

THE PARISH OF CAIRNIE

by Rev. James Campbell, M.A.

Physical Basis. The parish, situated in the western extremity of the county, is bounded by the Banffshire parishes of Botriphnie and Keith on the west and north-west, and by Grange and Rothiemay on the north, while to the east and south-east lie the Aberdeenshire parishes of Huntly and on the south-west Glass. Originally a small part of this parish lay in Banffshire, and in May 1891 the Boundary Commissioners determined that this part should be detached from Cairnie and added to the parish of Keith in Banffshire, leaving Cairnie now wholly situated in Aberdeenshire. The land area is 15,818 acres. The highest hill in the parish is the Bin Hill (1,027 feet).

Afforestation. In the *Old Statistical Account* (1794) the Rev. Alexander Chalmers states: "Tradition says that some of the hills in Cairny were once covered with stately oaks. Now they present their nakedness to every passenger. Not one tree has been planted here for 60 years." That picture of the countryside is not applicable to the parish to-day. In 1839 the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, who was then proprietor of practically the whole of Cairnie, began a great afforestation scheme, including planting on the Bin Hill, and before the end of that year the area planted covered 2,258 acres. A stone fence, 11 miles in length, was erected around the plantation at a cost of 6d. per yard, amounting in all to £484. Other costs in this great undertaking emphasise the contrast between the costs in 1839 and those of the present day. There was further planting in later years. The trees planted were mostly

spruce, some fir and larch. The First World War took its toll of the trees in the parish, and for some years after parts of the Bin Hill were bare and desolate once more. Replanting, however, took place in 1926, and the Bin is again a forest, stately and beautiful. The Forestry Commission is doing good work in this area and the plantations in Cairnie cover almost 6,000 acres. In this parish alone the Forestry Commission has 12 forestry holdings for its employees and their families, the number of men employed meantime being 25.

History of the Local Community. All the farmers in Cairnie now own their land. At one time the land belonged to the Dukes of Richmond and Gordon, who were generally good landlords and held in high esteem by their tenants. A time came, however, when most of the big landowners found that heavy death duties, high taxation, and upkeep costs were burdens greater than they could bear, and they were forced to sell their lands. The farms in Cairnie were offered at a reasonable price to the tenants, who purchased their various holdings. The last of these sales took place in 1934.

VII.

WOODS AND PLANTATIONS.

THE following named places have been planted since 1839:—The Bin, the Muckle Balloch, the smaller hills of Milleath, Janetstown, Drumdelgie, Cormellat, Brownhill, Whitehill, and a considerable extent of moorland. The planting of the Bin, and adjoining hill called Ord Fell, was begun in 1839, and the others at a later period. The plantations consist chiefly of Scots fir and larch.

The planting of the Bin was a great undertaking. It was suggested to the Duke of Richmond by the Rev. William Cowie, then minister of the parish. The planting was begun in the month of March 1839, was suspended during the summer months, was resumed in the month of November, and finished in December the same year. Area of the Bin planted at that time, including Ord Fell, 2258 acres. A stone fence, eleven miles in length, was erected around the plantation at a cost of sixpence per yard. Total cost of building fence, £484. Cost of grubbing whins and other plants, £54 0s. 9d. Cost of making drains, £225 15s. 7d. Cost of making road from Turnpike at Ordbrae to Bin Moss, £180. Total number of plants used in the plantation, 6,387,017. The total cost of planting, with obligation to uphold the plants for four years, £1956. During the time the contractor's obligation continued, 650,000 plants had to be renewed. Aggregate cost per acre, about £1 5s. 8d.

[Information supplied by Mr John Lipp, Haddoch, per Rev. James J. Calder, M.A.]

stiff clay, and on the highest it is good black loam upon clay embedding masses of trap rock. On the division between the Bogie and the Doveran there is considerable variety of soil. On the lower alluvial lands, along the valleys of both rivers, the soil is good yellowish loam on boulder gravel and rock; and on the higher cultivated land the soil is of equally fertile, although of a lighter description. West of the Doveran, towards the Beinn-hill, clay is found on the lower cultivated ground, and blackish soil, mixed with rocky fragments, generally compose that on the higher.

Hydrography.

The Doveran intersects and bounds the parish from the Milltown of Rothiemay, up to the influx of the burn of Arlloch, a distance of about 11 miles by the windings of the river. The Bogie Water bounds the parish on the east with Drumblade, from near its confluence with the Doveran, up to the burn of Tulloch-beg, being a distance of about 2½ miles. On the south-west division of the parish there is the Gordon and Roger burns, small tributaries of the Doveran, and on the north-east there is the small bounding burns with Forgeue and Drumblade, which form the western affluent streams of the burn of Forgeue. Besides these streams, there are others of smaller note. On Kinnair, there are St. Mungo's and St. John's Wells, the Rogerdu and Annet's Wells. On Robieson there is a strong chalybeate spring. Close by the old castle of Huntly there is the Duchess Well, and in the vicinity of the town there are the Meadow and the Clinkies' Wells; and on the north face, and near to the top of the Clashmach, there are many springs of pure water.

Fishing.—The Doveran abounds in salmon and sea trout, and the most formidable artificial obstruction to the free run of the fish higher up the river than the cruipe dykes at Banff is the weir at Milltown of Rothiemay. The Bogie is an excellent trouting stream, and, together, few streams in the country afford better or more varied sport to the angler.

Arboriculture

The higher knolls and ridges of the hills on Kinnair, from the Foreman, by St. Mungo's, the woods of Kinnair, and Bruntstone, have been planted with Scots firs and larch, but latterly, on the northern division, a good deal of the timber has been cut down. Along the Doveran, at Avoche, the planted ground contains a fair mixture of hardwood trees, and generally the uncultivated ground is covered with furze, birch, and

birch, alder, and other brushwood. A portion of the lower lying land in the north-east corner of Kinnair, bordering with Drumblade, has been planted with Scots firs, and, considering the nature of the soil—stiff wet clay—they have made satisfactory progress. The plantations of Huntly Lodge, which lie along the west side of the Doveran, cover a large extent of ground. The outlying woods to the north and west of the lodge chiefly consist of Scots firs of various ages; while in the private grounds along both sides of the river, by Huntly Lodge and the old Castle, and southwards by the town of Huntly, contain a fine variety of hardwood trees, mixed with Scots and a few silver fir, near the lodge, which are of great size and beauty. Besides these silver fir, which are said to have been planted by the first Duchess Dowager of Gordon in memory of some of her ancestors, there are numerous fine specimens of beech, oak, ash, and elm trees of large dimensions—here is a gum tree which girths about 10 feet at the surface of the ground. The old fir woods of Dumbennan and Arnhall have mostly been cut down, but the ground remains partially covered with alder trees and birch bushes. The Huntly side of the Beinn-hill plantation occupies the western division of the parish, although a considerable part of it falls within the parish of Carmie, it may not inappropriately be called a Huntly plantation. It extends for several miles along the ridges of the Beinn, and covers an area of about 3,000 acres. The chief portion (about 2,600 acres) was planted in 1838-9, and the trees planted chiefly consisted of Scots firs and larch, in proportions suited to the different soils—larch being planted on the lower hills in the proportion of two to one of Scots firs, and on the higher rocky parts the proportion was reversed. On the lower ground, and on the Huntly side of the forest, beech, plane, ash, and elms were planted along with larch and spruce firs. The surface of the ground is uneven, and appears agreeably diversified; the lowest parts being about 450 feet, and the highest reaching to 1,050 feet above the level of the sea. The higher parts were rocky, with coarse grass and heath, and the lower were in general too rugged and barren to admit of the plough, or of being brought under cultivation in any shape. The fences around the forest are chiefly "rickle dykes," consisting of the outlying trap rocks, which were split up into suitable sizes for that kind of fence, and they were, owing to the abundance of suitable material, erected at a cheap rate.

The planting was executed under contract, for about 16s. an acre, and the trees, for the first 20 years, were allowed to take nature's course, consequently many of the most suitable and

valuable trees were lost sight of. Still, the plantation of the Beinn-hill is the most successful, as well as the most extensive plantation within one ring fence in the north of Scotland.

Zoology.

Besides the domesticated race of animals, the following reside during the whole, or a part of the year, within the district of Strathbogrie:—

<i>Mammalia.</i>	Snipe.	Marlin.
Red-deer.	Jack-snipe.	Sand or Bank Swallow.
Water Hen.	Ox-eye.	Titmouse.
Red Grouse.	Black Grouse.	Yellow Grouse.

Valuation, or Rent of Land in the Parish of Huntly, year 1872-73, £3,965 3 10			
Do. Mansion Houses, Home Farms, Gardens, and Wood-lands.	750	7	2
Do. Shootings and Fishings, where let.	103	10	0
Do. Water Works, Gas Works, Police and Look-up Houses.	121	0	0
Do. Market Customs, Granaries, Brewery, Tannery, Tile works, Mills, and Manufactories.	261	2	0
Do. Small Properties in the Town of Huntly.	7,912	8	3
Do. Great North of Scotland Railway.	623	0	0
Total value.	£13,736	11	3

The Parish of Cairnie by Rev James Campbell M.A., March 1955 in The Third Statistical Account of Scotland Vol VII, The County of Aberdeenshire.

It states that in 1839 the Duke of Richmond and Gordon began a great afforestation scheme, including planting on the Bin Hill and by the end of the year had planted an area covering 2258 acres. Also refers to a stone fence of 11 miles around the plantation at a cost of 6d per yard, total £84.

Also interesting (and something which you probably have already seen) is the account in the section **"Forestry" by William m McNeill in "The North East of Scotland. A survey prepared for the Aberdeen meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1963"**

It states that the Bin to be one of the state forests in the East of Scotland Conservancy of the Forestry Commission whose headquarters are Aberdeen. It gives the employees as 1 Conservator, 4 Divisional Officers, 7 District Officers, 2 Engineers, 49 Foresters and Assistant Foresters, 462 Forestry Workers. The Bin was one of a number of sites participating in major silvicultural experiments under investigation by the Research Branch of the FC, specifically provenance trials with Norway Spruce.

Another source is , **"A Topographical Dictionary of Scotland" by Samuel Lewis, 1846.**

It states under the parish of Cairnie that 2600 acres were planted in then year 1839 with 6,7000,000 trees by the Duke of Richmond.

Hope that this is helpful.

Kind regards,

Karen (Patterson).

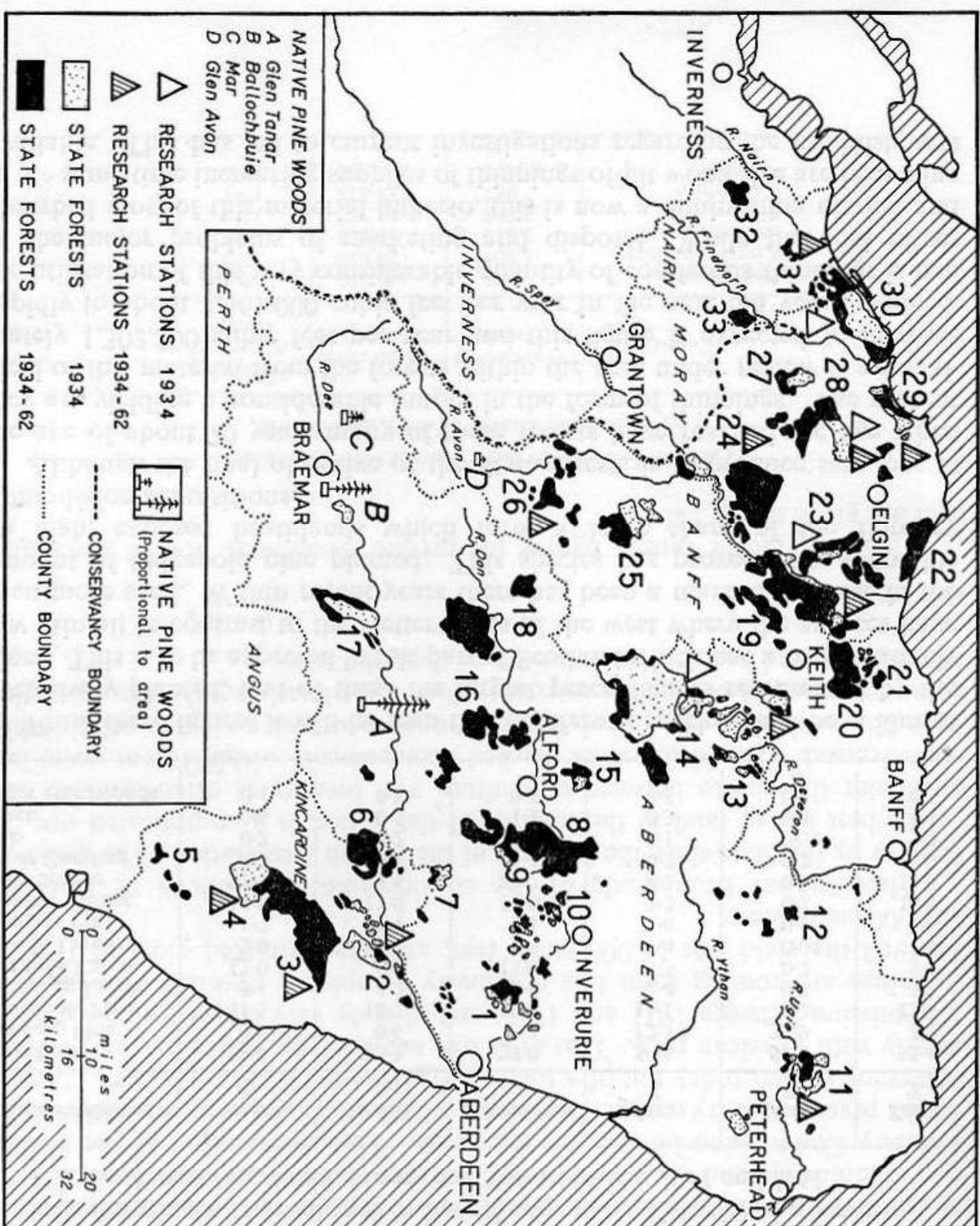


FIG. 15. State forests. Counties of Aberdeen, Kincardine, Banff, Moray and Nairn.

1. Kirkhill Aberdeen
2. Durris Aberdeen and Kincardine
3. Fetteresso Kincardine
4. Drumtochty Kincardine
5. Inglismaldie Kincardine
6. Blackhall Kincardine
7. Midmar Aberdeen
8. Bennachie Aberdeen
9. Pitfichie Aberdeen
10. Kennay Aberdeen
11. Forest of Deer Aberdeen
12. Delgaty Aberdeen and Banff
13. The Bin Aberdeen and Banff
14. Clashindarroch Aberdeen
15. Whitehaugh Aberdeen
16. Cushnie Aberdeen
17. Alltcaileach Aberdeen
18. Tornashean Aberdeen
19. Rosarie Banff
20. Aultmore Banff
21. Speymouth Moray and Banff
22. Lossie Moray
23. Teindland Moray
24. Elchies Moray
25. Scootmore Banff and Moray
26. Glenlivet Banff
27. Newtyle Moray
28. Monaghtly Moray
29. Roseisle Moray
30. Culbin Moray and Nairn
31. Laiken Nairn
32. Assich Nairn
33. Ferness Nairn