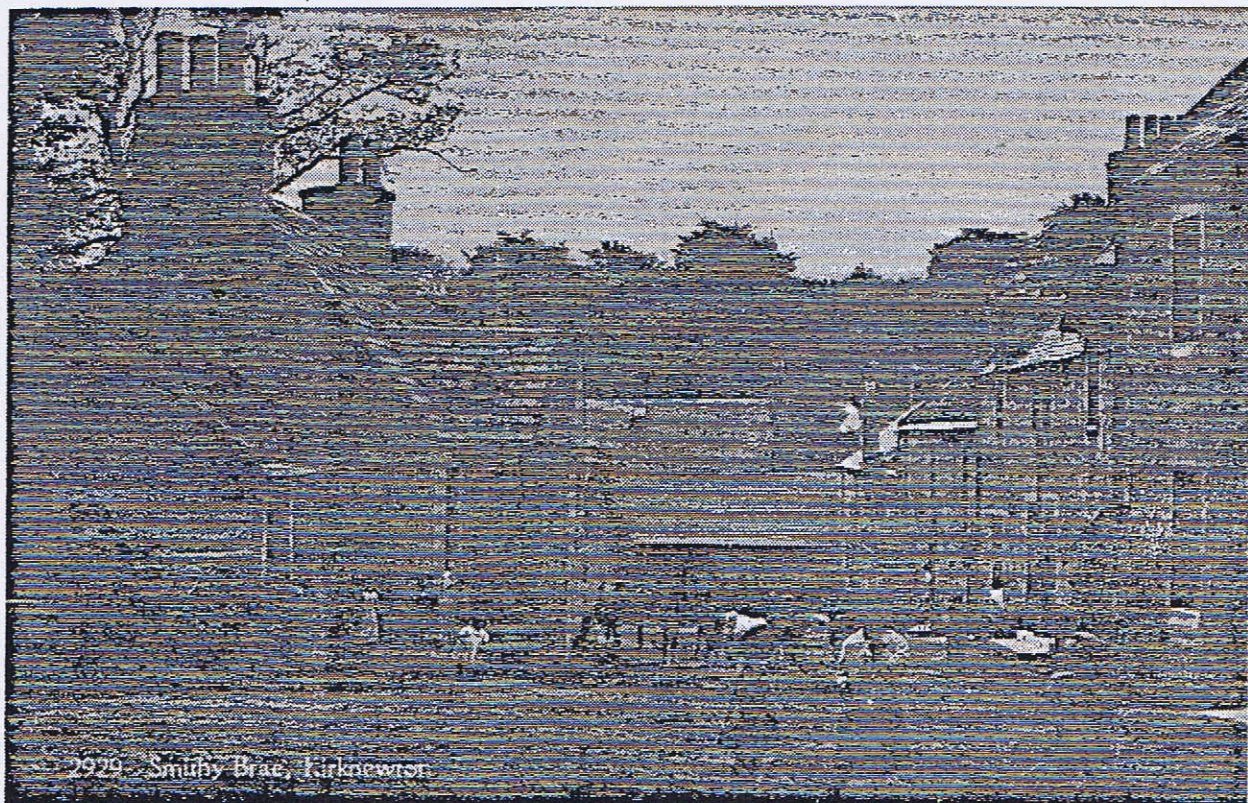
*The local foxhunt gathering in
Main Street circa 1900.*

*Another view of Main St
looking west. Circa 1930.*



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Kulu. 3.

Main Street looking West Kirknewton.



▲ Smiddy Brae as it was circa 1900.
The smiddies were behind the
shop on the left.

Old cottages, now demolished, on
Meadow Road, later renamed
Whitemoss Road. Circa 1900. ▼



for the event. Several sites were tried, but the most acceptable seems to have been a field near the railway station owned by John Manson of Milrig. Unfortunately, the relationship between him and the committee was not always harmonious. In 1912, for example, he at first refused the use of the field, relenting only on condition "that no shows be allowed on the field until the morning of the Games and on no account were they to bother him about getting on sooner."

The minutes of Games committee meetings between April, 1908, and May, 1921, have been preserved and they provide both enlightenment and amusement. In 1908, one member recommended that no refreshment tent should be allowed on the field; predictably enough, he found no support. Some years later, there is a more explicit reference to the problem of alcohol at the Games. The entry reads:

"The Secretary was asked what steps he intended taking regarding two of his committee who were very much the worse of drink and could not attend to their duties but rather inclined to quarrel with the public. The Secretary regretted to hear such a report about his committee, but said he would speak to the committee at fault and ask their resignation."

Happily, two uniformed constables were always present at the Games to deal with any outbursts of excessive enthusiasm.

Members of committee were paid for their work on the day. In 1908, it was resolved that the Secretary and Treasurer should each receive 15s. and other members 5s., while the fellow engaged to gather up stray papers received a day's wage of 3s. 6d. The bandsmen, too, were paid, but only after the committee had put the job out to tender. In 1909, Leith Trades Silver Band offered their services for £6, excluding rail fares, only to be turned down in favour of Ratho Band, who quoted an inclusive fee of £6 10s. The same year, the St. Ronans Troupe of International Dancers were paid £3 10s. for an exhibition of Highland dancing.

In subsequent years, Dr. Guthrie's Industrial School Band, Newhaven Silver Band, Ratho Blue Ribbon Band, Miller and Richards Band (Edinburgh), the Great War Pipe Band (Branch No. 2) and Gilmerton Brass Band were among players engaged. By 1920, the visiting band was able to command a fee of £16.

A five-a-side juvenile football tournament and a tug-of-war invariably proved popular, and as well as the conventional sprints, there were such specialities as the Young Ladies Race, the Workmen's Race, the Ploughmen's Race, the Quarrymen's Race, the Farm Servants' Race, the Married Ladies' Race, the Schoolboys' one-mile relay and the Sack Race. Occasionally, there was a competition for the best-kept horse and harness; among the judges for this event over the years were William Gardner of Langton, J. H. Harwell of

Whitemoss and Robert Marshall of Kirknewton.

But the real oddities among the field events were a mysterious convention known as "Cutting The Goose" and a race for ladies which involved the unladylike sport of chasing a young pig around the field. The lady who caught the pig kept it. Sometimes, the pig race presented difficulties for the organisers. In 1922, it is recorded that all the pigs examined as possible candidates were found to be too small, and in any case, no farmer could see his way to part with an animal. "It was agreed," the minute states solemnly, "to forgo the Pig Race and to have a substitute race open to ladies."

After the exertions of the afternoon, many of the party retired to the village green, where the band played dance music until 8.30 p.m. It is, however, possible that some of the successful competitors preferred to celebrate in more boisterous style at the local hostelry.

The committee's proceedings were rarely free from controversy. In 1911, the retiring secretary handed over to his successor, "ten flags, with staffs, also two pillow slips and a quantity of tickets," but remarked that a certain gentleman in the village "had some things belonging to the Games, such as the quoiting pins, sprint pins and strings; as they were buried amongst the coals in the coal-house he could not get them at the present time." On another occasion, an office-bearer had to be reprimanded for giving away a football belonging to the Games, without the committee's authority.

By far the most common source of concern was, however, the public's apathy. The Games themselves seem to have been reasonably well attended, although in 1912 business was adversely affected by "the very wet day, also the large Co-op trip that left the district on the same date." But when it came to the task of organising the Games, most of the village was conspicuous by its absence. Few people turned up for the annual general meeting, and a dedicated but tiny group of volunteers found themselves re-elected year after year. Among them were David Greig, George Telford, James Hamilton, Alex. Hamilton, George Gregory, Thomas Watson and David Monteith.

In May, 1916, the committee met to consider, "owing to the severe war that was going on, whether we should have Games or not, when our fellow subjects were fighting, bleeding and dying for us." It did not take long to conclude that the Games should be suspended and that a donation of £10 should be sent to the Scottish National Red Cross Society. After the war, the Games were revived, but in 1921, because of unemployment in the district, it was decided to abandon the event. The 1922 Games went ahead, but in 1923, more ill-luck: bad weather forced their postponement for a week, involving the committee in extra expense. In 1926, the year of the General Strike, Kirknewton Gymnastic Games were called off for the last time.

Two years later, however, the Kirknewton Gala Day was inaugurated, continuing — if in more modest fashion — the traditions of both the Kirknewton Play and the Games. Jock Hunter, Willie Hardie and James Brown ("Sneck O' The Latch") were a few of those who gave stalwart service to the Gala committee in its early days. Nowadays, there is a Gala Week of sporting and other entertainments, organised by the Community Association; as well as the visiting bands, a popular feature of successive Galas has been the performance of Kirknewton youngsters in the McMahon Dancing School.

For many years, two of the village's favourite outdoor pastimes were quoiting in summer and curling in winter. The first notice of quoiting being played at Kirknewton appears in the parish minister's statistical account of 1845, but the game may have been established locally long before this. Quoits are iron rings weighing several pounds and the quoiting pitch consists of two circles of clay, set 18 yards apart, with an iron pin in the centre of each. The object of the game is to toss the quoit as close to the pin as possible.

Until the early years of the present century, the game was played on the village green, thereafter on a site at the opposite end of the village. Matches between the leading players of Kirknewton and East Calder created tremendous enthusiasm and a spirit of acute rivalry; in the 1920s and 1930s, bets of up to £100 were staked on the outcome of important competitions.

Quoitors from far outside the village took part in the annual Kirknewton Handicap, but local exponents of the calibre of Johnny Gardiner, Archibald ("Baldy") Reid, Bob Willis, Sandy Binnie, George Haston and Jimmy Gregory could be relied upon to give the visitors a good run for their money.

In accordance with custom, when a championship was being played, the quoits of the competitors were borne by local lads to the field of battle. After the morning's sport, there was a welcome adjournment for refreshments, and the tussle concluded after lunch.

Like most games, quoiting had its own mystifying language. Such expressions as "ahint wab," "cockle" and "couplin' up" were familiar enough in Kirknewton, even if only the quoitors and their supporters knew their meaning.

The Quoiting Club's accounts are still in existence. As an illustration of the club's affairs, and of how the cost of living has changed, we quote a typical year's balance sheet, that of season 1931:

<i>Income</i>	£	s	d	<i>Expenditure</i>	£	s	d
Money in Club Funds	5	5	2	Hall Rent (4 Mar)	2	0	
Subscriptions	4	15	0	Hall Rent (31 Mar)	2	0	
Entry Fees	3	17	0	Rail Fare (G. Telford)		10	
Gate	3	7	6	Entry Fees for contests	1	0	0
Members	1	2	0	Membership Cards			
				(Jas. Brown)	7	0	
				Spade (per Jas. Dick)	2	6	
				Pin Dressing (Haston)	1	6	
				Handicap Bill	7	10	0
				Groundsman	1	5	0
				Gatekeepers	7	6	
				Printing	6	6	
				Taxes	1	11	
				Income Tax		7	
				Secretary's Salary			
				(Wm. Russell)	7	6	
				Sending Bills			6
				Balance	6	11	4
Total	18	6	8	Total	18	6	8

Curling, too, was popular from the middle of the 19th-century, especially with the farmers of the neighbourhood. The curling pond was situated on the Meadowbank estate.

Both sports declined in appeal in the 1930s, while bowling and football took their place. The village's first football team, Meadowbank Thistle, played in the local juvenile league, on a pitch adjoining Hillhouse Farm. Among the regular members of the team were Bert Scott, George and John Fairlie and several of the Cormack family; the committee included the Murrays Will and Jimmy, Bob Greig and Bob Bell, who was also team trainer. After the Second World War, their successors, Kirknewton Amateurs, enjoyed a long run of success, but lapsed in the 1950s; an attempt to revive the club some years later proved futile.

Jim Bell was one of the most prominent of Kirknewton's bowlers, who also numbered Willie Stein, James Smart, McNair Robertson, Willie Cuthbertson and many others. The green, adjacent to Kirknewton Primary School, is now the site of a house.

At the present time, sports facilities in the neighbourhood include tennis courts at Burnwynd, two fine golf courses at Dalmahoy, a bowling club at Oakbank and the Redcraig Rifle Club.

The focus of community life is the village hall, which has accommodated a variety of functions, from noisy political meetings to silent pictures, religious services to whist drives, Burns suppers to

"Bingo." Despite fairly rudimentary facilities, it has proved remarkably adaptable to a multiplicity of uses.

With the dissolution in 1898 of Kirknewton Friendly Society, who had held the lease of the hall for 78 years, a public meeting was called and, after negotiating with the society, the villagers agreed to buy the building and its furniture for £220. J. A. Maconochie Welwood of Meadowbank, George Gardiner (parish minister) and William Dick (Inspector of the Poor) were entrusted with the lease.

Soon it became obvious that the building would have to be expanded, and in 1903, a "news and recreation room" was added. Here, the daily newspapers could be consulted free of charge. A billiards table was purchased in 1914, a new floor laid in 1920, extensive repairs carried out in 1947. In the 1950s, however, the building fell into disuse, until it was rescued by the newly-formed Kirknewton Community Association, who restored it by voluntary labour and reopened it in 1968.

Kirknewton shared in the earliest excitements of the cinema. "Dod" Paris organised evenings of silent pictures, and when the talkies arrived, Robert McNaught — otherwise known as "The General" — gave his fellow villagers a regular opportunity to marvel at the stars of the silver screen. At other times, the hall was used regularly for dances and other social evenings, and there was no shortage of live entertainment. Alex Kitson, Snr., a well-known local personality, ran a concert party called the Kitsonians and the village headmaster, Gordon McQueen, directed the productions of the Kirknewton Operatic Society, which flourished during the 1920s. Among the professional performers who appeared at the hall was the great Scottish comedian Dave Willis.

After the Second World War, in common with many other small communities, Kirknewton became less self-dependent for its amusement. The birth of television as a popular medium encouraged people to stay at home more often, and when they did venture to leave the comforts of their own fireside, they were inclined to prefer the brighter lights of the city. Because of its proximity to Edinburgh, Kirknewton has perhaps suffered more than most rural communities in this respect.

Nonetheless, there are still active youth and old people's organisations and the hall is busily occupied on most evenings during the winter. In 1974, it was handed over to the care of the local authority, who agreed to undertake repairs and improvements and to build a new hall for the long-term benefit of the community.

7. The unfinished story

IN the Kirknewton of today, the church is no longer the ruling establishment; the landowners have neither the wealth nor influence they possessed once; the poverty and deprivations common among the majority have given way to comfort and even affluence. It is true that many other villages have undergone a similar transformation, yet in at least one sense, Kirknewton's progress has been unusual. For since the Second World War, when the Royal Air Force opened Ritchie Camp, the village has had a strong military presence.

In the late fifties and early sixties, the U.S. Air Force had its Scottish base here. About 50 houses were built to accommodate the service families, but it seems the villagers reacted to the miniature invasion with equanimity. Little but the most cursory contact was established between the visitors and the resident population and, except for the occasional "Open Day" at the camp, the Americans kept themselves very much to themselves. They did, however, put up a water-tower which has become the unhappiest legacy of Kirknewton's brief reign as "Little America."

Subsequently, Ritchie Camp was taken over by the 1st Battalion, Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) and then the 1st Battalion, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's). The Black Watch was formed in 1739 from independent companies recruited for the policing of the Highlands; the Argylls are of more recent descent, the result of an amalgamation of the 91st Princess Louise's (Argyllshire Highlanders) and the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders of "Thin Red Line" fame.

Although the soldiers have not been posted here long enough to establish roots, there has been a genuine attempt to integrate them fairly closely with the village. The Community Association has encouraged their active participation in the social life, and the battalion bands have played their part in the annual Gala Week. But perhaps the most striking tribute to the harmony of the relationship is the number of local girls who are now army wives!

Apart from extensive housing developments, the main visible effect of the influx of population has been the expansion of Kirknewton Primary School. Built in 1928 a short distance from its predecessor (which was converted into the Church Hall), it boasts a fine gymnasium and assembly hall, seven spacious and well-equipped classrooms and an atmosphere of cheerfulness and informality.

Kirknewton has had only six head-teachers in the last century. They are: Thomas Dick, whose record of 39 years' service (1868-1907) is unequalled; Gordon McQueen (1907-23), who left for a similar post in Penicuik; John Kelly (1923-33) and Alexander Gibb (1933-61), both of whom died in office; George Jamieson (1961-64), who resigned to work in another part of the county; and his successor, Gilbert Donaldson, who is happily still with us. Among the long-serving assistant teachers, special mention should be made of Miss McCall. At present, there are 250 pupils and eight assistants, compared with 123 pupils and three assistants in 1951. Roman Catholic children attend a primary school in East Calder; senior secondary pupils travel by special bus to West Calder High School.

Education and other important functions are the responsibility of Midlothian County Council and the more commonplace affairs that of East Calder District Council, which took over from the old Parish Council but will itself be superseded in the reorganisation of local government due to take effect in 1975. In the new structure, Kirknewton will become part of West Lothian district, losing its historical link with Midlothian, except in electing a Member to Parliament. The sitting member is Alex Eadie, a former coal-miner who was appointed a junior minister in the Labour Government of February, 1974. Another well-known Labour leader is the trade unionist Alex Kitson, Jnr., a native of the village.

Within the parish, agriculture remains the main industry. Among the local farms are: Ainville, Auchinoon, Belstane, Blackraw, Broompark, Burnbrae, Burnhouse, East Haugh, Easter Newton, House of Muir, Kirknewton Mains, Langton, Lawheads, Leith-Head, Morton, Ormiston, Ormiston Mains, Overton, Redcraig and Selms. Strictly speaking, Whitemoss Farm does not qualify, as it is situated in Ratho parish.

Small holdings at Humble, Raw and Milrig have helped to offset the decrease in the numbers employed on the farms. There are other sources of employment locally, including the stone quarry at Kaimies and the railway; the district road depot is at Kirknewton and it, too, provides a few jobs. But with the gradual displacement of the agricultural labour force by machinery, most people now have to travel outside the locality to work, in factories, shops, offices and laundries in the Edinburgh area.

The morning exodus is mainly by car or train. Fortunately, there is a reasonably good railway service to Glasgow and Edinburgh from Midcalder Station, although the station - like the church and the school - stands at some distance from the village, along an exposed road. The bus service is lamentable, for while East Calder can count on a bus to Edinburgh every half-hour, Kirknewton has to be content

with a minimal daily service, supplemented at the week-end.

In some other respects, the village's social services leave much to be desired. At one time Kirknewton had its own police station in the "turret house" on Whitemoss Road (which had previously been a school for infants); later, a modern station was provided, but this closed a few years ago.

Since the retirement of Dr. John Young in the late 1960s, there has been no doctor resident in the village. Even the parish minister does not live here, but at East Calder. The Kirknewton manse, a beautiful house with a commanding view of the surrounding countryside, was sold in the 1950s after 200 years of continuous use as the minister's residence. It is now in private ownership.

The Sunday church service at Kirknewton is held at the inconvenient hour of 12.20 p.m.; there is no evening service. The united charge of Kirknewton and East Calder has more than 1,000 members, compared with 850 twenty years ago, and there are 46 elders and 21 members of the Congregational Board. Comparatively few worship regularly at Kirknewton, and both the Sunday School and the Woman's Guild have small memberships. The kirk itself, with the congregation grouped on three sides, is remarkably attractive and well maintained, despite its somewhat unprepossessing exterior. An alternative form of worship is provided by a Gospel Mission which holds regular meetings in its own premises and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

As early as 1827, Kirknewton had a Post Office, or receiving office as it then was. Now there are also three general shops in the village as well as a small drapery. The district is served daily by vans and a mobile library calls once a week.

Apart from the sawmill, the concern of the Marshall family for more than a century, there is no industry in the village. Consequently, it has been relatively easy to conserve something of Kirknewton's rural character and appearance. In 1970, Midlothian County Council announced a plan for the restoration of parts of Main Street and Low Doors, including a row of traditional 18th and 19th-century one-storey cottages with pantiled roofs. In the opinion of the Planning Department, the domestic style of traditional architecture "makes a very welcome change from the anonymity of modern development." As a first priority, it was decided to bring some of the existing buildings up to modern standards, demolishing others to create "small pockets of development." In practice, this improvement scheme has sensitively merged the old and the new. With the increase in the volume of heavy traffic to and from the new town of Livingston, however, a new road to bypass Kirknewton's narrow, winding thoroughfare is urgently needed.

Even now, despite the noisy and polluting influence of the

internal combustion engine, Kirknewton seems sometimes to have rolled back the years. It is still possible at the week-end for horse and rider to make their leisurely way through the village; for the foxhunters to gather for their sport on New Year's morning; for the gallant Lady of the Post to deliver the morning mail by bicycle; and on Gala Week evenings, for the local Inn to resound to the pipes and accordion. Under the auspices of Scotland's Gardens Scheme, it is even possible to enjoy a Sunday afternoon stroll in the grounds of Kirknewton House, although the house itself is literally half the place it used to be.

Happily, one or two of the parish's more eccentric edifices have been untouched by the bulldozer, including the curious "Waterloo Tower" which occupies an isolated situation near the road from Kirknewton to Wilkieston. Less happily, the village green — scene of many revelries — was sacrificed some years ago for private housing, and as the property companies cast a speculative eye over the district, it is difficult to escape the unpalatable conclusion that we have much more of our green and pleasant land to lose. In the era of the urban-sprawl and of remote-control decisions, the life and identity of villages are constantly threatened. Whether Kirknewton withstands the threat is a part of the story that remains to be told.

THE END

APPENDIX (I)

Parish Ministers of Kirknewton – 1573–1974

James Hamilton	-	-	-	1573–1612
Andrew Balfour	-	-	-	1613–1624
James Layng	-	-	-	1625–?
John Colvill	-	-	-	1648–1663
William Allisone	-	-	-	1663–1666
Charles Lumisden	-	-	-	1666–?
John Wilkie	-	-	-	1669–?
James Waughe	-	-	-	1673–1682
John Alexander	-	-	-	1682–?
John Bannerman	-	-	-	?–1689
James Anderson	-	-	-	1691–1697
John Thorburn	-	-	-	1699–1744
Alexander Bryce	-	-	-	1745–1786
William Cameron	-	-	-	1786–1811
Alexander L. Simpson	-	-	-	1812–1862
Henry Wallis Smith	-	-	-	1862–1885
Arthur Gordon	-	-	-	1886–1889
George Gardiner	-	-	-	1889–1922
Charles Allan	-	-	-	1922–1948
James Turnbull	-	-	-	1948–1961
William Mechie	-	-	-	1962–

APPENDIX (II)

IN MEMORIAM

The Great War, 1914-18, claimed the lives of 44 men of the parish. On a Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1921, the war memorial of Kirknewton and East Calder was unveiled. It bore these names: Captain Frank Smith; Lieut. W. B. Parker-Smith; Lieut. R. H. Whitelaw; 2nd Lieut. A. Stevenson; 2nd Lieut. G. L. Whitelaw; Sergeant William Preston; Corporal James Hunter; Corporal James H. Hogg; Lance-Corporal Matthew Flynn; Lance-Corporal Robert Gray; Lance-Corporal George Hope; Private Robert Ballantyne; Private James Bishop; Private John Bryce; Guardsman John Campbell; Spr. Michael Flynn; Private James M. Forbes; Private George Gardiner; Private Robert Gifford; Private David B. Graham; Private Alexander Laird; Private Daniel Macbeth; Private John Martin; Private William Morrison; Private James Milligan; Private Hugh McDermott; Private James R. McDowall; Private John McKellar; Private William McKie; Private William J. McIntyre; Gunner James McLuskey; Private David Newton; Private Thomas P. Philp; Private James Reid; Private James Renwick; A.B. Adam P. Stewart; Private William Sutherland; Private William Tait; Private John Watt; Guardsman William Watt; Private David Whigham; Guardsman George Wilkie; Tpr. William Wilson; Guardsman James W. Young.

A further 22 men of the parish fell in the Second World War, 1939-45. Their names were: Sgt. Plt. John Arbuthnott; P/O Walter Gowans Brown; A.L.A. William Noel Calwell; W/O Angus Whitson Elliot; Sergeant James Falconer; Rifleman Alexander Forrest; Gunner Allan Gibson; Trpr. John R. Hogg; C.Q.M.S. William Lawson; C.Q.M.S. James Marshall; Private George Murdoch; L.A.C. William McGill; L.A.C. Francis McNairney; Sergeant Andrew Ramsay; Corporal James R. Russell; Sqd. Ldr. John Rhind; Corporal Edward Sharkey; Sergeant George A. Tennant; Sergeant James Toolin; Sergeant John Knox Watson; Gunner Thomas F. Wilson; A.B. William Whitelaw. A plaque in their memory was added in 1951.

APPENDIX (III)

To the younger generation, some of the words in recent daily use in the village will be unknown. Here is a selection of them — now, infrequently or never heard:

Britchin or Brechin—the breeching or harness round the hind part of a horse to restrain the load; Bucht—a sheep pen; Chitter—tremble, shiver from cold; Clocherin—the sound of coughing, wheezing; Donnert—stupid, wandered; Doup—the backside; Dunt—a knock, blow; Ettle—to intend to make an effort; Fankle—to knot or entangle a rope, wool, etc.; Feering—furrows opened out marking the “rigs” at the beginning of the ploughing operation; Footerin—awkward; Forenent—facing, opposite; Gallowses—braces for trousers; Gean—the wild cherry and its fruit; Gomméral—a fool, blockhead; Jow—spill the contents of a vessel by moving it from side to side; Pouk—to pull or pluck; Rax—stretch, strain, to reach, hand or pass; Ruck—to put hay into ricks or small stacks; Shilpit—small, weak, half-starved; Slaiger—to cover with mud, a wet mess. food eaten messily; Slaister—to make a wet or dirty mess; Slounge—splash, a quick wash; Slype—a sledge used in agriculture; Smittle—infectious; Sneck—door latch or the securing of a gate or door; Soor dook—butter milk; Theek—to thatch; Wairsh—saltless, tasteless.

APPENDIX (IV)

Members of Parliament representing constituency in which Kirknewton is situated.

(Dates of Elections in parenthesis)

EDINBURGHSIRE (Midlothian)

George Lockhart (1708-10-13); John Baird (1714-15); Robert Dundas (1722-27-34); Sir Charles Gilmour (1737-41-42-44-47); Robert Balfour Ramsay (1751); Robert Dundas (1754); Sir Alexander Gilmour (1761-66-68); Henry Dundas (1774-75-77-79-80-84); Robert Dundas (1790-96-99-1801-02-06-07-09-10); Sir George Clark (1811-12-18-19-20-30-31); Sir J. H. Dalrymple (1832); Sir George Clark (1835); William Gibson Craig (1837); W. Ramsay Ramsay (1841); Sir John Hope (1845-47-52); Earl of Dalkeith (1853-57-59-65); Sir A. C. Gibson Maitland (1868); Earl of Dalkeith (1874); Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone (1880-85-86-92); Sir T. Gibson-Carmichael (1895); Hon. A. W. O. Murray (1900); Lord Dalmeny (1906); Hon. A. W. O. Murray (1910).

MIDLOTHIAN & PEEBLESSIRE, NORTHERN

Sir J. A. Hope (1918); G. A. C. Hutchison (1922); A. B. Clarke (1923); G. A. C. Hutchison (1924); A. B. Clarke (1929); D. J. Colville (1929-31-35); Sir T. D. K. Murray (1943); Lord John Hope (1945); D. J. Pryde (1950-51).

MIDLOTHIAN

D. J. Pryde (1955); J. M. Hill (1959-64); Alexander Eadie (1966-70-74).

Some Electoral rolls:— 1714-80; 1761-84; 1774-104; 1906-15,711; 1929-36,471; 1943-64,626; 1945-73,831; 1966-62,940.

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