

CHAPTER SIX

PASTORAL CARE AND EDUCATION

Mention has already been made of the role played by Kintore Church in **the moral and spiritual care** of its parishioners. Until the advent of the welfare state, the Kirk also had a major role to play in the physical well-being of the poor and disadvantaged of the parish. The kirk had also traditionally played an active role in **education** - not just in **Sabbath School** but in the parochial schools as well.

In the **New Statistical Account** of 1843 **Reverend Simpson** describes the state of the poor in Kintore. There was, regrettably, a large increase in the numbers of “ordinary” poor. By this he probably means unemployed or low paid rather than old or infirm. Mr Simpson gives no explanation as to why this increase occurred but it is likely to have been a result of agricultural improvement. Many of the small crofters lost their land in the drive to enclose the fields with dykes, and it was expensive to introduce lime, fertiliser, new machinery and drainage. Unless they could get work from other farmers they were in great financial trouble and in cases like this the Kirk was duty bound to help out. The money for helping the poor came from weekly collections, bequests and fines from sinners or people who broke the Sabbath. Reverend Simpson also refers to “*three fatuous or imbecile persons, all paupers*”, and a boy and girl (presumably orphans) one of whom was a “*simpleton*”. Though charitable, 19th century church leaders were not always very enlightened in their language!

Smith’s “New History of Aberdeenshire” gives a detailed breakdown of **poor relief** in Kintore in 1871. Income for the poor was **£758.4.5. along with £22.2.2.in mortifications** (bequests in wills.) One of these was **Davidson’s legacy**. Born in Kintore, Mr Davidson became a barrister at the Temple in London and died in 1765. He left £300 sterling to the church for the poor of Kintore and from the interest of his legacy, 7-10 paupers received £1 per annum each. Other benefactors of the poor of Kintore were **Baillie McKay** who left £400, and **Miss Ross**, the last surviving daughter of a parish schoolmaster, who left £100 in 1861 to be divided among poor burgh dwellers not receiving parochial relief.

The poor fund was spent in the following ways;-

<i>“Relief of Regular Poor</i>	<i>£481.15.2</i>
<i>Relief of Casual Poor</i>	<i>£ 18. 7.31/2</i>
<i>Medical Relief</i>	<i>£ 21. 8.2</i>
<i>Management</i>	<i>£ 46.19.6</i>
<i>Law expenses</i>	<i>£ 17.16.6</i>
<i>Buildings</i>	<i>£ 2.17.6</i>
<i>Balance in Hand</i>	<i>£191. 2 51/2</i>
	<i>£780. 6.7”.</i>

The number of poor being relieved was broken down as follows, 18 males and 46 females, totalling 64, plus their 35 dependents. The larger number of women was probably accounted for by widows and the longer life expectancy of women. Six people and their dependents had recently been removed from the roll either because

they had moved out of the parish, or died or perhaps even gained employment. There were also nine paupers on the roll classified as insane.

After 1900 the new **Liberal Government** introduced **welfare reforms** including the first Old Age Pensions, but only for those over seventy, and a National Insurance Act. However, the Kirk still had a role to play in relief of the poor for some years into the 20th century. It was only through the good services of the church and individual benefactors that the poor in rural parishes like Kintore were able to remain living in the community. Had they lived in England or some Scottish cities, their fate would have been the indignity of the **Workhouse**, and separation from family and friends. There was a poorhouse or “poor cottages” in the community, near Springburn, but at least its occupants were in the village and could move in or out depending on their circumstances.

As well as the support of the poor and infirm at home, the Kirk was also mindful of its obligations abroad. Treasurer’s reports at the beginning of the 20th century refer to the “*upkeep of a boy at Kikuyu*” largely supported by Sunday school collections. It cost £5 in 1910. This seems to have been an early version of World Vision. The church also sent an average of £3-£4 to Foreign Missions at this time, £1-£2 to colonial schemes and £1-£2 to general social work.

Even as late as 1960, well after the Beveridge Report and the introduction of the Welfare State, interest on the trusts managed by the kirk, amounting to £1300, was being distributed among the needy of the parish, mainly senior citizens.

From Reformation onwards, schoolmasters had to be loyal to the Kirk and sign the **Confession of Faith**. In 1710, for example, it was signed by **William Bruce** in Kintore. Often they combined their role with that of Session Clerk (though this does not seem to have been the case in Kintore) and sometimes even that of gravedigger!

Kintore seems to have had a good school fairly early on in its history because **Dr Arthur Johnston**, son of the **Laird of Caskieben** learned his Latin there in the late 16th century and went on to be a leading Latin scholar and poet.

There is quite a lot of surviving information about the school in the 19th century. Reverend Simpson tells us that there were classes for **English Grammar, Latin and Geography**, and that the **Scriptures were read daily**. The schoolmaster in 1843, who had been in office since 1836, had a salary of £30 a year and a house but no garden. There was also a good “**female school**” in the town. In the 19th century it was common to educate only boys in the main parochial school and send girls to a Dame or Sewing School to learn skills that would help them to become good housewives and mothers. As well as the main school, there also schools at **Port Elphinstone**, built in 1841, and **Leylodge** which was older. The total population of the three schools was around 200 but it varied from winter to summer depending on farm work. As mentioned earlier the main parochial school was in the **Townhouse** until 1907 when the original part of the recently demolished former school (which gave its name to School Road) was built.

Several natives of Kintore had left money for the education of young people in the parish. **Mr. A. Smith** left £100 sterling to the Free Church to pay for the schooling of

poor children and **Mr A Garden** who died in 1846 left the interest on £118.16.2 for the same purpose. **Buchan's Legacy**, dating from 1841, left £150 sterling, the interest on which was to pay for a teacher.

Reverend Simpson also mentions the popular **circulating library** that encouraged the youth of the parish to read, and the two **Sabbath Schools** that were both well attended with a total of over 150 pupils. One was taught in the church by the Minister himself and four assistants. The other Sabbath School was taught in Port Elphinstone school by the teacher and an assistant. The Minister also boasted proudly that the Sabbath School library contained over 200 volumes.

In 1871, according to Alexander Smith, the **School Board** had five members and was chaired by William Tait of Broomend with John C. Turner as its clerk and treasurer. The parochial school at that time had grown in size to 167 pupils and there were 151 in Port Elphinstone. The growing school population would have been due to a number of factors, but mainly the new employment opportunities created by the railway and Tait's mills. Better health care also meant lower infant mortality, and eventually a rising birth rate.

At the end of the 19th century the schoolmaster was **Mr Philips**. He was replaced by **Mr Taylor**, a very cultured man and talented musically, who taught singing successfully with only the aid of a tuning fork. There was a staff of seven teachers, two of whom were reputed to be quite sadistic and free with the tawse. **Miss Hardie** who attended school around Mr Taylor's time can remember skirmishes in the playground between "**Free Kirkers**" and "**Auld Kirkers**". She can also remember "**The Band of Hope**" setting up their tent in the field next to Oakhurst, just along from the school.

Other long serving "**Dominies**" included **Mr John Forbes** and **Mr John Glennie**. The school was for many years a **Junior Secondary** with pupils staying on till the age of 14 years, then after WW2 till the age of 15, and latterly from the 1972 ROSLA Act until the age of 16. Pupils could sit a **General Certificate** in the third year of secondary and if they did well could go up to **Inverurie Academy** to continue their education. The top qualifying class at Kintore Secondary were taught a very good range of subjects including French, Science, History, Geography, Geometry, cookery and even some Latin. There was a **Religious Assembly** every morning, sometimes lasting for half an hour. The **Assembly Hall** then was only the area of the present foyer and yet PE had to be taught there too.

The late Mrs C. Smith who lived at "Memphis" in the village, and contributed to this history, attended Kintore School as a secondary pupil and taught there from the late 1950s until her retirement in 1969. Mrs Smith was one of the few secondary pupils who stayed on for a third year at the school, studying Latin, before completing her school education at Inverurie. Unusually for a young woman at the time, Mrs Smith then studied for her MA at Aberdeen University (having lectures at both King's and Marischal Colleges) and completed her education at the teacher-training centre at St Andrew Street in Aberdeen. According to Mrs Smith, teachers at Inverurie Academy in the 1920s were very impressed by the ability and knowledge of the pupils from Kintore. The only exception was the poor quality of the Latin. Apparently it wasn't something that **Mr Taylor** was very well qualified to teach. He was a very successful

English and History teacher (as well as the Music already mentioned) and **Miss Simpson** was the very successful French and Art teacher. **Mr Jones** taught Mathematics and Science and his Science room was very well equipped for the time.

Pupils also had the benefit of visiting teachers even before the war. Mrs C Urquhart and Mrs M Campbell remembered **Mr John Morgan** from Kemnay who came to teach violin and there were specialists for Art and Physical Education, usually known as “drill”. It was some time before Kintore School had its own school meals, and local girls who attended school in the thirties remember taking a flask of soup with them and setting it by the classroom fire to keep it warm. The school population between the wars also fluctuated a great deal because of itinerant farm labourers moving from parish to parish in search of work. Their offspring were known as “**cottar children**” who must have found it very difficult to make and keep friends.

The thirties was a time of **economic depression and high unemployment** worldwide. In Britain, public servants were asked to accept pay cuts to help the economy, and teachers took one of the largest cuts. Their salary fell by 20% to around £150 per annum for a primary teacher.

Mrs Smith was invited to teach at Kintore by Mr Glennie when one of his staff was frequently ill and then when another teacher, Miss Farquharson, asked for leave of absence to travel to Australia.

A big event for Kintore School came on 22nd June, 1960 when the new part of the building, incorporating a hall, was officially opened by **Matthew Dundas, Provost of the Burgh**. On that occasion **Reverend McFadden**, the school chaplain, led the worship and blessing. At that time the school had 217 pupils, ten full-time and five visiting staff. There was considerable inconvenience during the building work and Mrs Smith remembers having to march her Primary 7 class along to the public hall for some of their lessons and having to share the big hall downstairs with a younger, noisier class, being separated only by a curtain.

Leylodge School was still open but had only 16 pupils and one teacher. Mrs Smith had to teach some of the Leylodge pupils when their teacher was in hospital for a major operation. Coming from a small country school where discipline was more relaxed, they were much chattier and noisier and not used to the same pace of work.

In 1973, Kintore School featured in a **Press and Journal** article, part of its Weekend Review series.

“(Kintore’s) in the middle of a population explosion and nowhere does it show more than in the local school.

*The headmaster **Mr William Low** now has charge of about 300 pupils, nearly 90 in the secondary department, and about 210 in the primary – and it’s a tight squeeze to pack them all in. Indeed one class meets in the corridor.*

*Kintore’s representative on Aberdeen County Council, **Mrs Priscilla Ramsey**, Goosecroft House, is most concerned about the conditions of overcrowding. -----Mr Low meanwhile expects two temporary classrooms before the end of the school year--
----- The first pupils to have to stay on till the age of 16 – three boys and two girls- make up Kintore’s first Class 4 and will be there till next Christmas. Both*

the girls want to work in a shop while one of the boys can't wait to start his apprenticeship as a joiner.

Photography has captured this class's imagination and they happily do it in the old school boilerhouse."

The Press and Journal; Saturday, March 10, 1973.

The article also features the deputy headmaster of the school, **Mr William Airlie**, who was Provost of the Burgh, having been elected the previous May. Although originally a Banffshire man from Gamrie, Mr Airlie had lived and worked in the burgh for 24 years, enough to claim citizenship!

Kintore junior secondary department closed in the early 1980s after the opening of **Kemnay Academy** but its primary department continued to thrive under the leadership of **Mr Raymond Bissett** and **Mrs Wilma Walker**, its first female headteacher. There is now a popular nursery department as well. Back in Mr Low's time the under fives were catered for by the playgroup. The Church still plays an active part in the life of the school. In 2000, **Reverend Alan Greig** was regularly leading assemblies and the pupils of the new schools still sometimes visit the church en masse, for example to celebrate Christmas.

As well as its close involvement with parish education and the welfare of the poor, the church's other main pastoral role was to conduct **baptisms, weddings and funerals**. It is interesting to note that holding these ceremonies and sacraments in the church itself is relatively new. Reverend McFadden certainly noted in the Third Statistical Account that the majority of marriage services and funerals were now conducted in the church building. (His final pastoral duty in the village was to marry Mrs Smith's son Alistair.) However a study of the **Parish Supplement** (forerunner of our own **Chronicle and Kintore Konnect**) at the beginning of the twentieth century shows a very different picture.

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Baptisms

At Burgh Farm, Kintore, on 24th June, Alexander Hay.

At North Leylodge, Kintore, on 3rd July, Elsie Castle.

At North Leyloge, Kintore, on 3rd July, George Milton Traill.

At Buckgrove, Kintore, on 18th July, Elspet Adam Masson

At Wellneuk, Kintore, on 19th July, Francis Mackintosh Alcock..

At Smithfield, Kintore, on 23rd July, Elizabeth Hutton Forbes Grant.

At Smithfield, Kintore, on 24th July, James Buchan.

At Church of Kintore, on 31st July, Alexander Watt Brown.

At Townhead, Kintore, on 5th August, Isabella Carnie Cocker Allan.

At Church of Kintore, on 4th September, Edward Smith.

At Church of Kintore, on 4th September, James Callum.

At Burnside, Kintore, on 4th September, Jane Ann Fraser.

At Little Bogheads, Kintore, on 16th September, Robert Greig."

Kintore Parish Supplement. October 1904.

Out of 13 baptisms, only three actually took place in the church. Neither did they always take place on the Sabbath. Also the Minister obviously sometimes conducted baptisms in more than one place on the same day. One can only assume he carried a

small portable font with him. Or did he simply make do with a humble domestic receptacle? Sadly the Supplement does not give us this information.

Marriages, though always conducted by the Minister, almost never took place in the church. There is no mention of any church wedding in the Supplements we have available. The following were fairly typical;-

“ **Marriages**
October 15. At Bon-accord Hotel, Aberdeen, by Rev J Chedburn, assisted by Rev. Rev. T.O. Duncan, MA. Kintore, William John Brown, Aberdeen, to Eliza Alice Wilson Johnstone.
October 18. At the Public Hall, Kintore, by Rev T.O. Duncan, MA. James Craig to Catherine Laing.
November 20. At New Street, Kintore, by Rev R.L. Barr, Kinellar, John Anderson, Aberdeen, to Jeannie Soutar. ”
Kintore Parish Supplement, January 1902.

The Supplement records place of death rather than where the funeral took place but again it is very likely that most funeral services were conducted first in the house with prayer and perhaps a psalm, followed by a service of burial in the graveyard.

Whatever the actual place, there is no doubt that church, minister and the spirit of God were present at all the crucial events and passages of parish life.