

GLENCAPLE - CAERLAVEROCK



GLENCAPLE W. R. I.

PARISH OF CAERLAVEROCK

DUMFRIESSHIRE

OUR HISTORY.



GLENCAPLE

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DUMFRIES.

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The village of Glencaple stands on the left side of the Nith estuary in the Dumfriesshire parish of Caerlaverock. It owes its existence to the Royal Burgh of Dumfries, the county town, which is situated five miles further up the river. In the year 1746 Dumfries had just recovered from the shock of the Jacobite invasion when the town had had to pay a fine of £2,000 and deliver a consignment of 1000 shoes for the Highland host. But now this tragic episode was over, the Town Council decided to make new plans for the future and, first and foremost, to see what could be done to improve the town's shipping trade. There was a dock of sorts but no adequate harbour and the most troublesome problem of all was the river itself. If only the Nith had been a good, navigable river, how much easier and cheaper it would have been to make these improvements! But navigation on the Nith had always been difficult. In spite of the money spent on it, time and again, by the hopeful councillors - money to dredge away the muddy sand that seemed to gather again as soon as it was dispersed, money to pay engineers for trying to remove various rocky barriers that lay across the channel, money for putting down buoys to guide ships through the treacherous waters of the estuary - there didn't seem to be much left on the credit side when all was said and done.

The Solway has always been famous for its swift and dangerous tides which create a network of channels and shifting sands. Sometimes, as it rushes up the Nith, the flood tide forms a bore topped with foam and with a 'head', as it is called, which may be from four to six feet high. Then, as the tide ebbs, this expanse of water is withdrawn, leaving flat stretches of mud and sand full of creeks and winding streams running into the Nith which will now be reduced to quite a narrow channel. Little wonder it was difficult to control this unruly river.

After much discussion among themselves and with various men of business in the town, the councillors decided that it would be a good idea to build a harbour further down the river and the site they proposed was at Glencaple Burnfoot in the adjoining parish of Caerlaverock. Here the Council were luckier than usual for when the Laird of Caerlaverock, William/

William Maxwell of Nithsdale, heard of the proposed harbour, he made a present of the necessary land - indeed, more than was necessary - to the burgh. He also allowed the Council to have the use of local building stone. In return for this generosity, the Council enacted that all goods passing the bridge at Dumfries for the use of the laird and his successors should henceforward be exempt from duty. The quay at Glencaple was built forthwith and seems to have been finished by 1747. Then houses were erected in a row along the rising ground above the river and so Glencaple was born. It is significant that the country folk have always preferred to call the village 'The Quay' or 'The auld Quay' (to distinguish it from another quay that was later built further up the river at the Kingholm). This reminds us that the quay was indeed the origin of the village.

The first ship to enter Glencaple Quay was appropriately named the 'Success'. She was the property of a Dumfries merchant and ex-Provost, Andrew Crosbie, and she brought a cargo of American tobacco from Maryland. Meantime more houses were rising along the river front. They were all of much the same design and they commanded a fine view across the Nith to the wooded hills of Galloway stretching along the western skyline down to the Solway with its wide merses and ending in the volcanic mass of Criffel, a familiar and beloved landmark along the shores of the Solway and on both sides of the western Border. Though Criffel lies on the other side of the Nith and is actually in another county, no description of this district seems complete without it. The lights and shadows keep playing over its slopes and changing into pastel colours with the sun and the rain and the pattern of the clouds. On winter days it is often thickly powdered with snow. In the days before there was a science of meteorology, Criffel was also a kind of barometer or weather gauge to the country folk -

'When Criffel wears his hat,
Ye may be sure it will be wat,
But/

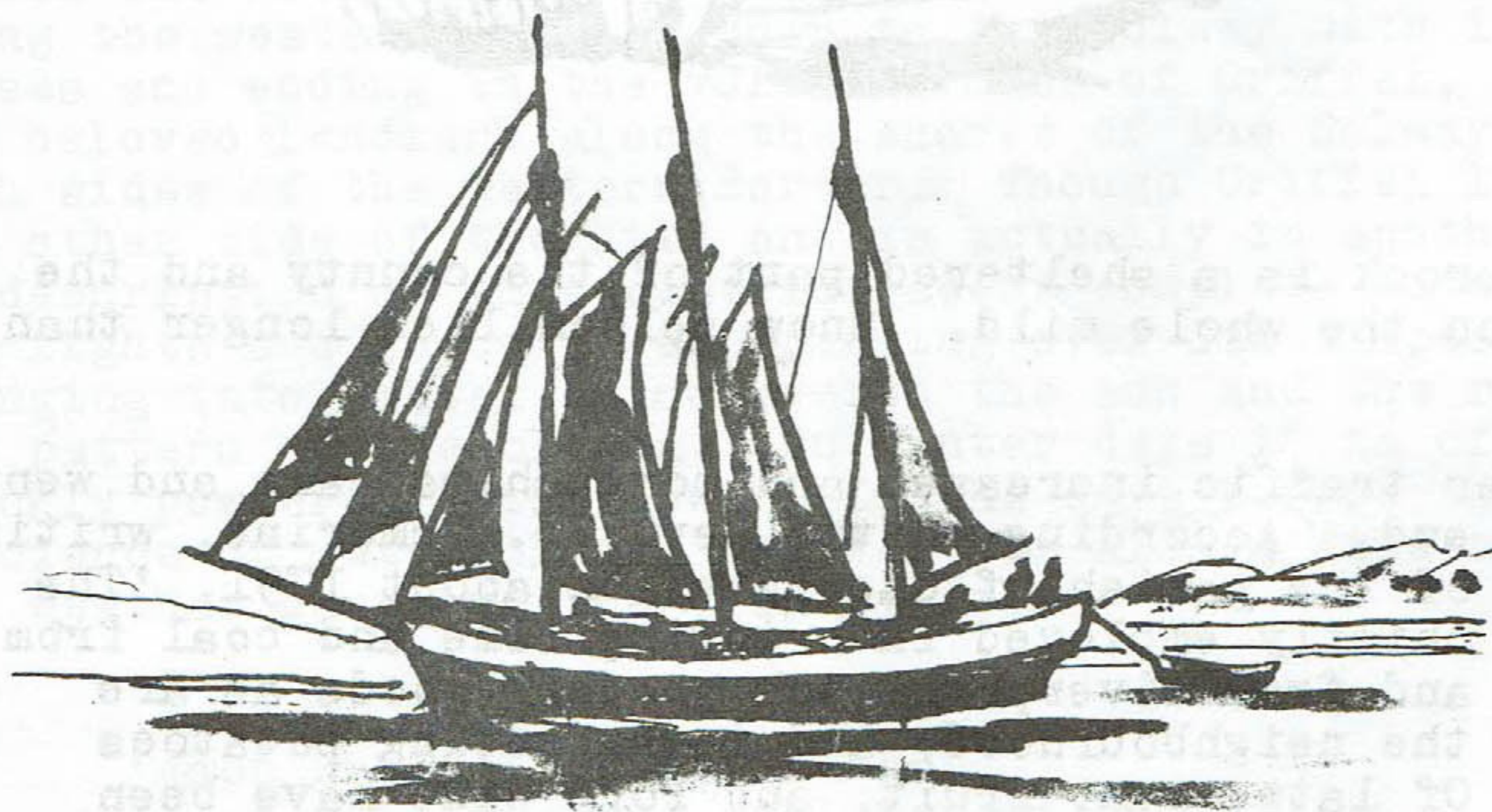
'But if instead he wears his tie,
Ye may expect it to be dry'.



Caerlaverock is a sheltered part of the county and the weather is on the whole mild. Snow seldom lies longer than a few days.

+The river traffic increased and more ships came and went at the quay end. According to the Rev. Wm. McMorine, writing his account of the parish of Caerlaverock about 1791, 'The vessels are chiefly employed in bringing lime and coal from Cumberland; and from Liverpool such grocery goods as are consumed in the neighbourhood; and in exporting potatoes and grain. Of late, rum, fruit, and Port wine have been imported/

imported; and a considerable quantity of timber is annually brought from Memel and Riga." Among the imports were, strange to say, bones in large quantities. These were carried by carts to a bone mill further down the shore at Lantonside. Here they were manufactured into manure for the farms. The rollers and other gear were still to be seen within living memory. Liverpool was a common destination for ships from the Quay. Indeed a close connection developed over the years between Glencaple and Liverpool, a connection which has lasted right up to recent years. One ship, the 'Nithsdale', is said to have completed the voyage to Liverpool in one tide. On sailing days Glencaple was visited by upwards of thirty vehicles a day filled with passengers and friends. A familiar sailing ship was the 'Ocean Gem' which is still remembered by the older generation. It was an uplifting sight to see it passing up the river, with its sails swelling in a favourable wind. Besides the 'Ocean Gem' there were steamers and other boats - 'The Mary', 'The Havelock', 'The Kirkconnel', 'The Mary Ann Maria', which survive only as names in old folk's memories.



DANISH VESSEL ON NITH - 1922.

It is difficult to ascertain just when the ship building industry developed in Glencaple, but for many years it was carried on with much success. The ships were launched with the usual ceremonies from a site near the present Hotel. According to the Second Statistical Account (1841) two vessels of about 60 tons were annually launched. With this increased prosperity the village grew bigger and a second street was built behind the front row of houses. This seems to have been known as Thomson Street after the owner of the ship building yard, but later on its name was changed to Wellington Street, presumably to honour the victor at Waterloo. The ship building industry at Glencaple seems to have faded out towards the end of last century. The 'Kirkconnel' is said to have been the last ship built in the yard. One of the main causes of this decline was the corresponding decline in shipping, due in part at least, to the spread north of the railway. So Glencaple's very short industrial life came to an end. Here is a nostalgic verse written by a local rhymster in praise of the Auld Quay:-

"The furnace roared in Thomson's yard, the anvil
ringing clear,
And bolts were driven in the sides of sailing
ships to steer,
A steamless path across the deep, which was
as it should be,
The town came down to see the launch at brave
Glencaple Quay".

In 1831 Thomas Carlyle, the Dumfriesshire philosopher and historian, rose early one morning and drove from his home at Craigenputtock down to Glencaple to join the little steamer there for Liverpool where he boarded the London train. (He was carrying with him the manuscript of "Sartor Resartus".) By 1848 the railway had reached as far north as Dumfries and after that sea traffic, coastal and otherwise, was greatly reduced.

The story of the shipping trade on the Solway estuaries at this time is closely connected with the subject of smuggling. This developed round our shores as it did elsewhere, because of/

of the heavy duties that had to be paid on certain articles like tobacco, tea, rum, brandy and wine. The Isle of Man was the centre of the smuggling trade and cargoes were taken from there to various creeks and other hide-outs along the Solway shore. The smugglers were popular among the country folk and among some of the gentry and even the clergy as well, - who now acquired a taste for strange new drinks, like tea and wines. The King's officers, the gaugers or excisemen, were equally unpopular and were too few in number and had too few boats to cope with the smugglers and their friends. Many local lads found smuggling more exciting than farm work and certainly more profitable. According to the Dumfries Custom House Records, a revenue officer together with the parish constable went to search a house in Glenhowan (a Caerlaverock village older than Glencaple and now quite disappeared). Here they found some bundles of contraband tobacco, but before they could carry it off, a "multitude of women" attacked them and seized the packages. The constable apparently disappeared but the gauger was not so easy to shake off. According to the historian of Dumfries, "he might as well have sought to make a troop of wolves give up their prey as these Glenhowan termagants surrender theirs. The bold rash man of the revenue was soundly beaten by them and lodged as a captive in the smugglers' stronghold till they had secured the whole of the tobacco; after which, sore in mind as well as in body, he was set at liberty". The Glenhowan warriors seem to have been tried in Dumfries (1711) on a charge of rioting but were set free without punishment. The smuggling trade probably reached its height about the middle of the eighteenth century. In vain did the General Assembly condemn this wicked traffic. No crime was quite as respectable. "To jink the gauger" was fair game and every free trader was a hero. It was not till the end of the century (1784) that the reduction of the duties and the enforcement of revenue control in the Isle of Man gradually brought an end to smuggling on the Solway shores.

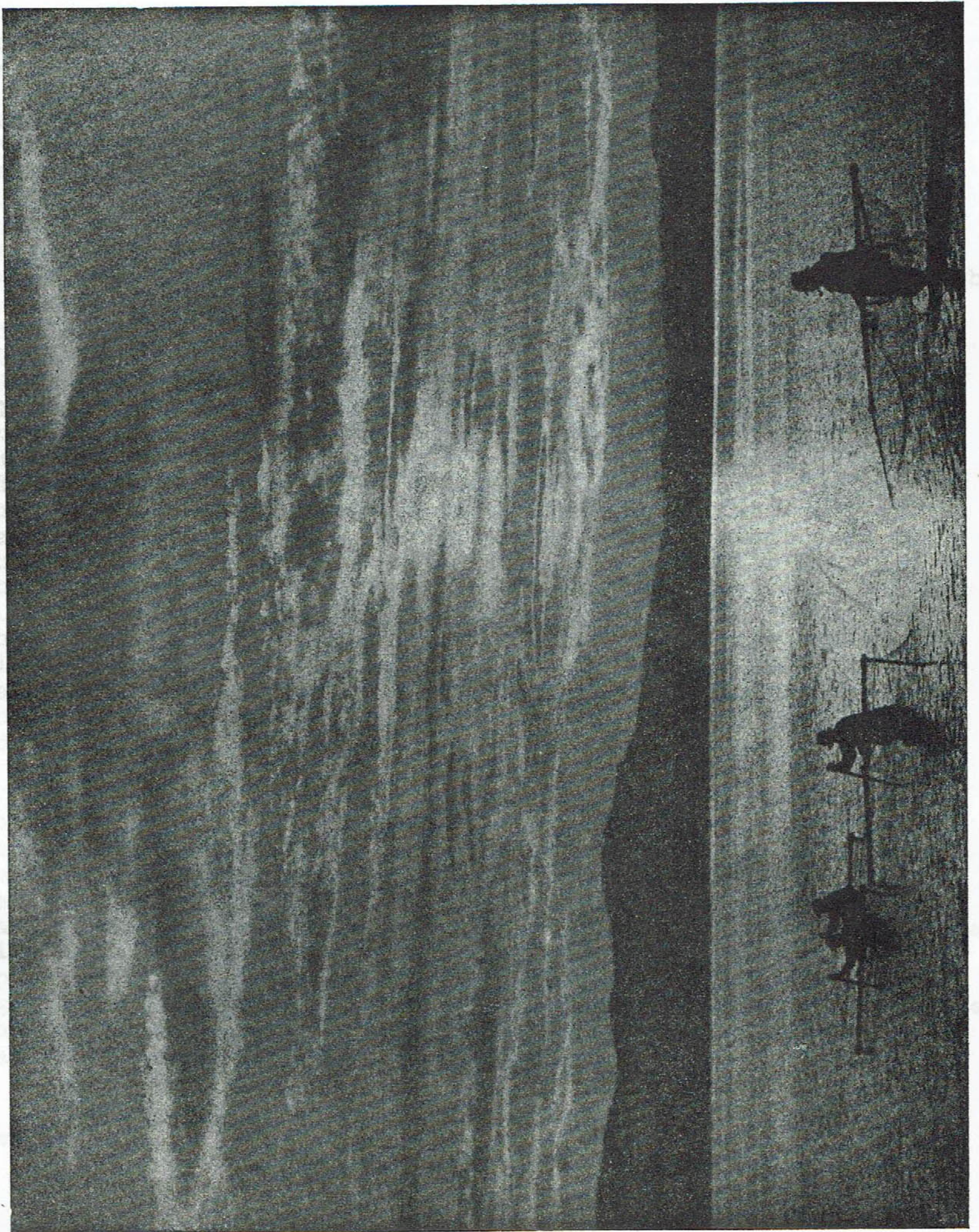
Glencaple is usually described as a small fishing village and long before it came into being, indeed from time immemorial, fish were being caught by various methods in the tidal waters of/



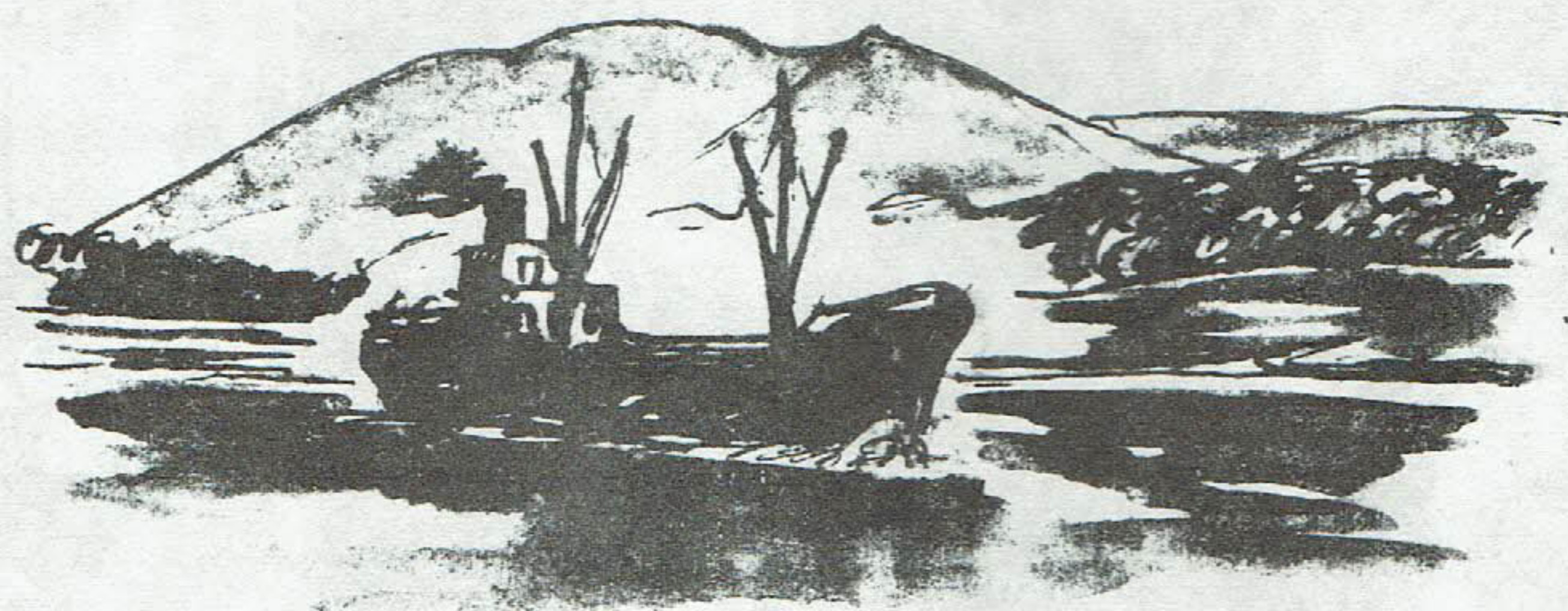
of the Nith and among the shifting mud-flats of the Solway. It is said that at one time herring were plentiful in the Nith at Glencaple, so plentiful that the farmers carted them off to the fields for manure. Salmon too, must have been plentiful, for in a good season the market was flooded and the salmon had to be salted and preserved. Sometimes it would be eaten three times a day. Farm workers, who were always paid partly in kind, were moved to object when they were given salmon oftener than twice a week. The year 1887, Queen Victoria's jubilee, was supposed to be the best fishing year in this district and men were going home almost sleeping on their feet. Now there are no shoals of herring here but salmon are still fairly plentiful and there are also supplies of excellent flounders which come and go with the tides. Flounders used to be caught in the time honoured way of tramping them underfoot - 'tramping flukes' - but it is more usual now to trap them on the flood as well as the ebb tides by what is called a paidle net, a kind of poke net specially devised for catching flounders. For centuries fishermen have been setting these nets in the estuary of the Nith but they seem to be used only on the Scottish side of the Solway.

It is the salmon, however, that is chief of all the fish in the estuary and the one that brings most profit to the fishers. Salmon are caught by a large and awkward looking poke net which the fishermen carry about or hoist on top of their cars. The net is fastened to a kind of wooden frame with a cross bar and three upright supports. This contraption must be held by the fisherman while standing, often breast high, in the running tide. We are told that this kind of net is used on the shores of the Solway and nowhere else. Some authorities say that the word 'haaf' is old Norse for 'channel' or 'stream'; others say it means the 'open sea'; anyway, it seems probable that this method of fishing was brought over by the Norse invaders about ten centuries ago.

The 'haafers' usually fish in a line or 'back' at right angles to the river bank, facing the current. They hold a small piece of the net with the right thumb, while the rest of it stretches behind them in two pockets. When a fish enters the net, the fisherman feels a tug. He will then lift the net quickly to the surface and will find the fish - he hopes - trapped/



trapped in one of the pockets. Sometimes the men will stand in the water for hours at a time, but it seems to be quite a social occasion, for a good deal of talk floats from the immersed fishermen through the summer air. The 'haaf - net' season lasts from February to September but it is generally too cold to start till April. Nowadays the haaf-net fishing is more of a hobby or part time job than an industry, but it is no doubt quite a profitable hobby. The fisherman must have very strong clothing for this job. His haaf back and net, waders and licence will cost him altogether about £25, so his outlay is quite substantial. 'Haaf-net fishing', as one observer describes it, "requires a good constitution and strong wrists, a quick mind, an x-ray eye and an intimate knowledge of the estuary. The fisherman has to know a good deal about the normal habits and the special tricks of his quarry and he gets to know intimately a stretch of water whose surface and colour and depth are ever changing. The bed of the Solway is never the same for two days running and sometimes quite drastic changes can happen in the course of the channel overnight".



STEAMER NEAR GLENCAPLE

But it is agriculture, and not fishing, that is and has always been the chief source of employment in the parish of Caerlaverock. According to the Rev. Wm. McMorine who wrote the first Statistical Account about 1791 "the parish is a kind of peninsula, formed by the Solway Firth, the river Nith, and the Lochar water; resembling a cornucopia (a just emblem of its fertility) having its mouth towards Dumfries, into which it pours a considerable part of its produce; and the convex side towards Nith and Solway. The middle and upper end of the parish is high with gently rising hills; it bends and is lengthened to a point eastward, and this part is low and level. The higher ground is generally a light, dry and tolerably fertile loam; interspersed however with many acres of wet, shallow, stony, moorish soil, (producing nothing but heath and rushes), lying for the most part in the valleys; which, even after it has been limed and tilled, but ill rewards the labour of the husbandman. The low and level point is of various soils. The whole stands on a red freestone bottom, which, in the higher land, is at no great depth from the surface; and is a soft, easily wrought, though pretty durable stone used for building in the vicinity. The parish is six miles long and nowhere more than two miles broad". In those days oats was by far the heaviest crop but it is not grown to such an extent now. In recent years barley has become much more common and is used mainly for feeding. Potatoes, turnips and some wheat are grown too and there is also much good grazing land. The beef cattle outnumber the dairy cattle. There are only two dairy farms in the parish.

The favourite cattle in the old droving days were the black Galloways. They were driven south through Dumfries and through this parish in their thousands to the English markets. The coming of the railways meant the end of droving and the great drove roads began to go out of use. Now cattle and sheep are moved by motor transport which is quite a business in itself. In recent years the Galloways have regained their popularity and many of them, black and brown, are to be seen grazing round about. The cultivation of turnips increased the number of sheep and at one time they were sent from Glencaple and other small ports at 1/- per head.

Glencaple is probably the youngest of the Caerlaverock villages/

villages and of the other six, Bankend is the only considerable survivor. It was on the main road from England before the present Dumfries-Annan road was built. Now it has been largely rebuilt by Dumfries County Council on a neighbouring site, but the new village, in spite of its mod. cons, has not the picturesque and compact appearance of old Bankend as some of us remember it in the earlier years of the century. Glenhowan village is gone and Shearington, Blackshaw and Greenmill are fragments of their former selves. Kelton, once, like Glencaple, busy with shipbuilding, lies on the boundary of Dumfries parish and can scarcely be called a village either. X

In previous centuries country folk needed very little from the town except perhaps salt and latterly sugar, tea and coffee. Oatmeal was produced in every village. Cattle were killed at the back-end of the year and the meat was salted down for the winter. Most families kept a pig and most cottages had a pig-house attached. Salmon was of course a common item in the diet here and a barrel of salt herring was often laid by for the long winter months. There was generally milk enough and butter milk was a favourite drink. Wool was made into the guidman's hodden grey, the woman's skirts and petticoats and, last but not least, blankets which were washed and tramped clean when the winter was over. All stockings were of course home made but in summer weather they were not much worn. Candles were used for lighting and they too were home made. Hanks of wick were always kept in the house. A length would be cut off when necessary and inserted in a tube which was filled with melted tallow and allowed to cool. A scissor - shaped contrivance, called a snuffer, was used to extinguish the flame and to control the smell. (The tallow was usually made from a braxy sheep - a sheep that has died of disease.) Later on oil lamps began to be used, plain lamps and fancy lamps, hanging lamps and standing lamps and of course there were lanterns for outside use. Between the wars, and especially since the last war, electricity, both for lighting and power, has come into general use and has transformed life and work in this, as in other Scottish parishes. Dumfries-shire indeed was a pioneer in the distribution of electricity.

The/

The South of Scotland Grid Scheme was the first of its kind to be established (1930).

X Each village in the old days usually had its shoemaker, its joiner, and its tailor as well as its grocer and sweetie shop, with its own special home made toffee and in addition Bankend had a cooper, who made meal barrels, butter vats and rain water barrels. He would bring the staves and hoops and assemble them wherever they were wanted. There was at least one clogger who was called 'Auld Caulker'. In those days there were blacksmiths in most villages, certainly in Glencaple, Bankend and Shearington and the Kelton blacksmith also served as the local vet. Now there is only one blacksmith in the whole parish. The gravedigger usually did odd work about the parish. One particular worthy who did this job was once heard to complain during a slack season that he "hadna buried a leevin' sowl for six weeks". There was a mill in Bankend village which ground the oats and made oatmeal for the district, but, like most small mills, it was closed at the turn of the century, when milling began to be done on a large scale. Another old rural industry was basket-making. Willows or wands were grown to make creels or handled baskets of various sizes. The wands that had grown for one year only were used as wattlers and at two years they made 'bools' or 'ribs' and 'rims'. Many country folk in those days could make and repair baskets but with the coming of the spale basket and now the wire basket, the old art gradually died out. Thatching was another skilled job which was very necessary when all the cottages were thatched. Some weaving seems to have been carried on at one time in the old village of Glenhowan. There were also some small quarries in the parish, one famous for making good grind-stones. There is an old tradition that Sweetheart Abbey on the opposite side of the Nith was built with Caerlaverock stone ferried over the river by local women. In the early years of the century a familiar figure was the stone-breaker. He worked usually in a recess by the roadside and wore a protecting shade across his eyes. He has long gone and indeed the old style roadman is going too. Road metal, already broken to the right size and tarred, is now brought from the quarries.

The casting of peat, the drying of it and the carting of it home was a laborious job in the old days when peat was the only available fuel. Caerlaverock was considered lucky in having near at hand the biggest moss in the south of Scotland - the Lochar Moss, and the laird had acquired two farms, Stank and Merkland, in the neighbouring parish of Ruthwell, to ensure/

ensure access to the moss. (Now the peat is so little used, the present laird has sold these two farms). Through this treacherous mass of bogs and ditches the Lochar Water flows sluggishly to the Solway. During the Middle Ages it was indeed a formidable barrier and it was not till the 18th century that a road was at last built across it. (This explains the difference in dialect, habit and traditions which even yet may be noticed between the people of Nithsdale and those of Annandale). A considerable amount of land has been reclaimed from the Lochar Moss throughout the years. Roots of oak trees have been found underneath the peat and layers of sand mixed with shells have been discovered. This seems to confirm the old rhyme about the Lochar Moss:-

"Aince a wud and then a sea,
Noo a moss and aye will be."

The Lochar Water is apt to silt up when it enters the Solway and the neighbouring farms are sometimes flooded. Every cottage used to have its 'pile of turf against the wall' but peat is no longer used as a fuel. From time to time experiments have been made to use these layers of peat for commercial purposes and no doubt more will be done in the future. It is likely too that still more of the moss will be reclaimed or planted with trees.

The main road in Caerlaverock is the one that goes round the parish and along the shore, joining the villages of Glencaple and Bankend in a kind of loop. Then there are two lesser roads, one from Glencaple joining the Bankend Road where the War Memorial now stands and the other crossing the hill further south and passing the site of the old village of Glenhowan. This road, locally known as the Kelsick, meets the Bankend Road near the parish church. Besides these roads there are about half a dozen old roads or rights-of-way, criss-crossing the parish. They were in many cases convenient short cuts and were in general use until comparatively recent times. Children went by them to school 'in bands the gither' and country folk on their various occasions, but now the advent of the motor car and the social changes/

changes of the last half century have changed all that. "No busy steps these grass-grown footways tread". Pupils who live at any distance from school are now conveyed there and most families have cars. So the old highways and byways are left unheeded and nobody complains when they are barred by hurdles and fences or even when they are ploughed over. The railway never penetrated into the parish of Caerlaverock, so there has been none to close. Horse buses used to ply between Dumfries and Glencaple and between Dumfries and Bankend but after the first World War they were replaced by motor buses. There is still a bus service, but so many people now have their own cars that the buses, except on Saturdays, are seldom busy. Big changes were developing on the farms. Barn mills were torn out in favour of travelling mills and seed which once had been sown by hand was now done with precision by machinery. Wheel ploughs were replacing swing ploughs, binders were ousting reapers which had once taken the place of scythes and hooks. Between the wars, tractors came into use and after the last war the horse gradually disappeared from the farm. New implements, power driven, new methods of hay making and harvesting became common, and electric power and light were installed in farm steadings, in cottages and in villages. With increasing mechanisation, less man-power, the amalgamation of small farms and the end of the old village industries, more and more folk were leaving the country side for the towns and the newer lands across the sea.



OLD BANKEND - 60 YEARS AGO.

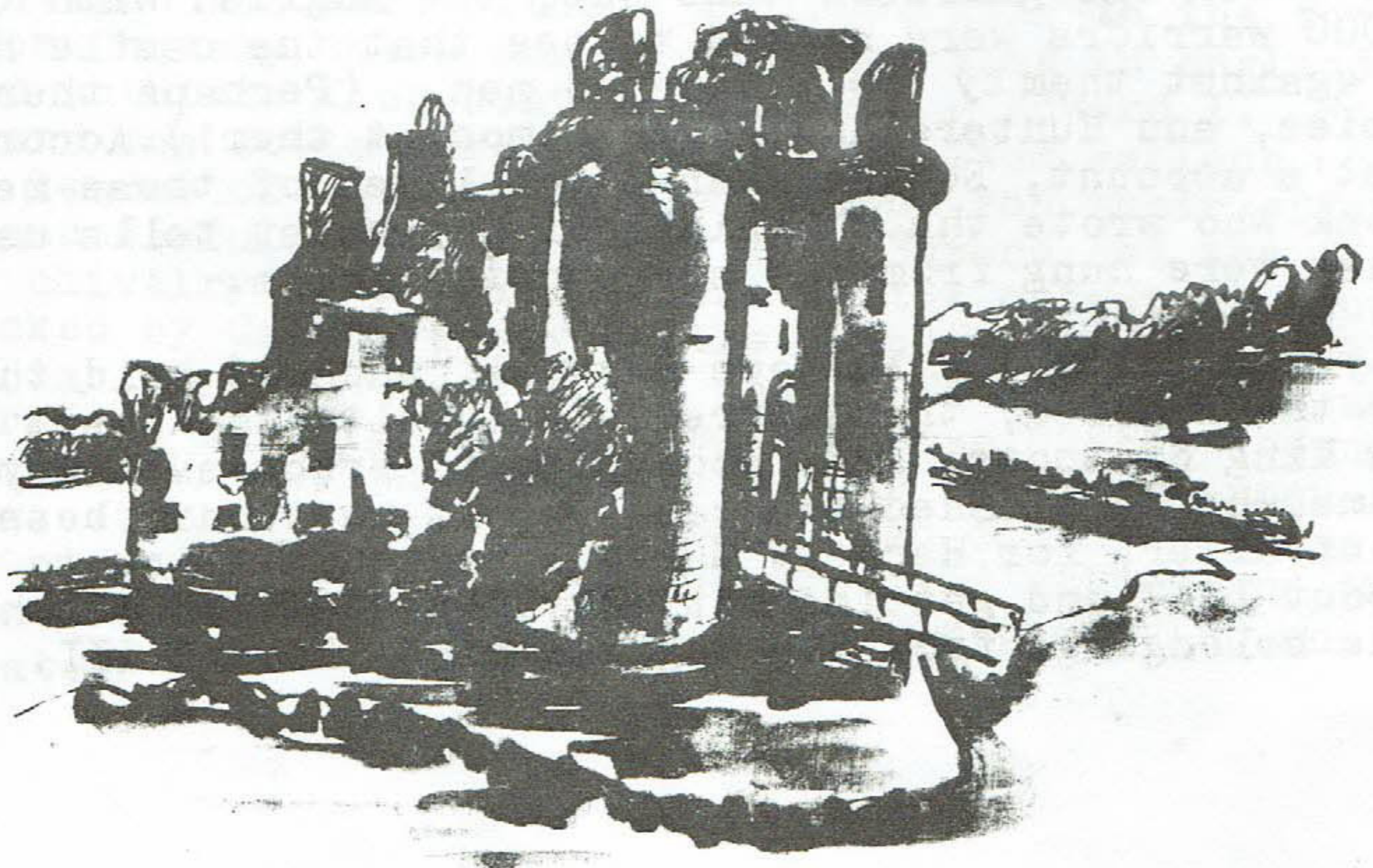
South of Glencaple near the shore road that goes round the parish stands the most impressive landmark of its kind in this part of Scotland, the ruins of Caerlaverock Castle. During the Middle Ages it commanded the western route from England up Nithsdale and probably also a sea route from the south, for at a time when roads were few and often bad, a sea passage was easier and more convenient, so that Caerlaverock Castle may have guarded a landing place on the Solway. The Romans may have come by this route; - there is no certainty about these matters among the historians and archaeologists. Caerlaverock Castle is surely one of the finest examples in Scotland of a feudal castle with its two great rounded towers guarding the entrance gate over which are the arms of the Maxwells with their motto, "I bid ye fair". The flanking walls meet to form a great triangle - an unusual shape - round which are two moats. In the days before the invention of gunpowder this castle must have seemed impregnable. It has a record of stretching far into the dim past of struggles against the auld enemy across the Border and sometimes struggles of Scots with Scots, of bitter sieges, of victory and surrender, of valour and of treachery, of destruction and recovery, which seems to epitomise the history of the Maxwells, the lairds of Caerlaverock, and indeed the history of Scotland through long centuries.

Caerlaverock Castle first came into prominence in the tragic years that followed the death of Alexander III (1286) when Scotland was left without a direct heir to the throne, and unfortunately there was at the same time in England an able and ruthless King bent on conquest - Edward I. For some years the Scots were led by Sir William Wallace, a gallant leader of resistance, but in the end their efforts were unsuccessful. In the year 1300 Edward led the flower of his chivalry into Scotland, but at the outset he found his way blocked by Caerlaverock Castle. The siege that followed is familiar to us because there was in Edward's great army a minstrel or poet (a sort of medieval war correspondent) who wrote an account of these events in the kind of Norman-French which was still used in the best English circles. Here is a translated extract: "The gleam of gold and silver and the radiance of rich colours displayed by the embattled host illuminated/

"illuminated the valley which they occupied. Those of the Castle seeing us arrive, might, as I well believe, deem that they were in greater peril than they could ever before remember. Caerlaverock was so strong a castle that it did not fear a siege - therefore the king came himself, because it would not consent to surrender. In shape like a shield, for it had but three sides with a tower at each corner, but one of them was a double one, so high, so long, and so wide that the gate was underneath it well made and strong with a drawbridge. It had good walls and good ditches, filled to the edge with water and I believe, there never was seen a castle more beautifully situated, for at once could be seen the Irish Sea to the west, and to the north a fine country surrounded by an arm of the sea, so that no born creature could approach it on two sides without putting himself in danger of the sea. Towards the south it was not easy, because there were many places difficult to get through because of woods and marshes and ditches hollowed out by the sea where it meets the river". Edward had all the latest military appliances of those days, including battering rams and catapults, so it was no wonder that at the end of the second day the defenders put out a white flag from a loophole in one of the gate towers. An English archer shot an arrow through the hand of the man who held the flag. (The English were practised marksmen). When the garrison came out, the English with their host of 3000 warriors were amazed to see that the castle had been held against them by 60 exhausted men. (Perhaps there were Crosbies, and Hunters and Edgars amongst them!). According to the poet's account, Edward spared the lives of these men, but the monk who wrote the Chronicle of Lanercost tells us that many of them were hung from the surrounding trees.

Some years later Sir Eustace Maxwell, who had held the castle for the English, transferred his loyalty to Robert Bruce, now King of Scots, and, according to Bruce's policy at that time, he demolished the castle. It must have been rebuilt soon after, for Herbert Maxwell was submitting to the English about 1347 and getting letters of protection for himself and all his belongings from the English King, Edward III. A few/

few years later, about 1356, another attack was made on the English, this time under the leadership of Roger Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, son of the famous 'mak - siccar' Kirkpatrick who helped Bruce to slay Comyn at Dumfries fifty years before. Kirkpatrick succeeded in driving the English again out of Nithsdale, captured the castle of Caerlaverock and remained in it as keeper. In the summer he entertained as his guest at Caerlaverock his old friend, Sir James Lindsay, who was, strangely enough, the son of another of Bruce's attendants on the day that Comyn was slain. But Lindsay and Kirkpatrick, it seemed, had been rivals in love and Lindsay had never forgiven his old comrade for being the favoured suitor. When the feasting in the castle was over, and all was quiet, Lindsay killed Kirkpatrick as he slept and then fled on horseback. It is not clear whether he lost his way in the darkness, but he was captured in the morning not three miles from the castle. His rank and influence did not save him. Lady Kirkpatrick demanded justice from the king. A special court was held for the trial of Lindsay, who was condemned and executed on the heading hill at Dumfries.



These dreadful events had to happen according to the monkish legends, in order to wipe out the sacrilege done by Bruce and his friends when they slew the Red Comyn before the high altar of the Grey Friars Kirk in Dumfries on a February day in 1306. The tragic story of Kirkpatrick's murder in Caerlaverock Castle was the subject of a ballad copied down or invented by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe of Hoddam, a descendant of the murdered man, a well known literary man in 18th century Scotland and a friend of Sir Walter Scott. Some Caerlaverock people still remember William Fergusson who was for many years caretaker of the Castle and who used to recite this fearsome ballad to his visitors. Here is one verse:-

"Fell Lindsay puts his harness on,
His milk-white steed doth ready stand,
And up the staircase he has gone,
With poniard in his hand,
The sweat did on his forehead break,
He shook with guilty fear,
In air he heard a joyful shriek,
Red Comyn's ghost was near".

There is supposed to be a Kirkpatrick burial place in Caerlaverock Churchyard.

The last historical episode connected with Caerlaverock Castle concerns another laird, Robert Maxwell, first Earl of Nithsdale, who was a staunch supporter of Charles I in his quarrel with the Covenanters - the Bishops' Wars. This led to the last siege of Caerlaverock (1640) which may be described as one of the episodes leading up to the Great Civil War two years later. The veteran leader of the Covenanting army, General Leslie, was marching into England and meantime a detachment was sent under Colonel Home with orders to capture Caerlaverock Castle and prevent it from becoming a rallying point for the Royalists. Robert Maxwell, Earl of Nithsdale, was holding the castle with a garrison of 200 men. By this time the Earl had made of Caerlaverock a magnificent place. With the help of the best architects and engineers he had made it not only
a/

a great fortress but a palace as well, for, unlike most of his forbears, he was devoted to art and literature and was also interested in science. (He was nicknamed the 'Philosopher'). A contemporary writer described the family residence in the Castle as the "daintie fabric of Nithsdale's new lodgings". With its lavish decorations and its rich furnishings, its crests and coats of arms, the double headed eagle of the Maxwells, the stag and the holly bush, and its various floral and heraldic carvings, all certainly must have combined to make a lodging worthy of an earl.

It took the Covenanters several weeks to get the siege really started. This was because it took so long to haul the cannon from Edinburgh over the inadequate roads of those days. But once these heavy guns had really begun to batter the Earl's 'dainty lodgings', the end was only a matter of time. After thirteen weeks the garrison was forced to surrender to the superior arms and the constant bombardment of the enemy. This was on the 29th September, 1640. A full inventory of all the Castle's luxurious furnishings was taken at this time. This interesting list still survives and gives us some idea of a nobleman's home in those days. The most unusual item was a library of books which had cost the Earl £200 - a big sum of money for books in the 17th century. This was the end of Caerlaverock as a place of residence. The Maxwell lairds had inhabited it - as continuously as the fortunes of war and politics had allowed - for about 500 years. Now it was left a ruin and so has remained till our time. The estate of Caerlaverock has now passed by inheritance from the Maxwells and the Herries family to the Duke of Norfolk who in 1945 placed the Castle in the care of the Ministry of Works. (Local tradition insists that Oliver Cromwell conducted this last siege of Caerlaverock but this doesn't seem possible. Cromwell was an active member of the English parliament in 1640, the year of the siege, and didn't become a soldier till 1642 when he joined the Parliamentary army on the outbreak of the Civil War).

Another well known landmark in the parish is Wardlaw which is a hill opposite the castle. It is crowned with a clump of trees and was probably a native British settlement. Near it on/

on the south side was a Roman fort. 'A Wardlaw' was the battle-cry of the Maxwell retainers when they charged to battle. For centuries it was used as a beacon hill and watch tower, as its name implies, for, like the castle, it was in an excellent position overlooking the Solway and guarding the entrance to Nithsdale. It could give and receive signals in times of danger - and they were all too common from the earliest days up to our own times when it served the same purpose throughout two world wars. There are other old beacon hills or forts encircling the parish - Craig Wood, Highmains and Baillie Knowe. (This last name means 'beacon or bonfire hill'). On the banks of the Lochar near the parish kirk is a rather mysterious ruined building called the Auld Isle. It bears the crest of the Maxwells and is said to have been used as a safe place for plate and other valuables and could easily be flooded for this purpose.

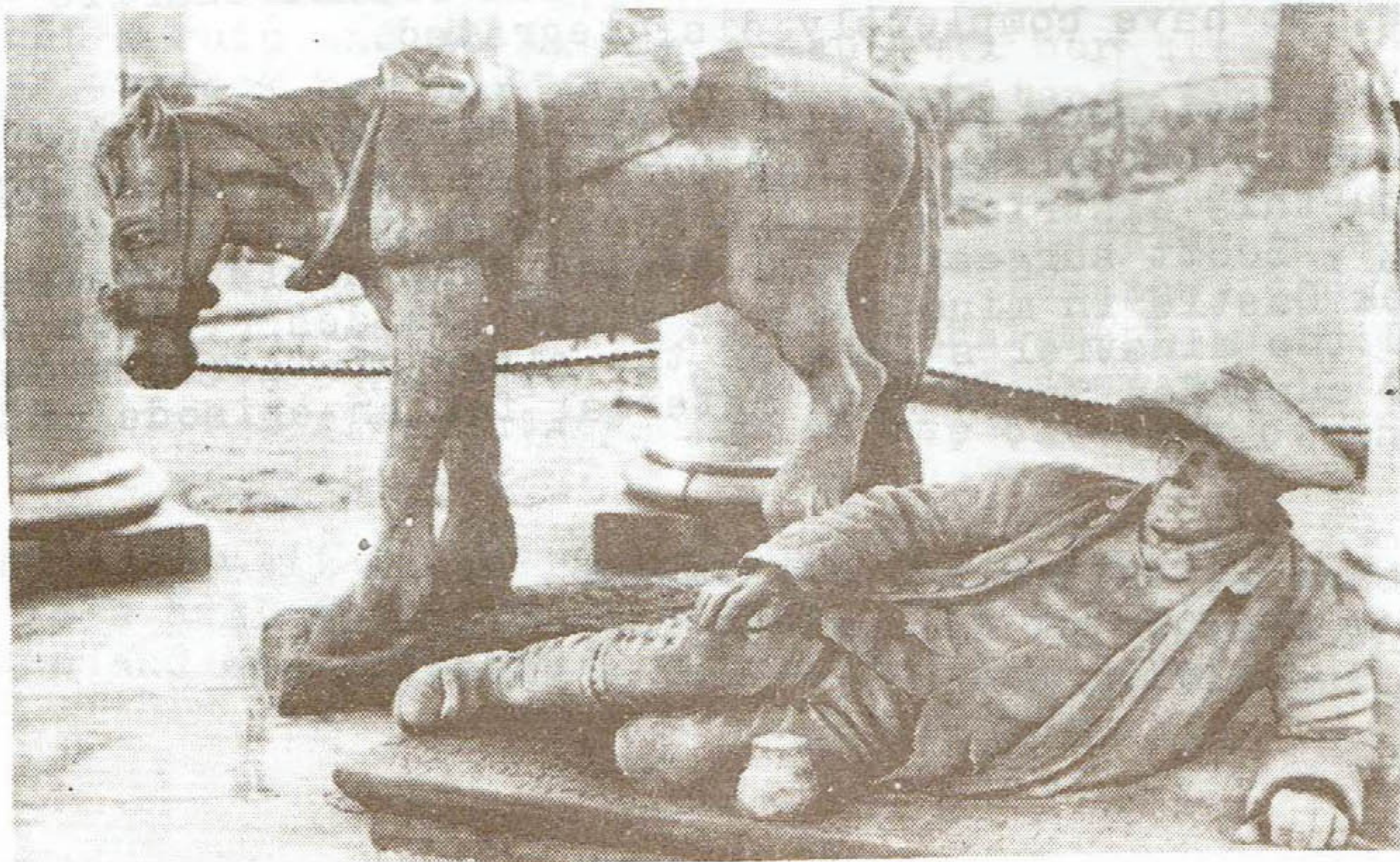
Before the present Annan Road was made, the main road from Carlisle to Dumfries ran through Bankend and it was through Bankend that part of the Jacobite army passed on its way north during the retreat from Derby late in the year 1745. It was the detachment under Prince Charlie himself that came up this way and, according to a popular tradition, he stayed at Townhead, Bankend, while some of his men stayed at a house in the village occupied by the Mathieson family where bannocks were specially baked for them. Not so long ago there was supposed to be in existence in the village an old worm-eaten table that was called Prince Charlie's Table. The top of the table was in the form of three clover leaves. This relic of Bonnie Prince Charlie seems, however, to have completely disintegrated.

There is no evidence that Sir Walter Scott was ever in Caerlaverock but nevertheless he had more than one interesting connection with this district. In a foot-note to his novel 'Guy Mannering', Scott suggests that he had 'the noble remains of Caerlaverock Castle' in mind when he wrote the description of Ellangowan, and the minstrel's tale of the siege of Caerlaverock Castle in 1300 supplied Scott with material for an episode of the/

the same kind described in the novel 'Ivanhoe'. Joseph Train, an exciseman in Dumfries and an antiquary in his spare time, provided Scott with some local characters for his Waverley Novels. Among these was a wandering mason called Robert Paterson who, together with his scraggy white haired sheltie, was a familiar figure in the country side of Galloway and Dumfriesshire, especially in the kirkyairds where he felt it his duty to recut and repair the tombstones of the Covenanters. Scott had for a long time been interested in this old character and had met him once as far away from his home county as Dunnottar. Scott chose him for the title part of his novel about the Covenanting period in Scotland, - "Old Mortality". According to his introduction to the novel, Scott believed that Old Mortality died at Bankhill, near Lockerbie, but it was afterwards discovered that he had died at Bankend and was buried in Caerlaverock. Years after the death of Scott, his publishers, Adam and Charles Black, carried out his wishes and erected a tombstone to Old Mortality in Caerlaverock Churchyard. Carved on it are a mallet and chisel - the old man's tools - and the verse which Scott placed at the head of the first chapter of his novel:-

"Why seeks he with unwearied toil,
Through death's dim walks to urge his way,
Reclaim his long - asserted spoil,
And lead oblivion into day!"

This epitaph, one feels, might well be applied to Sir Walter himself, as well as to Old Mortality.

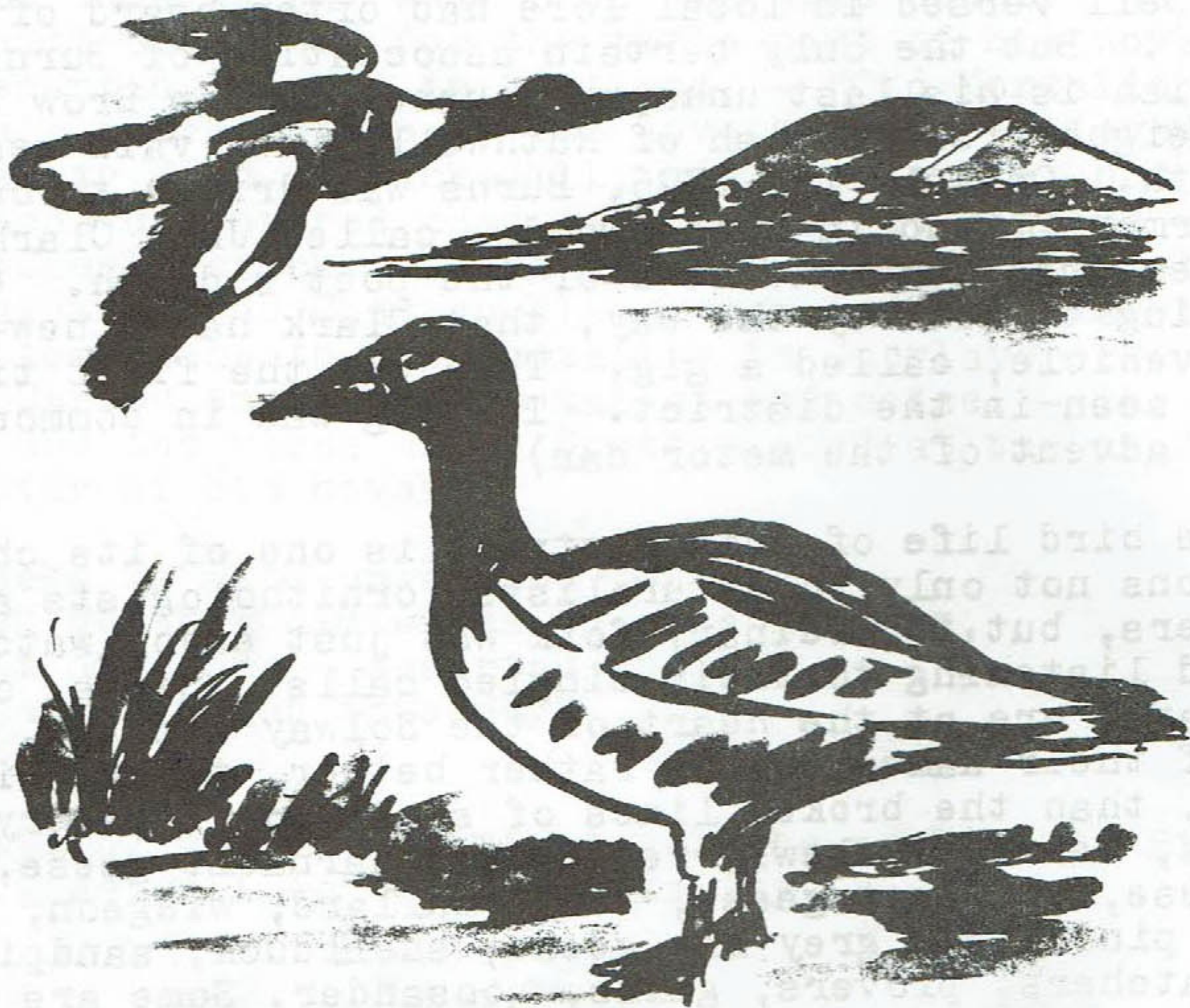


SCULPTURE GROUP IN DUMFRIES MUSEUM

Robert Burns, during his few years as an exciseman in Dumfries, must have come to know Caerlaverock and Glencaple pretty well. In the kitchen of the old farmhouse at Shearington there was supposed to be a window with R.B. scratched on it. What happened to this window pane, nobody knows. (Both Miss Hunter who lived in Shearington Farm and Captain Dalgliesh who was well versed in local lore had often heard of this.) But the only certain association of Burns with this parish is his last unhappy journey to the Brow Well in the neighbouring parish of Ruthwell, in a vain search for health. On July 18, 1796, Burns was driven through Bankend by a farmer friend in Locharwoods, called John Clark. Three days afterwards came the news of the poet's death. (It is interesting to note by the way, that Clark had a new-fashioned kind of vehicle, called a gig. This was the first time one had been seen in the district. The gig was in common use till the advent of the motor car).

The bird life of this district is one of its chief attractions not only to naturalists, ornithologists and wildfowlers, but to ordinary folk who just enjoy watching birds and listening to their mingled calls. Birds, one writer says, are at the heart of the Solway's magic. Just a list of their names sounds rather better, to one listener at least, than the broken lines of some modern poetry - peesweeps, terns, curlews, redshanks, barnacle geese, brent geese, pinkfeet geese, teal, mallard, widgeon, sanderlings, dunlins, pintails, grey lag geese, shelduck, sandpipers, oyster catchers, plovers, gulls, goosander. Some are with us the whole year through, but many are migrants that halt in the passing or spend a whole season by the shallow creeks on the merses and on the shining stretches of mud left wet by the ebbing tide. At the back-end of the year, the wild geese come in great numbers from their breeding grounds in the Arctic regions. To see and hear them passing swiftly across the sky is an experience that never stales. There is something strange and fascinating about that 'lang, lang skein o' beatin' wings, wi' their heids towards the sea'. The wildfowlers will hide in the muddy creeks on cold winter nights waiting for the birds to rise at daybreak. Bird watchers with kinder intentions look/

look patiently for them with field glasses. "The silence of the marshes is unique" says Mr. B. Blake, "it is not absence of sound, but a blending of the primitive sounds of nature, of bird-call and flight, of lapping water and sighing wind".



Part of the merse land is reserved by the Duke of Norfolk for his own private shooting and part is let by ticket to a reasonable number of wildfowlers. The remainder of the merse is now a bird sanctuary or nature reserve with a resident keeper. This reserve was inaugurated some years ago by the well-known naturalist and bird-lover, Mr. Peter Scott.

Wild flowers still grow profusely, but not as profusely/

profusely by the roadside as they once did. In spring the grass is studded with celandines, wood anemones, violets, speedwell and mayflower and later in early summer the whin and the broom make the country side gay with their golden blooms on the banks and braes, over the merse and along the hedgerows between Nith and Lochar. The broom has been used for many purposes, even as a royal emblem, but here its chief practical use has always been the making of besoms. In the Autumn there are many juicy brambles to be found in the ditches and hedgerows and later on there is - or used to be - a fine show of holly bushes and trees with their glossy leaves and bright red berries. Unfortunately the holly has suffered in this commercial age from people who disfigure the trees by tearing off whole branches for Christmas decorations.

The story of church and school development in this parish is closely connected with the life of one of Caerlaverock's sons, the typical Scottish lad o' pairts who makes his way in the great world but still remembers his home. His name was John Hutton and, according to the Rev. William McMorine, who wrote the first Statistical Account of Scotland in 1791, he herded sheep belonging to the parish minister who was at that time an Episcopalian. From the Caerlaverock glebe he went away to be "companion to a gentleman's son who had taken a fancy to him". Along with him he seems to have received "the rudiments of a liberal education", studied medicine at Edinburgh and become a doctor, graduating M.D. at Padua. Hutton's fortune was made by a lucky accident. He happened to be in Holland shortly before the Revolution of 1688 (Many students from Scotland went to Holland in those days to pursue their studies, but many Scots went there too because of religious persecution from one side or another). One day it happened that Mary, Princess of Orange, wife of Holland's ruler, William of Orange, and daughter of James II, was out with a hunting party when she was thrown from her horse. A surgeon was wanted immediately to bleed the Princess. (At that time bleeding was supposed to be the cure for all ills). Hutton apparently was the first doctor that could be found and so he ultimately became physician to the Orange family. He came over with them at the Revolution and was appointed first physician to King William/

William and Queen Mary and physician general to their armies and hospitals. As such he was present at the battle of the Boyne and the siege of Limerick. No doubt he retained these positions during the reign of Queen Anne (for whom medical attention was certainly often necessary). In 1710 John Hutton became Member of Parliament for the Dumfries Burghs, the second Member of Parliament for Dumfries in the United Parliament, and according to Mr. McMorine, he died in 1712 and was evidently buried in Somerset House Chapel.

In 1708 he had had a new manse built at Caerlaverock and when he died he left about £1000 for the upkeep of the kirk and manse, for education, and for the relief of the poor and needy of the parish. He also left to the Presbytery of Dumfries, an extensive library, including the prayer book supposed to have been used by King Charles I on the scaffold - which does not seem to have been preserved.

This Hutton Trust is bound up with the story of Caerlaverock and Glencaple - religious, educational and economic - during the last 200 years. The Caerlaverock people enjoyed a kind of welfare state on a small scale long before the rest of the country had heard of such a thing and it has been a great boon to the people. In 1781 a new church was built. It was seated for 470 people and no rents were charged for any of the sittings. The stipend in 1791 was £110, including many payments in kind, meal, barley, fish and other products of the parish. Of course as the years passed the Session began to have their troubles in administering the Trust funds. Some of the complaints and criticisms remind us forcibly of similar criticisms made in our time about the benefits of the welfare state. Here is the Rev. William McMorine's contribution - "If the situation, circumstances and manners of the inhabitants of Caerlaverock are considered, it should seem that a fourth part of the sum allotted to the support of the poor might be sufficient for all purposes of real and useful charity. And indeed an attentive observer will reckon it a matter of doubt, whether the greatness of the parish funds be productive of most good or evil. The moralist has some cause to complain that/

that it dries up the sources of private charity and renders the poorer people less willing to assist their old and needy relations. These they seem sometimes disposed to abandon to the care of the session by the small allowance they bestow, make up to them the want of that tender assiduity that provides the cordial of age and poverty and which natural affection alone can administer". The farmers too complained of the number of idle and indolent men in the parish who depended for their support on the Hutton funds and not on their own exertions, so that the farmers found it difficult to get workers in an emergency. Some critics even went as far as to suggest that infirmities of one kind or another might be "feigned" in order to excite compassion and to obtain a more liberal share of charity". No doubt the management and distribution of the funds caused a considerable deal of worry and annoyance to the minister and his session. "Those whose poverty has been the result of early profligacy must not be starved into crime but they must not be put on an equal footing with the temperate and industrious whose poverty has been caused by old age, sickness, or misfortune. The trustees are furnished with ample and unquestionable powers to observe this distinction. They are left to the uncontrolled exercise of their consciences in selecting the objects of charity and the increasing revenue will enable them to bestow a bounty upon virtue and industry when overtaken by poverty". But in spite of all the criticism from the heritors, the farmers, the elders and the ministers of the Trust, the Hutton Bequest must have been a great blessing to many deserving people in the parish at a time when there were no benefits for the old and the sick and the distressed and when farm wages were very low. (At the very end of the 18th century the wages of a man servant maintained in the family was from £6 to £8 per year, a woman's wage was £3 per year. A married day labourer received only 1/- per day, without food and 8d. with food. Even so, Caerlaverock fared better than some other parts of the country.). However, with the advent of the 20th century and with the passing of various acts of Parliament to improve the social services, the work of the Hutton trustees was gradually assumed by the government. In 1935 the Dumfries County/

County Council took over most of the Hutton funds with other trusts in the county and they were merged in to the Dumfriesshire Educational Trust, only about one third being left to the church and for the relief of the needy of Caerlaverock. In 1958 the gross income of the Hutton Fund amounted to £1225.

After the Disruption in 1843 a Free Church congregation was formed at Glencaple and a church was built there. In 1930 the two churches were joined under one minister and so they have remained since. In 1837 a new manse had been built at Caerlaverock but after well over 100 years it was considered unsuitable for modern use and another house was bought to serve as a manse.

The first Statistical Account (1791) mentions four schools in the parish - Bankend, Blackshaw, Highmains and Kelton, which received a total of about £160 from the Hutton funds. In the second Account, only the first three schools are named and the number of pupils is given as about 200. The most famous of the local schools was Hutton Hall Academy which was called a grammar school. It was also a boarding school for boys and was known far and wide for the soundness of its teaching. There a boy could learn not only the ordinary school subjects, but Latin and Greek, French and the higher branches of mathematics. A staff of servants was kept to cook and launder and look after the boarders who might be about sixty in number. A teacher's salary at that time would be from £15 to £20 per year. The Rector also farmed at Bankswood. The last Rector was James McDonald whose activities are still remembered and appreciated. In 1892 a new school was opened at Bankend. The boarding school was closed about 1910 and Hutton Hall became an ordinary village school. The schools at Highmains and Blackshaw had been closed long before, in the middle of the last century, when a school was built at Glencaple. Though now well over its century, Glencaple School still functions with a staff of two teachers and a roll of about 30. The roll at Hutton Hall is usually between 40 and 50 with two teachers also. The education authority has planned - and still plans - to have only one school in the parish but so far nothing definite has been done to carry out this plan. X

One/



The Great Eastern reaches Newfoundland

PRINT FROM THE 'GLASGOW HERALD'.

One of the many successful pupils of Hutton Hall was James Anderson, the fifth son of a bookseller in Dumfries. He entered the merchant service and became an officer in the Cunard Line of Steamers. For some time he was captain of the "Great Eastern", one of the first big iron ships designed by the great engineer, Brunel, and built at a cost of £640,000 - a vast sum in those days. As captain of the "Great Eastern" Anderson shared in the responsibility of laying the electric cable across the Atlantic, a wonderful achievement carried through in spite of seemingly endless difficulties and disappointments. The inspiring genius behind this great feat was the Glasgow Scientist, Professor William Thomson (afterwards Lord Kelvin) helped by another Glasgow man, James White, who manufactured the instruments used to test the cables. (For the next fifty years Britain was to lead the world in submarine telegraphy and long distance communications.) This was completed in the year 1866, just 100 years ago, and for their services, James Anderson and Professor Thomson each received a Knighthood. Later, on his retiral, Sir James built a mansion house by the side of the Nith below Glencaple. The grounds were laid out in terraces on the model of his famous ship and were planted with flowers and shrubs which he had collected in foreign parts. In spring and summer Kirkconnel Lea is still beautiful with its trees of various kinds, its green lawns and hedges and its many coloured shrubs.

Another former pupil of Hutton Hall was Joseph Hunter, who like John Hutton, became a doctor and ended his career as a Member of Parliament. When Medical Officer of Health for Dumfries Burgh, he did great pioneer work in the clearance of the town's slums.

At the end of the 18th century the population of this parish was over 900. By the middle of the 19th century it was up to 1418, but in 1951 it was 710. According to the last census, 1961, the population is now 682. About 100 years ago the population of Glencaple was roughly 600 but now it is less than half that number. This is no doubt partly due to the loss of the shipping traffic in Glencaple but a reduction of 50% in population in the last century is true, not only of Glencaple/

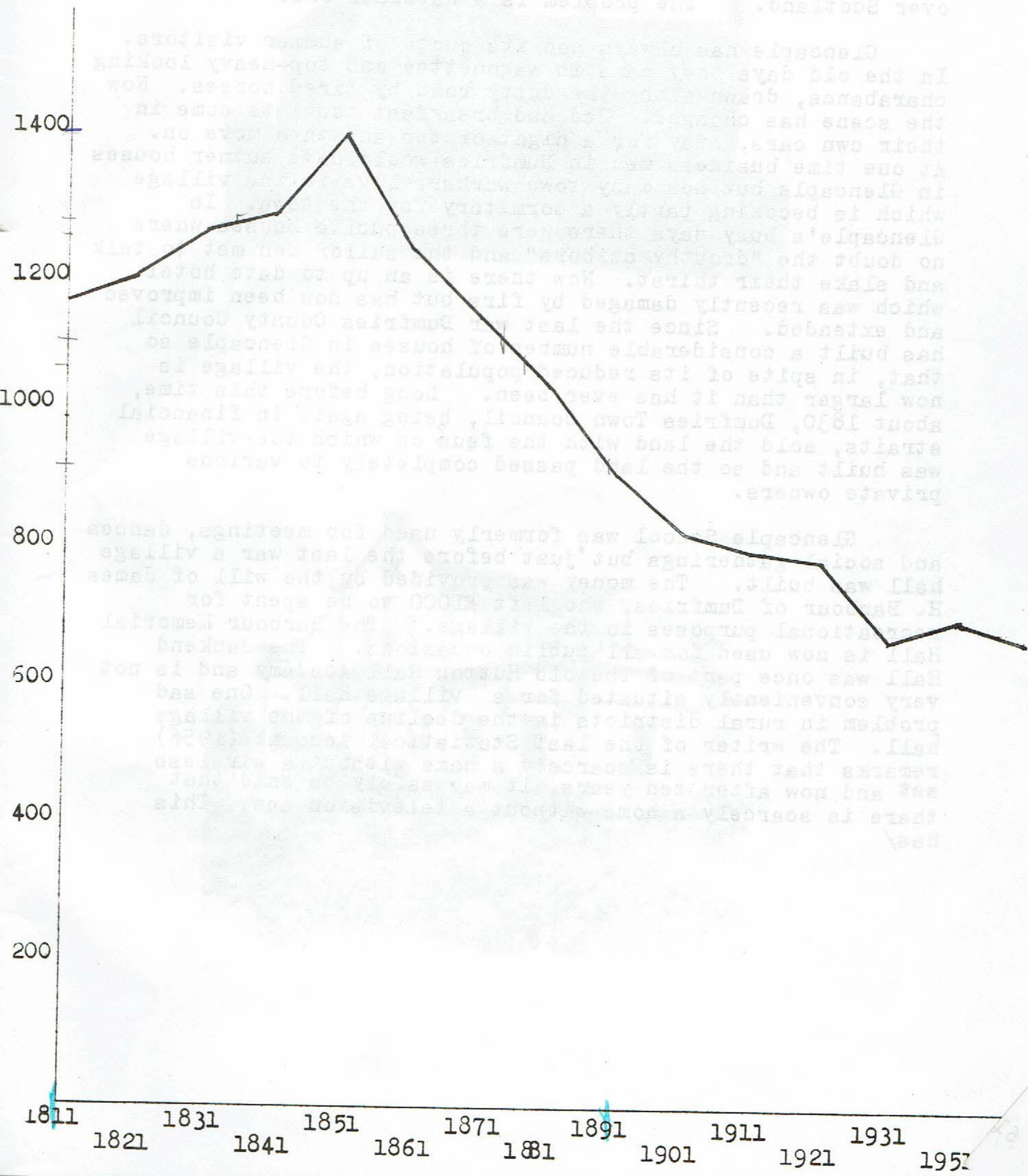


PARISH OF
CAERLAVEROCK.

POPULATION OF THE PARISH

1811 to 1961.

Source.
Census Report
1961.



Glencaple and Caerlaverock but of most rural districts all over Scotland. The problem is a national one.

Glencaple has always had its quota of summer visitors. In the old days they came in wagonettes and top-heavy looking charabancs, drawn along the dusty road by tired horses. Now the scene has changed. Bed and breakfast tourists come in their own cars, stay for a night or two and then move on. At one time business men in Dumfries would have summer houses in Glencaple but now many town workers live in the village which is becoming partly a dormitory for the town. In Glencaple's busy days there were three public houses where no doubt the "drouthy neibors" and the sailor men met to talk and slake their thirst. Now there is an up to date hotel which was recently damaged by fire but has now been improved and extended. Since the last war Dumfries County Council has built a considerable number of houses in Glencaple so that, in spite of its reduced population, the village is now larger than it has ever been. Long before this time, about 1830, Dumfries Town Council, being again in financial straits, sold the land with the feus on which the village was built and so the land passed completely to various private owners.

Glencaple School was formerly used for meetings, dances and social gatherings but just before the last war a village hall was built. The money was provided by the will of James H. Barbour of Dumfries, who left £1000 to be spent for recreational purposes in the village. The Barbour Memorial Hall is now used for all public occasions. The Bankend Hall was once part of the old Hutton Hall Academy and is not very conveniently situated for a village hall. One sad problem in rural districts is the decline of the village hall. The writer of the last Statistical Account (1956) remarks that there is scarcely a home without a wireless set and now after ten years, it may safely be said that there is scarcely a home without a television set. This has/



has probably much to do with the decline of once popular rural entertainments, like concerts, whist drives, plays and even dances and for the difficulty so many hall committees now have in balancing their books.

Now that transport is easily available because so many people have cars, young folks tend to go into the town for their entertainment, whereas, not so long ago, they found their own amusements in the village. Curling used to be a popular winter recreation and a curling club was formed in 1830. Eight men with one stone each made a rink. The stones were shaped from whinstone and had iron handles set in lead. Another popular country game was quoits and there is a local club book dated 1875, but there seems to have been no quoiting to speak of since the first World War. The most popular game of all in this, as in most country parishes, is carpet bowling which seems to have developed about 1890. It has been popular with the young as well as the elderly and in recent years the women folk have also joined in. A Scottish Carpet Bowling Association was formed in Dumfries with a set of rules for the game and clubs were formed in every parish. Two clubs in this parish, Glencaple and Bankend, fought keenly every year to retain the Stott Cup. Football enthusiasts usually go to Dumfries and further afield to view the game but in recent years a football club has been formed, mainly for youths, at Glencaple. The boys compete in League matches throughout the summer months. At one time much stir and excitement were caused by the local ploughing match, but it was discontinued about sixty years ago when the big ploughing match in Dumfries became more popular.

Formerly women did not have much in the way of recreation and entertainment nor much chance indeed to get away from domestic chores, but the winds of change have been blowing in this direction too. In November, 1929, a branch of the Women's Rural Institute was established in Glencaple and has carried on successfully ever since. The meetings are/

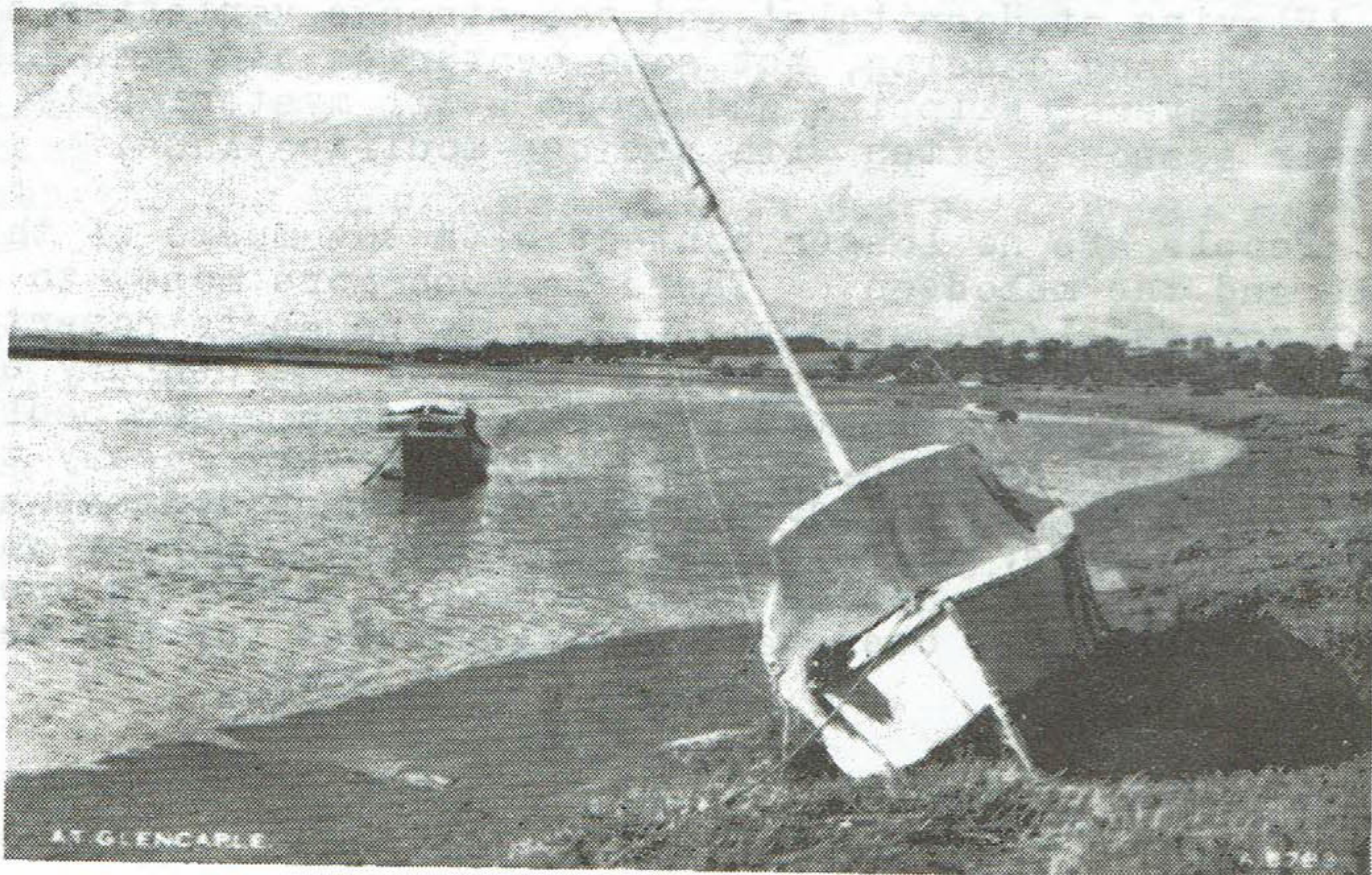
are held on the first Thursday of each month and the present membership is about 42. Now the women are able to enjoy and take part in various forms of entertainment and they also benefit by the talks and demonstrations which are regularly provided at their meetings. There was a 'Rural' in Bankend at one time, but it lapsed and now in its place there is a Ladies Club which also meets monthly and has programmes which run on the same lines as those of the W.R.I. Then during the winter there are monthly meetings of the Woman's Guild, a branch of which was formed in 1931. The meetings are held in the churches of Caerlaverock and Glencaple alternately. For many years there has been a badminton club in Glencaple and various further education classes are run on the winter evenings by the Dumfriesshire Education Committee, the most popular of these being arts and crafts and dressmaking.

Changes are apparent even in the children's amusements. The age-old singing games - unchanged for centuries - are still to be heard fitfully in the school playgrounds, but favourites, like, 'Water, water wallflower' and 'The wind, the wind, the wind blows high', etc., so common in the early years of the century are rarely heard now. Even here the impact of television is apparent in, for example, a game like 'Playing at Hospitals' and the strange varieties of pop singing and dancing, but some centuries old game like beds or peevers, skipping and bools still mysteriously appear in their seasons, often with strange modifications.

People are no longer content with the music of the fiddle and the melodeon. There is much more money to spend and it may safely be said that there is no acute poverty in country districts. In the early years of the century every house was regularly visited by tramps, beggars and pedlars, of one kind and another, but now they are very rarely to be seen. Dirty ragged children would cause much comment and surprise nowadays; thirty or forty years ago, nobody would have taken special notice of so common a sight. In one lifetime there have been vast social changes for the better, but/



SHOOTER'S LANE, GLENCAPLE.



AT GLENCAPLE

but still there is much enough left to criticise. 'Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers'.

In spite of all the programmes poured out by wireless and television, the Dumfriesshire dialect still survives and even when speaking or trying to speak - the Queen's English - we give ourselves away with our vowel sounds which seem to be peculiar to the southern counties.

Old customs and superstitions are passing away. Hallowe'en still remains but only a shadow of what it was even in living memory. Hunt the Gowk has almost entirely gone and the Hogmanay and New Year festivities are quickly being supplanted by the more sophisticated celebrations of Christmas.

Glencaple Quay, some folk say, might be used again for local trade if the Nith were dredged and other necessary improvements made but it would take a very large sum of money to carry out this project even if it were feasible. Ambitious plans for a Solway Barrage Scheme are also discussed. Changes even greater and more surprising than we have known may take place in the near or further future. Meantime, Caerlaverock remains spread out between Criffel and the blue mountains of Cumberland, a pleasant countryside and one to be remembered with gratitude.

"Aince mair ye hae seen the auld Castle wa',
Ye hae looked on the Warlaw Hill,
An' the quarry knowe an' the Hutton Ha',
An' the brig an' the auld meal mill,
The ruined Isle and the Kelsic trees,
And the auld kirkyaird near by,
Where the wild birds scream and the grass grows green,
On the graves where your kindred lie."

APPENDIX.

Place names:-

Glencaple - Gaelic gleann capuill - the mare's glen.

Caerlaverock. - British Caer - a fort.

The second part is probably a British or Welsh personal name Llyarch. Og. - supposed to be an old British (or Welsh) poet.

Glenhowan - Gaelic gleann cobhain - glen of the hollow.

Shearington- Shirringtonn (so named in a map of 1660.)
(Old English personal name Scira-tun).

Books consulted:-

First Statistical Account of Scotland.	1791.
Second " " " "	1841.
Third " " " "	1956.

"History of Dumfries"	- Wm. McDowall.
"The Solway Firth"	- Brian Blake.
"Dumfries & Galloway"	- Sir Herbert Maxwell.

The W.R.I. are indebted to their friends outside the Institute for their contributions.