

TODAY'S NEWS

Have I got old news for you?

The Warlock of the Peel



1907

Parish Council Meeting.

Giving consideration to naming Streets and numbering houses in Lochwinnoch

1872

"Road Reformers"

Abolishing tolls on the roads in Renfrewshire is meeting stiff resistance. It is thought that those who use the roads should pay for them.

1885

A **Special General Meeting** of the Local Authority of Lochwinnoch is to be held today "To consider the forming the village into a special water supply district"

To be continued @ pbthecairn

1898

It is **reported** that arrangements for a conversion of Castlesemple Loch into a protected trout fishing area have been completed.

To be continued @ pbthecairn

Ringan Semple, a representative of the ancient family Semple, who lived in the Peel, its keeper, till 1735, was known as "The Warlock of the Peel." He was small of stature, lame, and deformed, and did not mix with the people of the district. A favourite recreation of his was to sail his boat on the loch, and was also fond of fishing and shooting. He could not bear to see his castle destroyed, and died of a broken heart. His ghost, however, was believed to have haunted the ruin for many years after his death. He was in league with the Spunkies of Lochside hills, the Water-Kelpie of Castle Semple Loch, the Bogle that frequently alarmed the rustics by an unearthly noise in the air, and other inhabitants of the mythological world. Ringan had also an ally in Sam Arnot, another warlock. It was stated that at a horse-race between Lord Semple and another gentleman, they cast their spell over his lordship's opponent, who fell from his horse, broke his breast-bone, and, of



1844

A wagtail has built its nest between the rails at Lochwinnoch Station. It is sitting on 5 eggs. The wheels of the engine and carriages passing 2 or 3 inches from the nest. It goes in and out fearlessly.

1896

Cheap Bread in Lochwinnoch

Two pound loaves are a penny each.

1875

County Licensing Court

Mr H Shedden applied for a Hotel licence in High Street, Lochwinnoch. Mr Henry McDowall objected and after a long discussion the hotel was refused.

At the same session, one applicant who had lost her license because she had sold alcohol on a Sunday, explained she had sold a pint of beer to an old man more as a medicine than as anything else. She too was refused.

course, lost the race.

We next hear of Ringan among the fairies, who danced on Dunconnell, and other green hills in the parish. Early in last century the wife of a local farmer gave birth to a child. Previous to its baptism it was carried off by the fairies, under the direction of the Warlock of the Peel. The farmer, who was an elder in the kirk, prayed long and earnestly for the return of his child. His petition was answered, the baby being found at the mouth of one of his cows, quite unhurt.

The fairies were permitted by their queen to have a grand dance upon a beautiful knowe near Glenhead on Hansel Monday evening, 1738. Two young farmers, who happened to be on their way home to Auchenbathie Tower, were witnesses of the dance of tiny fairies, who were robed in green mantles, and whirled around in graceful jigs to the strains of sweet and celestial music. A knowe, a little distance above the Tower is still known as the 'Deil's Dancing Knowe'

The ghosts of Ringan and his band of confederates were next heard of during the notable frost of 1740, which lasted for 13 weeks. People walked upon the ice on the loch on their way to church for 13 successive Sundays and had each worshipper not carried a Bible with a red cover they would, it was believed, have been captured by the unearthly inhabitants of the Peel.

Ringan and his allies were also blamed for the misery which befel the inhabitants of the district owing to want of water, employment, and food, consequent upon the long frost.

It was also related that the water-kelpie aided by Ringan, caused a great flood on Fair o' Hill Day in November, 1763, and seized and drowned a fair young lady and her male attendant in the Loch.

The spirit of the Warlock of the Peel [it is a relief to learn] appears to have ceased troubling the good people of this locality many years ago.