



LOCHWINNOCH

OFFICIAL GUIDE



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LOCHWINNOCH

Situation and Position.

The Parish of Lochwinnoch has an area of nearly 19,878 acres, of which 371 are water. From East to West the parish is twelve miles long, and from North to South six miles broad. An old description, dated 1810, is still worth quoting:—

“Lochwinnoch is greatly diversified in its general aspect. Part of it consists of high bleak hills in the background; part of it is a low winding valley, in general of a very fertile soil; and in the heart of it is the longest loch or lake in the county. This valley, with its shelving country towards it on both sides, contains nearly the whole population. It is also ornamented with plantations, whilst the houses of its numerous small proprietors are each set down under the shade of a few old trees in the midst of well-cultivated spots of ground. The whole strath has a warm and cheerful appearance. It is the very vale of Tempe of Renfrewshire.”—Robertson.

The village lies on the side of Castle Semple Loch, nigh on the top of that sheet of water, where the River Calder outpours itself. “The situation is indeed very pleasant as it is exposed only on the south-east, being under shelter in all other directions either by rising grounds or thick plantations.”—Crawford. The subsoil is light and loamy on a deep gravel bed which is continuous from the hills behind the village right to the Loch. Because of the natural drainage this obviously makes for a dry and healthy building position.

Ample travelling facilities are available. There is a railway station in the village with a good service of trains to Glasgow, the coast of Ayrshire and Kilmarnock, with connections for the south. Less than a mile from the village is another station, Lochside, to and from which a 'bus service runs to and from some trains. At Roadhead on the main Glasgow road, a mile off, a frequent 'bus service is in operation for Glasgow, Kilmarnock and the coast.

The village is well designed, consisting, generally, of two main streets, of good width and unusually straight and regular. Each extends to fully a quarter of a mile, intersecting each other at the Cross. From these main lines various lesser roads lead off, all maintaining, with a good degree of regularity, what are to-day considered the best principles of town planning.

Historical.

It cannot be expected that any definite assertion as to the rise of Lochwinnoch as a village can be made, but the first written mention of the name is in a Charter of King David, dated 1124. This Charter is no longer extant, but is referred to in another Charter by David's grandson and successor, Malcolm the Maiden, in 1158. By this Charter the lands of Lochwinnoch, along with others, are conferred upon Walter, son of Alan, the hereditary Steward of Scotland. It is interesting to note that the first landowners in the parish were the Stewarts, a couple of centuries before that family reached the throne.

In 1163 Walter then granted a Charter to the Monks of Lochwinnoch. Earlier than this, however, the Monks of Paisley had maintained a Chaplainry at Lochwinnoch, and it may be assumed that the village had its beginning even earlier than the twelfth century.

Bearing on the history of the village it is interesting to note that from time to time a number of canoes have been dug up in the parish, and besides these a quantity of gold and silver coins, a ladle of Corinthian brass and querns have been found.

Considerable controversy has been waged as to the derivation of the place name—Lochwinnoch. It has been frequently stated that the Patron Saint of the parish was Saint Winnoch and that his name is perpetuated in the place name. All weight of evidence, however, is against this, as it cannot be proved that a Saint Winnoch ever had any connection with the parish. It is considered that St. John the Apostle was the Patron Saint of the old Church. Loch-ianach, the Gallic for the loch or lake of the birds, has been suggested from authoritative sources, and bears the stamp of likelihood, as even to this day the loch is a great haunt of water fowl and other birds.

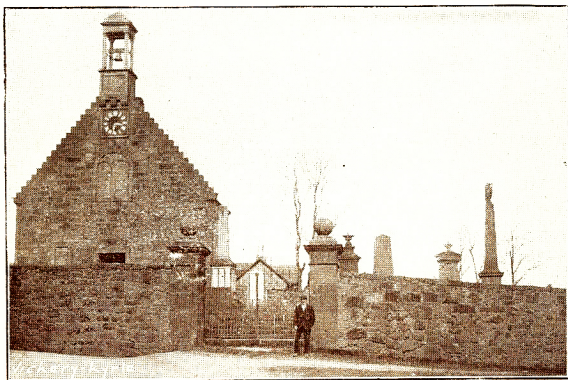
The earliest records of organised industry in the district is contained in writings that in 1758 William Naysmith, Schoolmaster in Lochwinnoch, introduced cotton spinning into the neighbourhood. Aided by the many facilities for water power, many evidences of the harnessing of which still remain, the industry was considerably developed, and as recently as fifty years ago a number of thriving mills were engaged on this work. Eventually, the introduction of steam looms, etc., killed the industry.

Hand-loom weaving was, last century, the staple industry of the village, every other house having its own loom, but this romantic craft also succumbed to the onward march of the all-conquering steam.

The bleaching of yarns and the quarrying of Freestone were also carried on till a comparatively recent date.

Local Churches.

COLLEGIATE KIRK.—The Collegiate Kirk of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lochwinnoch was founded in 1504 by John, first Lord of Sempill. In July of the following year the Church was visited and inspected by King James the Fourth. The edifice, now somewhat dilapidated, lies close to the mansion house of Castle Sempill, and is worthy of a visit. The principle ornament is the tomb of the founder, who fell at Flodden 9th September, 1513. Below the chancel is a vault which has long been the burial place of the lairds of Sempill.



AULD KIRK.

Photo: R. Stewart.

THE AULD KIRK.—Situated at the foot of Johnshill this old church was in the olden days a Chaplainry under the Abbey of Paisley. The grant of the Parish Church of Paisley "with all its pertinents," given by Walter the High Steward to his new Monastery, was founded about the year 1163 and conveyed to the monks the Chapel of Lochwinnoch.

Before the year 1207 Florence, Bishop-Elect of Glasgow, confirmed to the Abbey of Paisley the Chapel of Lochwinnoch.

Lochwinnoch was first referred to as a parish in the year 1504, the spelling then being Lochwynyok.

The Cure of Lochwinnoch was probably served at first by Chaplains or Monks of Paisley Abbey, and this state existed till the Reformation in 1560.

To-day all that remains of the old church is the front or entrance gable with its old-fashioned clock.

PARISH CHURCH.—The Parish Church is centrally situated opposite Harvey Square. It is a building of imposing architecture and unusual but pleasing design, and is solidly built of stone and surrounded by trees.

When the Auld Kirk showed signs of decay the new structure was commenced, and in the year 1807 the foundation stone was laid.

The Church was opened for public worship on Sunday, 2nd October, 1808.

WEST U.F. CHURCH.—Rev. Robert Smith, Parish Minister of Lochwinnoch, was amongst the 474 members of the Church of Scotland who walked from that momentous Disruption Assembly, on the 28th May, 1843, in St. Andrew's Church to the Cannonmills, after the reading of the famous protest. Out of this action of the ministers came the birth of the West Church, and was fraught with far-reaching consequences for the minister and his people.

The foundation stone of the new church was laid on 29th August, 1843, and the West Church was completed and opened for public worship on 14th February, 1844.

CALDER U.F. CHURCH.—This fine old church has an interesting and worthy history, being originally the Early Secession or Burgher Church. The congregation grew and prospered. As Lochwinnoch, in common with other places, under the prosperity of the cotton manufacturing was fast thriving it was considered fitting that "for the extension and spread of the glorious Gospel" a church be built at Lochwinnoch. Accordingly the present church was built in 1792. The present manse, beside the church, was built in 1824.

PLACES OF INTEREST.

Clochoderick Stone.

At a distance of about one and a half miles from the village, on the main road to Kilbarchan, is situated a most interesting relic. A great rough boulder, set close to the roadway, Clochoderick Stone is thought to be the "Stone of Roderick." Roderick was a monarch of ancient Strathclyde—a friend and protector of Saint Mungo. It is presumed that the stone marks the site of a battle or perhaps of his death and burial.

Old Bridge at Bridgend.

Situated at the entrance to Calder Glen this bridge affords a fine view of the waterfall adjacent to it. Said to have been built by Regent Moray out of the forfeited property of the Glens of Barr, the bridge is occasionally referred to locally, even to this day, as the Regent Bridge.

Roebank Reservoir.

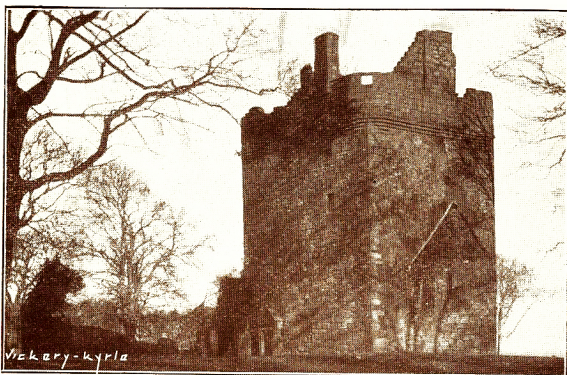
A full half-hour's walk from the village, to the eastward, lies the "Dam" in a natural cup in the high lands above Glenhead. Beautifully situated amid the loneliness of the hills, the reservoir has every appearance, were it not for the "Dam" breasts, of being a natural lake, and is charmingly dotted with little islands.

Fortress of Peel.

The remains of this interesting old structure are on the south side of the Loch, opposite Lochside House. The fortress is environed with an immense cairn of stones, and still stands to some height above the water level. Although frequently referred to in old records, little is known of its history. It is clear that it was used as a stronghold in very early times.

Barr Castle.

This is in a fine state of preservation and, although uninhabited, is well cared for. It is situated on the south side of Castle Semple Loch. The entrance to the Keep is by a porch which is of later construction than the original doorway above. Upon the ground floor are two vaulted apartments, one of which is the kitchen and has a finely arched fireplace. The hall, which is on the first floor, is lighted by four windows, one on each side, and has a fireplace in the west wall. A narrow private stair in the south-west corner leads to the second and third floors, to which the main stair also gives access. The dates 1680 and 1699 appear on the walls, but the building is older.



BARR CASTLE.

Photo: R. Stewart.

The Glens of Barr were a very old family, being first mentioned in 1296. They built the old Castle about the fifteenth century. Having sided with Queen Mary, they lost their estates after the battle of Langside, but were again re-instated in Barr in 1573.

Castle Sempil.

Much of the glory and beauty of this old estate—which is situated on the side of the loch—is departed, although it still retains some charm and a great deal that is interesting. The mansion house was, some few year ago, badly damaged by fire, and is now roofless and otherwise in a ruinous condition. The origin of the family of Sempil is difficult to trace, but we know that in the reign of King Alexander the Third, Robert Sempil was Stewart of the Barony of Renfrew. The old castle was demolished in the year 1735, and the elegant house which now stands in ruin was then built.

Garple Glen.

Garple Glen is a little cameo of rustic beauty. The garple trickles along its rocky bed, through miniature pools, over dwarfish waterfalls, through a fissure here and under a mossy bank there. The rugged path winds along the burn side. The tall stately trees, the bracken and the deep, deep carpet of fallen leaves form an enchanting setting for this miniature glen. Small it certainly is, but not paltry, for its scale and setting are so exact that its very smallness is its main charm.

Calder Glen.

At the entrance to the Glen a capital view of the old waterfall is to be obtained, and its setting of beauty is a promise of the delights ahead. A short distance further along the river bed presents a wonderful sight with its natural falls and weird courses out and in

amongst huge boulders where the action of the water has worn out innumerable crevices, basins and deep gorges. The twisting, winding path runs along the riverside flanked by finely wooded slopes with their profusion of broom, whin, briar and bracken, making a picture of rugged beauty which holds the visitor spellbound.

The Glen is open to the public, and many excursion and picnic parties are attracted by its charm.

Castle Scmpie Loch.

The Loch is one of the chief features and beauties of an interesting countryside. About two miles long and half a mile broad, the Loch lies in a natural basin fed by the Calder and drained by the Black Cart Water. With its well-planted and sloping lands around it, its pebbly shores and quaint little islands, it is admittedly one of the sights of the Shire.

As has already been indicated the Loch abounds with bird and plant life, and offers interesting studies for the Naturalist and Botanist.

The Public School.

The School occupies one of the finest sites in Lochwinnoch, being built in an elevated situation at the top of Calder Street, near to Calder Glen. It is a modern building, well equipped, sufficiently staffed and providing for the education of the young up to the third year of the Post Qualifying Classes. Pupils who desire to complete the full Secondary Course must, at present, finish the remaining two or three years at another centre. Various schools equipped for the finishing of such courses are within easy travelling distance from Lochwinnoch.

INDUSTRIES.

Cabinet and Furniture Making.

This is the staple industry of Lochwinnoch, and we are proud to say that our furniture is known and appreciated from one end of the globe to the other. A number of factories are engaged on this work, giving good employment to the greater portion of the inhabitants.

Woollens and Cloths.

The only reminder of the old weaving days is found in the production of woollens and homespun. Two small factories are engaged in this.

Colour Printing.

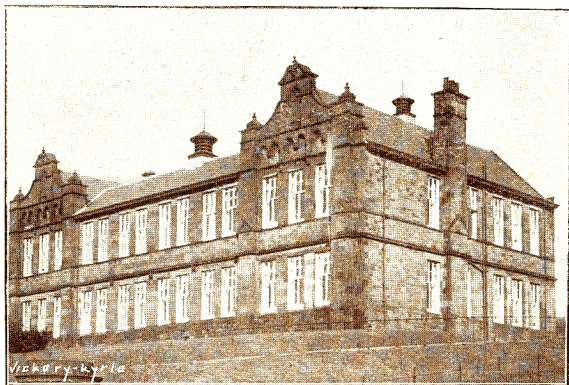
The printing of flag and art patterns on silk and other fine fabrics is carried out in a successful measure in the village.

Silk Spinning.

In what the locals know as the "Silk Work" the old and interesting trade of silk spinning and weaving goes on and prospers.

Famous Men of Lochwinnoch.

Hugh Orr was born in Lochwinnoch in 1715, and at the age of twenty-five set out to seek his fortune in America. After becoming the owner of the scythe works which first gave him employment, he



PUBLIC SCHOOL.

Photo: R. Stewart.

interested himself in national affairs and was appointed a State Senator. To him belongs the honour of having cast the first cannon made in the United States.

John Patrick, late Professor of Biblical Criticism in Edinburgh University, was born in the village in 1850, and gained his early education in the Public School. After serving as a pupil teacher, he entered the Church of Scotland Training College, later distinguished himself at the Glasgow University, and completed his studies in Germany. Graduating M.A. and B.D., he commenced his ministerial career in Kilmarnock, and after serving ten years at Greenside Church, Edinburgh, was appointed Professor of Biblical Criticism at the University of Edinburgh, in which town he still resides. In addition to his other degrees he was awarded those of D.D. and LL.D.

James Johnstone, Professor of Oceanography at Liverpool University, although not a native of the village, came to Lochwinnoch when a child, and after receiving his education at the Public School and the Technical College, Glasgow, entered the Royal College of Science, London, 1895. Three years later he was appointed assistant to the late Sir William A. Herdman, of Liverpool University, and succeeded him as Professor of Oceanography in 1919. He was a valued member of several Government Committees during the war, and is the author of standard works on Biology and Oceanography.

David Patrick, LL.D., was born in the village in 1849, and after distinguishing himself at Ayr Academy and Edinburgh University, joined the publishing firm of W. R. Chambers, where he eventually became head of the literary staff. Under his editorship were produced the new edition of the "Encyclopaedia," the "Cyclopaedia of English Literature," a World Gazetteer and a Biographical Dictionary. He died in Edinburgh in 1914.

War Memorial.

The Memorial takes the form of an Iona Cross and occupies a commanding position in Harvey Square, facing the Parish Church. The names of the sixty-three men from the parish who fell are inscribed on the base of the monument, which also bears the following inscription: "In Memory of the Men who fell in the Great War. 1914—1919. Erected 1921." The Memorial was unveiled by Lady Greig, wife of the M.P. for the Division, on 17th September, 1921. The Rev. John Russell, M.A., Chairman of the Parish Council, presided.

Local Notes.

The annual cattle show is one of the events of the village. Exhibits are numerous, and the accompanying sports interesting.

The Lochwinnoch annual sports day, under the auspices of the Lochwinnoch A.A.A., is now famous. The prizes are all of furniture made in the local works, and are admitted to rank very high in prize values so much so that the meeting is now known as the "Furniture Sports." Many of the leading athletes are attracted to enter and a great number of spectators from far and near are usually forward to enjoy the sport. The profits of these successful ventures are handed over to charities.

The Tradespeople's Early Closing Day is Wednesday, with the first Wednesday of each month as a whole holiday.

The vital statistics for the year 1927 may prove of interest. During the year there were registered 58 births, 18 marriages, and 38 deaths. A remarkable feature about the figures for the year is this: the average age of the deceased persons registered was 74.6 years.

Howwood.

Situated at the opposite end of Castle Semple Loch the thriving village of Howwood comes within the parish of Lochwinnoch. It is a small place, but very busy and prosperous, being largely concerned with bleaching of yarn and thread. Two large works are engaged in this industry, giving employment to a considerable number of people. Here is situated the only hotel in the parish; and nearby are Elliston Castle, an eminence where, according to tradition, William Wallace defended himself against a party of Englishmen, and the scene of the battle of Muirdykes.

RECREATIONS.

Billiards.

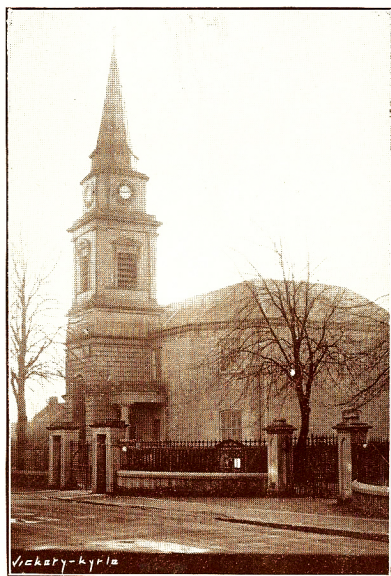
The Liberal Club possesses two billiard tables which are in good condition and open for play to non-members at very reasonable charges.

Bowling.

Pleasantly situated and easily accessible, the bowling green, the property of Lochwinnoch Bowling Club, is well cared for and in good playing condition. Visitors can be accommodated on the green for small charges.

Curling and Skating.

Castle Semple Loch affords unrivalled opportunities, during frost, for indulgence in these exhilarating pastimes. The village has three Curling Clubs, and each of them are willing to take an interest in visitors and learners.



PARISH CHURCH.

Photo: R. Stewart.

Fishing.

The St. Winnoch Angling Club have the fishing rights on the best reaches of the Calder and other smaller streams. A large number of trout have recently been put into the streams to improve and increase the stock. Premits are issued to visitors at a moderate charge.

Golf.

Well above the level of the village, about a mile to the westward thereof, lies the Golf Course. It is of nine holes over undulating ground of old turf, well designed and laid out. It is essentially a "sporting" course, giving opportunity for good iron and approaching play. The greens are in good condition.

Walking.

The country around the village affords abundant opportunity for walking. Circular walks are a feature, all with charm and attractiveness, varying in surroundings and type—from leafy lanes to wild open moorland—as they vary in length, from the short stroll to the lengthy "tramp." One need not hold too rigidly to the highways and byeways, as the glens and hills are practically all free of access, and where not permits can usually be obtained.

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CALDER GLEN. Photo: R. Stewart.

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