

CHAPTER FIVE

PARISH LIFE, WORK AND LEISURE

Kintore was and to a certain extent still is **an agricultural parish**. We have a valuation of the parish dating back as far as **1696** and most of the farm properties mentioned then have names still recognisable today, (even though the spellings may have changed) such as Ratchill, Blairs, Cottoune, Leylodge, Tillibinne, Wardhouse, Midmill, Brae, Strathray, Bogheads, Toombelhill, later called Woumbillhill, and Dalwirie. In 1696 the entire valuation of the parish was £1070 Scots, but it is impossible to compare that with modern values.

The biggest farm in the parish seems to have been **Leylodge** whose tenant was Robert Lesle(sic), valued at £15.0.8. and the smallest was **Woodhead** at a mere 17s8d. Most farms seem to have been valued at £5 or £6 Scots. Included in these valuations would be such items as farm-servants wages, rents from sub-tenants such as weavers, smiths, millers, tailors(sic), shoemakers and herds. Livestock would presumably also have been included.

In the town or **burgh** the following people are important enough to be listed- **8 weavers, 2 shoemakers, 1 smith, 1 merchant, 2 tailors, 1 apprentice, 9 servants and the minister.**

For some reason the Torrieburne(sic) was listed separately.

The 1696 valuation was put together by the Earl of Kintore's Chamberlain, Robert Bruce, Balzie (Baillie) of Kintore and Mr George Birnie, Schoolmaster of Kintore and Clerk and Collector of the said parish.

A century later, at the time of the **Old Statistical Account**, **Reverend George Adam** tells us that the town had 57 dwelling houses, and a population of 94 males and 134 females, 54 horses, 168 black cattle and 300 sheep. It had a mill where it cost 3d a peck to have your corn ground and the river produced salmon worth 4d a pound in spring and 2d a pound in summer.

The **population of the parish** as a whole had declined by about 100 to **862**, of whom 392 were male and 470 female. The surplus females were partly accounted for by the **stocking knitting industry** and partly by the fact that a lot of young men had to leave the parish to learn trades elsewhere. **There was no major industry in the parish.** Total livestock in the parish amounted to 106 horses, 800 black cattle and 2500 sheep. In fact sheep had been such an important source of income since the middle-ages that the town shepherd had been a privileged person. He had the use of a free croft, over three bolls of meal from the Earl of Kintore and a salary of 4 shillings for every kale-yard in the burgh. The wool was of great benefit to all the people of the burgh.

One farmer in the parish was very go-ahead and had introduced **improvements** such as liming of the soil, ditching, drainage and raising turnips. One or two others were beginning to follow his example but Kintore was still less advanced agriculturally than neighbouring Kinellar. Ploughs were improving and more farmers had carts to take their crops of oats and pease (a kind of barley) into Aberdeen to market. The peat mosses were beginning to wear out and so fuel was becoming less plentiful. The main

disadvantages suffered by farmers were the short leases and the flooding of land near the River Don.

The parish had quite **advanced transport links**. Two highways passed through the parish, one to the burgh of Inverurie and one to Kemnay and Alford. Recently, in 1791, a “*very elegant bridge of three arches*” had been built between Kintore and Inverurie. Before these new highways, the main road to Aberdeen had followed the old drove road along what is now Kingsfield Road towards Deystone and Kinellar. Local roads of sand and gravel were made by “**statute labour**”. Local men were obliged to work on the roads for a six-day stint and were paid 1s6d for their trouble. Because of good transport links, most people were now buying their cloth in Aberdeen instead of making their own. There were two taverns in the parish, necessary to accommodate travellers using the turnpike road north.

Reverend Adam described the people of Kintore as being

“generally peaceable, charitable and industrious, strangers to luxury and vice, and in the Royal burgh not much given to political speculations”
Old Statistical Account.1793

In the **New Statistical Account** of 1843, **Reverend Robert Simpson** also complained about the low lying nature of the land in Kintore which not only caused problems with flooding but which also seemed to give the population a tendency to suffer from typhus and other feverish infections. The river fishings were no longer very profitable, and the pearls that used to be found in the river were now exhausted. However much of the land was still very fertile and there had been several acres of new trees planted, notably by the Earl of Kintore.

The only main landowners were the **Earl of Kintore** and **Duncan Forbes Mitchell of Thainstone** though a number of small heritors owned small properties of about 5-6 acres each. In the 1841 census the **population** of the burgh was **462**, the landward parish **725** and **Port Elphinstone** (also part of the parish) **112**, giving a total population of **1299**.

There were no interesting forms of recreation at the time, but apparently there had at one time been a racecourse in the parish!

Much of the land had been improved over the last 30 years but leases were still too short, lasting for an average of only 19 years and so there was little incentive to improve if one was to lose one’s lease before one could enjoy the fruits of improving labours. Despite this, one of Kintore’s tenant farmers, **Mr Abel of Aquherton**, had won the Highland Society’s medal for the improvement of his lands. It took him 30 years to improve 120 acres. It was fortunate that he had an unusually long lease!

The quality of the **buildings** was improving, however, and most farmhouses were now built of stone and lime with slate roofs. Farm-servants slept in a “chaumer” and had the luxury of eating in the farm kitchen rather than having to cook for themselves in a “bothy” after a hard day’s work, a system that was more common south of Aberdeen. It cost you £2.2s to pasture a cow for the season – a great deal of money at that time.

In the burgh there were several good shops, including a **Post Office** that was the longest standing in the Garioch. The **Royal Mail and three stagecoaches** passed through the town daily. The economy of the parish had also been boosted by the **Aberdeenshire Canal** that had been opened in 1807 at a cost of £50,000 and recently enlarged. (It is still possible to see traces of the canal bed and a milestone on the Deystone road near Brae Farm.) The canal carried granite, coal, bone-meal, lime, bark, agricultural produce and manure on barges pulled by horses along a tow-path. There was also a passenger fly-boat service, again pulled by horses going at a steady canter along the canal bank. There was a small landing wharf in Kintore. Sadly the canal never made a profit for its shareholders despite the great benefits it brought to the economy of Kintore, Port Elphinstone (where its terminus was) and Inverurie. It was drained in the 1850s and part of the railway line to Huntly was laid on its bed.

In 1843 the total annual value of Kintore's produce was £10,749. This included grain, timber, turnips, potatoes, rental of pasture, fisheries and granite. So Kintore was a relatively wealthy parish. There were mills in Port Elphinstone, including a meal mill owned by **Mr Tait of Crichtie**, and several sawmills.

By 1875 the **Great North of Scotland Railway and Alford Railway** had added to the wealth of the parish. In Alexander Smith's "**New History of Aberdeenshire**" 1875, he tells us that the railways owned land in the parish worth £1049 per annum. According to **Alexander Watt** whose incomplete "Early History of Kintore" was published posthumously by his widow in 1865, the railway station was built on land once known as the "Battlefield" or "Hangman's Croft".

The **1871 census** showed the **population of the Royal Burgh to be 659** but there were only **68 entitled to be on the voters' roll**. This was because to vote at that time you needed to own or rent a considerable amount of property and most of the labourers and small tradesmen who lived in the burgh simply were not wealthy enough to qualify. Many of them would have to wait till the 1880s or even 1918 to vote. And of course most of Kintore's female population would have to wait until 1928 to vote, the exceptions being wealthy female householders or wives of householders; and even they had to have achieved the ripe old age of 30. Even after the First World War, young women were seen as too silly to be able to choose members of parliament, or even members of local councils.

Smith tells us that -

"the principal houses in the town lie along the old post road from Aberdeen to Inverness. Some scattered houses are built along the old Aberdeen road in the south end of the town and along the burghmuir on the west road. The Townhouse, Manse, Church, Churchyard and Parish School are in the South end of the main street and the railway station, Free church and schools are in the North."

A New History of Aberdeenshire. Part II 1875. P. 856.

A **National Security Savings Bank** branch had been established in 1837 and a branch of the **North of Scotland Bank** in the mid 1840s. There were also **Subscription and Sabbath School libraries** in the village. There was still no manufacturing in the burgh itself, but by this time Mr. Tait of Crichtie had established his **paper mill** near Port Elphinstone and was employing 200 people there.

Sewerage had been introduced to part of the burgh in the early 1870s but even after 1900 many cottages in the parish were without sanitation and had ashpits and earth closets in their gardens. These pits were emptied regularly by a man who came round with a horse and cart. Although the parish was very well served by roads, there was not yet a bridge across the Don and to get to Hatton of Fintray you had to cross by either ford or ferry.

The **Valuation Roll** for the year **1879-1880** showed many of the same names as 1696 and most of them were still owned by and rented from the **Earl of Kintore**. The largest property was **Crichtie**, occupied by John Tait, worth £450 in rent per annum. The Tait family also owned the largest industrial concern in the parish, the paper mills on Thainstone Estate, worth £465 value per year, and so were an economic force to be reckoned with. Other large tenancies were **Aquherton**, split between Peter Morrison and William Duncan at £416 combined annual rent, **Boghead**, occupied by David Burness at £366 per annum, **North and South Leylodge**, annual value £200.12s and £160 respectively, **Wards**, farmed by William Anderson at £190 annually, **Womblehills** (sic) tenanted by Thomas and Alex. Fraser at £170 per annum, and **Tofthill Mains**, occupied by Sylvester Campbell. The latter was probably the biggest tenant farmer in Kintore farming, as well as Tofthills, **Dalweary** (sic), part of **Deystone**, and part of **Nethermill**. His descendants still farm locally, but mainly in the parish of Kinellar.

The valuation roll only lists three women as tenants, Mrs Robert Hendry of the Burgh Land, Mrs J Henderson Snr and Agnes Sherriffs as having Crofts on the Hill of Kintore but one or two ladies were listed as being the occupiers of houses in Port Elphinstone and Kintore Burgh. **Tom's Forest Quarry**, owned by **John Fyfe** of Kemnay, was worth £50 per annum and after the Earl of Kintore the biggest landowner was the **Great North of Scotland Railway Company** (mentioned above) whose annual value had increased to £1348 in only a few short years. The blacksmith of the parish was **Robert Middleton** whose croft was valued at £13 a year.

The Valuation Roll also mentions several names familiar from the Kirk Session Records, the Morrisons who farmed **Hallforest**, Alex Roger, William Anderson, James Brown, William Watt, Charles Wilson and George Durno, all of them faithful servants of the kirk.

In 1914 all the estates of the Earl of Kintore were sold, mainly to the farmers who already occupied them. The Auction, held at the Grand Hotel, Aberdeen on 6th August 1914, must have been a stressful and uncertain event. The sale catalogue featured most of the properties listed in the Valuation Roll of 1880 and included lots of building land and even establishments like the Town House and the part of it let to Mrs Mary Cruickshank as a Post Office. The Torryburn, the Shootings, the Fishings on the Don and the Golf Course were all listed. The following advertisement in the catalogue is fairly typical:-

“The Compact Agricultural Holding

known as

BRAE OF KINTORE

situate in the parish of KINTORE, close to the Town, and extending to

95a.Or. 8p.

The Farm House

Contains;- Sitting Room, Parlour, Four Bedrooms, Kitchen, Dairy and Pantry.

The STEADING comprises;-

Boiler and Poultry Houses, Turnip Shed, Open Yard, Byre for Thirty-two Head, Two-stall Nag Stable, Barn with Loft, Stable for Three Horses, Bothy, Loose Box, Tool House, Two-bay Cart Shed.”

Knight, Frank & Rutley, Auctioneers, Sale Catalogue, 6th August, 1914.

By the time of the **Third Statistical Account**, written by the **Reverend John McFadden in 1960**, the parish had changed tremendously. The area of the parish was the same as in 1843, i.e. 9098 acres with Port Elphinstone still officially included even though its inhabitants considered themselves to be part of Inverurie and registered their births, marriages and deaths there.

At the 1951 census the population of the parish was **2379** but that of the burgh only **870**. The population had been increasing steadily in the 19th century until 1873 when there was a **mass emigration of 120 men, women and children to New Brunswick in Canada**. Some did return later, but the churchyard bears evidence to the number of Kintore people who lived and died abroad, in the Empire, Africa or the USA.

There were **several prosperous farms** in the parish ranging from 100 acres to 700 acres in size. A number of small crofts were still being worked and all but one had agricultural machinery. **The change from horse to tractor** had started after the first war because most of the mighty Shires and Clydesdale horses that had pulled the ploughs on Scottish farms had been requisitioned to pull heavy artillery on the battlefields of the Western Front in France and Flanders. Most of them had perished under the onslaught of machine gun and shells, dying horrible deaths. They could not be easily replaced and gradually the tractor and other inventions took over the role these horses had played. Of course the arrival of machinery was also to eventually lead to unemployment in rural communities and this was already beginning to have an effect by 1960. By February 1954 there were 60 tractors and 14 electric motors in Kintore. There were three motor garages and a blacksmith in the burgh, and 132 holdings of more than an acre in the parish. Only 70 horses remained, along with 579 dairy cattle, 1716 beef cattle, 810 sheep, 570 pigs and 38,715 assorted poultry!

Housing was of good quality. Many former cottar houses had been modernised with plumbing and sanitation installed. Twelve new agricultural workers houses had been built near the burgh. Ninety new houses had been built by the Town Council and

several new private houses had been constructed out of granite. Two of these on School Road, **Memphis** and **Barre** were constructed by two Kintore quarrymen who had gone to work in quarries in the USA, one at Memphis, Tennessee, and the other at Barre, Vermont. These men worked hard, did well financially and returned to their native village to build, in 1903, substantial family homes named after the places where they had made their fortune. The title deeds show measurements in cubits with each granite block being individually measured and cut. The location of the houses is given as adjacent to the **Turnpike Road**. The council had also taken over and modernised several old properties and built **Townhead Terrace** prior to World War Two.

Bridgealehouse which had once housed the burgh magistrate had changed its name to **Bridgend**, **Goose Croft** had changed to **Bona-vista (now the Post Office)** and **Langcruik** had been built on the site of an old house by Mr McDonald, a director of Balfour Beattie, the building firm, in the 1940s.

Prior to the building boom of the seventies, led by the Craig family and Malcolm Allan, much of the burgh land consisted of small crofts and farms. **Ashlea Avenue** and **East Park** estate were built on what had been the **Burgh Farm**. **Howieslap** was built on the site of **Black's Croft** and beside it was **Rosemount Croft**, all these on what is now **Kingsfield Road** and what was once the main drove road to Kinellar and beyond. At the end of Kingsfield Road there was a nursery, but before that you came to the **Lodge**, one of the oldest and most substantial houses in the burgh. Next to the Lodge stood the **Gordon Homes** where families of men serving in the Gordon Highlanders had accommodation. This part of the burgh also had the cottages known locally as **Babylon** where the "poorer" families lived and which were Kintore's nearest thing to slum dwellings. The town council built some very attractive, modern homes on Kingsfield Road not long after the second war.

Just off Forest Road stands **Ogilvie Crescent**, built just after the Second World War and named after **Provost Ogilvie**. The private housing just beyond it is much more recent being constructed on land belonging to the **Henderson family**, hence the names of Henderson Drive and Henderson Crescent, built in the 1970s.

On **Northern Road**, once called **New Street**, stands **Smithfield**. There is a very interesting story behind its name. **Provost Smith** of Lilybank had seven daughters and a son. Perhaps to encourage his daughters to find husbands, he built Smithfield and each daughter got a house there when she married. Provost Smith also sold **Hawthorne House** to Scott the blacksmith. His son, **Reverend Dawson Scott**, became famous as a poet and local historian and lived for many years at Hawthorne House. Its grounds were later converted into homes for the elderly. On Northern Road, **Mansefield**, built on land formerly belonging to the Manse, was another pre-war housing development. A local resident remembers that the rents were once the princely sum of £9 for six months.

On Forest Road, at the site of Moar's, formerly Duncan's Furniture shop, there was once a group of four cottages called Marischal Square. They were demolished to make way for the egg grading station mentioned below before being converted to their present use.

At the time of Reverend McFadden's ministry, many Kintore men were finding work at the **Locomotive Works** in Inverurie and many other men and "girls" (Mr McFadden's non PC terminology!) worked at **Tait's paper mill**. Only one quarry was still working (Fyfe's at Tom's Forest) but between one and two hundred men found employment at local civil and engineering works. The **knackery** employed 15 men. Its owner, **Mr Dundas**, became Provost of Kintore and built a fine Art Deco house near the school. The Hydro-Electricity Board was building a new transformer to replace the original electricity installed in 1914 by use of an electric dam at **Coolgardie, Broomhill**. (This had been inaugurated by Provost Smith on 4th November of that year. It was by all accounts a great occasion with a meal, entertainment by Mr David Thomson and his party, and a retiring collection for the War Fund) Other employers in the 1950s included an air ministry store at Cairnhall, the egg-grading station and a bulb farm near Port Elphinstone. Village trades included joinery, building and plumbing. There was also a busy haulage contractor's business and a **slaughterhouse** on Castle Road belonging to Sinclair McIntosh the local butcher. Several professional men and women travelled into Aberdeen by bus and train. There was little or no unemployment.

The parish shared a county councillor with Inverurie but the burgh was also entitled to send a representative to the County Council. A local farmer represented the landward area of the parish on the Town Council. **The Town Council had nine members** including the Provost, two Baillies, the Treasurer and Dean of Guild. The Town Clerk was an advocate in Aberdeen. The Town Officer had responsibility for the Churchyard and Cemetery. The Post Master was also the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths. Mrs. C. Smith, a local resident, recalled that it was an excellent state of affairs to have the Town Council. Each councillor had his own remit and residents knew exactly whom to contact if they had a problem with their drains, or a streetlight or a housing matter. Small did not mean inefficient but quite the opposite!

An iron bridge had been built over the Don in 1882 with the last two rivets being put in place by **Provost Fraser** and the **Dean of Guild**, blacksmith and mechanic **James Scott** (Reverend Dawson Scott's father.) This ended a long-standing tradition of crossing by ferry. A local character called **George Marnoch**, otherwise known as "Boatie Marnoch" had operated the ferry from Boat Farm. The ferry was like a punt on a rope and the adult fare was a penny. Many people crossed on it to go blackberry picking in Balbithan woods. The burgh streets were lit by the electricity already mentioned. Many farms had their own generators or used calor gas. The burgh had enjoyed the services of a resident doctor for some years. Just after WW1 the doctor's practice had stretched as far as Skene and he had travelled first in a pony and trap, later progressing to a motor vehicle. There was also a popular veterinary surgeon lodging in School Road. By 1950 the village had both a district nurse and its own dentist who also lived in School Road. Many of Kintore's citizens lived to a ripe old age. The two banks between them had deposits of over £200,000 because Kintore's inhabitants were traditionally thrifty! The parish also had a police station and auxiliary fire station. There were 15 shops in the burgh itself, and the post office employed five postmen.

During the course of the twentieth century a variety of buildings were in use as **shops** and many of them changed ownership and use several times. In the 1930s, 40s and 50s, for example, Kintore had many more shops and services than it has today. The

Townhouse once contained Diack's newsagents, followed by Murray's sweet shop and Mrs Forbes's Spar shop. The present pharmacy was once Johnstone's and then Macallum's grocery store. Dossett's butcher shop used to be a grocer's owned by Sandy Smith, who also operated two vans, and the Modelmaker's premises was once a grocery as well. Next door to that there was Morrison the tailor's which then became the Savings Bank and also at one time housed the Registrar. The current men's barber was once a butcher's shop owned first by Sinclair McIntosh and latterly by Morrisons.

On **School Road** a Mrs Glass ran a fancy goods and sweet shop in the 30s and 40s. In the 50s there was a furniture shop run by Andersons (now in Inverurie) and Andy Duncan's furniture store, now Moar's in Forest Road, started life where the Fish and Chip shop now plies its trade in Northern Road. Mrs Duncan ran a very successful café in School Road for many years from 1960 onwards. For a while before and during the second war, Miss Law ran the Post office from the Townhouse and sorted the mail that arrived in the village by train. Miss Urquhart ran the telephone exchange and also managed to deliver telegrams. Copland's Newsagent shop, now the Tandoori Takeaway, was once a chemist run by Charlie Pirie and Maryfield, the former Manse in the Square, housed a haberdashery business in the 1920s. Maryfield, later owned by the Gordons who bequeathed it to the church, was at that time occupied by the Misses Diack. On the left hand side there was a shop selling ribbons, thread and wool run by one Miss Diack while at the other side of the house her sister gave piano lessons to the youngsters of the town.

On **New Street**, now Northern Road, the building that now houses the Conservative Offices, was once home to a shoemaker called Ogilvie who lived to be 103 years old. Next to him was Albert McWilliam, the jeweller and watchmaker, and Dodd Sim the saddler. There was another shoemaker, Tevendales, where the Chinese takeaway now stands, and a further grocer, pishop and general merchant, Clark's, nearby. Meldrum's Garage stood where the fire station is now and there was another grocery and sweetshop run at different times by Mrs Scott and Miss Glashan. The Station Hotel became the Crown Hotel and was later converted into flats.

There were even shops on Kingsfield Road, including Auld, the shoemaker, Kennedy's grocery store and Maxie Wood, another grocery, as well as a small general store beside the level crossing. Peter Durno had a tailor's business on Townhead Terrace and there were two other tailors on School Road.

It is difficult to imagine so many similar shops doing a good trade and making a living in such a small village but there were several reasons for this. First of all, very few people had refrigerators, and so it was essential to shop nearly every day for fresh food. Secondly, this was in the days before supermarkets and so no-one bought in bulk and different shops specialised in different things. Thirdly, most of the grocers, bakers and butchers had vans that toured the countryside selling food to farmers' wives who, of course, had no cars in which to travel into town. And finally, very few Kintore natives travelled into Aberdeen more than once or twice a year unless they worked there. Public transport costs were high. In the late 1920s, an annual season ticket on Mitchell's bus cost £4.7.6. and a season ticket on the train cost around £8-£9 per annum. Obviously individual fares were also relatively high. So most locals would

buy their clothing and footwear from local tailors and shoemakers who could, as a result, run profitable businesses in the parish.

As Reverend McFadden commented in 1960;-

“It is true the city is visited by the parishioners, but they are a parish loving people who always have a return ticket.----They do not travel far from the parish, even for holidays.”

Third Statistical Account. 1960.

Before the twentieth century most of the population of Kintore worked so hard that they had very little time for leisure. Their only day of rest was the Sabbath and it was generally devoted to worship, prayer and contemplation, with perhaps an afternoon visit to relatives or a country walk. One of the favourite walks was up the Tuach Hill, taking care not to fall into the extinct quarry hole there, and another, known as the triangle, is still popular today. It went along Castle Road, down what is now the Kemnay road and back into the village via Gauchhill. The only other leisure times were perhaps at the Lamma and Michaelmas Fairs and at Harvest Festival time when there might be dances in the parish. Later on the annual Farmers' Ball became quite a prestigious affair. In the years immediately after WW1, before the onslaught of motor traffic,

“On Sunday evenings the young folks paraded three or four abreast, linked arms, on the Kintore to Inverurie Road, usually going as far as Thainstone.”

Miss E. Hardie, former Kintore resident.

After World War One attitudes and working hours changed and ordinary people found more time for leisure activities. So what did Kintore have to offer? Certainly by the middle of the 20th century there was a wide range of activities in the burgh and a number of organisations you could join. The Church itself provided many of these in the form of the **Woman's Guild** (already mentioned for their skill at fundraising for the improvement of the Church and the War Fund), the **Boys' Brigade** and **Sunday School**. There was also a strong and well-attended branch of the **Women's Rural Institute**. Some local residents remember the Guild's delightful fund-raising **Garden Parties**, held before the war on the lawn of the old Manse. In the 1970s what is now the Women's Group was known as **“The Young Wives”** and its programmes included advice on flower arranging, winemaking, care of houseplants and use of leisure time, as well as talks on the work of the Samaritans, meetings with other Young Wives groups, a session on “Teaching your Child to Pray” and a contribution to the Women's World Day of Prayer. The Guild at that time had similarly varied programmes including talks on Mission Work in Malawi and South Africa, the role of Church Women in America, the work of Oakbank School and Quiz nights.

In 1960, The Reverend McFadden mentioned the *“delightfully situated pleasure park”*, two cricket teams, one of which had a pitch at Gauchhill, a football team, the bowling club, the badminton club, the cycling club and the long-established pipe band, of which the burgh was very proud. The Town Council rented the golf course from the Laird of Balbithan, and also had the rights to the angling on both Don banks. Priority was given to citizens of the burgh but anglers were also attracted from as far away as Aberdeen on a regular basis. It was also common for city dwellers to visit

Kintore for a “day out” on the Aberdeen local holiday. Reverend McFadden regretted that the inhabitants of Kintore were becoming increasingly involved in gambling in the form of football pools. There was also a pool and billiard hall on Kingsfield Road.

The **Public Hall** was the centre of much entertainment. In the 1940s and 1950s, for example, there were dances most Saturday nights and whist drives on Fridays, while a mobile cinema called once a week. Other films were viewed at the **Victoria Cinema Inverurie**, built by the Kintore firm, Craig and Sons. A **Debating Society**, a **Young Liberal Club** and a **Drama Group**, run by **Mr Dinnie**, also met in the Public Hall. The drama group drew large audiences for plays like “*Waiting for the Verdict*” and “*Mains Wooing*”. The **Church Choir** were also leading village entertainers, providing soirees and concerts led by the Mearns and Deans families. The County Library provided book-lending facilities in the village school and the other school at Leylodge. During the war the church hall had served as a canteen for troops.

The Pipe Band had its own small hall in what is now Allandale Gardens. It had previously been the ex-servicemen’s hut and was another venue for concerts and dances. Sadly it burnt down. The late Mrs C. Smith, who resided at “Memphis” well into her 90s but who as a child lived on Forest Road at Wellend Cottage (where Mowat’s plumbing business used to stand) remembers attending dancing classes in this hut. A small man with a fiddle taught his pupils to do square dancing, quadrilles and eightsome reels. When the hut burnt down, Mrs Smith’s mother bought the “scalded” piano for £2, a lot of money in those days. One or two residents can remember attending woodwork and cookery classes in the village. The **Bowling Green’s** original clubhouse was a railway carriage. In summer there were picnics – a number of locals can remember the **Coronation Picnic of 1953**, and after the Second World War, the **annual village galas** began. There are still held today in the form of the Kintore Festival. Children (and adults!) also enjoyed Sunday School Picnics and School Picnics to Banff, Cullen and Fraserburgh, travelling by train. Residents can remember **bonfires on the Tuach Hill and at Gauchhill to celebrate the end of World War Two**. Mrs Smith also recalled the very fine sermon preached at the time of armistice in 1945 by the then minister, **Reverend Roderick Boyd**.

On at least one occasion an innocent, childish leisure pursuit led to a **tragedy** that shook the community. It was the custom of some youngsters to row an old boat on the waters of the electricity dam at Coolgardie. In 1935 young Freddie Moir of Dalwearie drowned when the leaking boat capsized and sank. No-one was able to rescue him before he perished.

Great excitement was created during the Second World War by the billeting of **Polish troops** at the Masonic Hall. The young women of the parish considered these foreign soldiers to be much more exotic and handsome than the local lads, especially when they marched along New Street in their smart uniforms singing the Polish song which was soon being copied by all the young people of the village. A number of romances developed, some of them illicit, and quite a number of hearts were broken at the end of the war. Before they left, however, the Polish officers attended the **Victory Ball** in the Public Hall. It was a “posh” affair and Mrs Smith remembered the difficulty of trying to put together a glamorous ensemble under the constraints of rationing and a lack of clothing coupons! Living at that time with her husband in Mansefield, she had

an officer's batman billeted on a camp bed in her living room. This was an imposition suffered by many Kintore residents.

Despite the presence of three hotels in the burgh, Reverend McFadden was pleased to report little drunkenness. The **Kintore Arms**, the oldest hotel, was built as a coaching inn to serve travellers on the new Turnpike Road. It has been owned since the 1930s by the Thomson family and before that by the Hunter and Mearns families. The **Station Hotel**, later the **Crown**, was, as its name suggests, the railway inn, and the **Torryburn** was a hotel with an interesting history. It was mentioned in the 1696 valuation as an important property in its own right, owning a substantial amount of farmland and the Rollomire. Before World War Two it was owned by Dr Rennie, and then requisitioned for the war effort and turned into a hostel for the **Land Army**. In 1947 it was bought by the late Jimmy Spence and soon became a hotel. Sadly it is now derelict.

Most households had **wireless** and **gramophone** before the war and a substantial number had **television** by the time of the Third Statistical Account. Reverend McFadden also commented that his parishioners were keen readers of newspapers and magazines. He also tells us that although the traditional **Hogmannay** celebration was still popular in the parish, the **Christmas Festival** was being observed more since 1950 and that there were an increasing number of lighted trees being placed in windows.

Reverend McFadden concluded his contribution to the Third Statistical Account by saying;-

“The morals of the people are generally good and the standard of family life high. Church attendance is probably above average for the county, but the farm workers as a class, while anxious to have their lines in the church, are poor attenders.”
Third Statistical Account of Scotland, 1960.