

## Drummy Walk 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016

### **The Crofts of Drummy, taken from Echoes 18**

The crofts are not mentioned in 1841 census but present in 1851 census. Presumably built between those dates, not necessarily all at the same time and on land belonging, to Lord Aberdeen. The land passed to the MacRobert Estate (Douneside) in 1934 on the death of Lord Aberdeen. The crofters became tenants of Douneside.

Many of the people had jobs e.g. farm labourer, horseman, drysteen dyker, dairymaid, bonnet maker, dressmaker, house servant as well as working long hours on the croft. An additional source of income was often needed in order to supplement the output from the croft. The crofts were mainly between three and eight acres. **See Echoes 17 for an account of life at The crofts of Drummy.**

### **Originally 12 dwellings in the area**

Strathweltie

Strathweltie Cottage

Tonley

The Brebner croft (remains in the woods behind Tonley)

Newton of Drummy

Broomfield of Drummy

5 Crofts of Dummy along the track

1 croft on the corner of Burnside (very little remaining)

**I have concentrated on the seven crofts along the track.**

**Up to the brow of the hill and along the track, 7 crofts in order East to West...**

### **Newton of Drummy**

The only croft that has had continuous occupation by the same family and their descendants and one of the biggest crofts. Newton and Broomfield between them had around 25 acres.

In 1851 census a branch of the Brebner family lived there (possibly relatives of the tenants from the croft behind Tonley).

Margaret Brebner (daughter) married John Melvin

Josie Melvin (daughter) married Donald Cumming

Josie and Donald father of Jock Cumming who lives there today.

Over the years many people lived there as boarders/ lodgers/relatives, even in the small building/cottage that became the 'pig house'

### **Broomfield of Drummy**

Now a new house on the site of the original croft, owned by Howard Butterworth, painter.

1851 census..Riddell family

Helen Riddell (bonnet maker) married William Innes (stonemason) still there at 1901 census.

By 1940's Geordie Mellis (postie) and wife Nellie (poet) 'The Auld Road to Drumimy'. Nell was nicknamed 'Woodbine Nell' due to the Woodbine cigarettes that she favoured.

Later Improvements were made to the house and Hector (Bunt) Masson moved there with wife Nell ( different Nell from Nellie Mellis) from West Croft. They were grandparents to Gillian in the paper shop. Bunt died there in 1979; he was the last occupant of the original croft.

### **The ford**

The ford is shown on the 1870 map and allows access to Strathweltie. The crofters of Drummy had no proper roads had gained the privilege of carrying peats through this road by 1873. At one time there was a wooden bridge and a wicket gate over the burn.

### **East Croft**

1881 census: Milne family. Andrew Milne (crofter and general labourer) and his mother Annie.

About 1927 the Lamont family (Charlie and Annie) moved there. They had two boys Alan born 1926 and Peter born 1928. Peter lives in the village today. They had been staying with Annie's parents at the Thomson Croft but moved to East croft as they had their children. Their sons Alan and Peter left when they married. Later Annie's father Peter Thomson came to live with them after his wife died. Peter Thomson lived there was the last occupant of the croft.

### **The Double House**

1891 census Munro family. John was from Banffshire and wife Anne from Lumphanan with Ann Smith, mother in law to John and mother of wife Anne plus Jock Smith unmarried brother of Ann Munro. John and Ann had four sons and later two daughters. Their daughter Mary married Alex and their stepdaughter Helen Williams became the mother of Rob, Geordie, Pink and Helen Adam.

**Next door** lived George Smith (a horseman) brother to Ann Munro (nee Smith) and unmarried brother Jock Smith. He was married to Mary who was born in Coull. They had a daughter, Mary who was a dressmaker. Elizabeth Gordon also lived with them as did William Cran. William later moved to Cromar cottages. He was the last occupant of the croft.

### **The Thomson Croft**

The location identified by an old apple tree that grew in the midden.

Before the 1911 census..The Davidson family. Later the Thomson family. Peter Thomson, married to Maria (nee Allen), moved there from Ivy Cottage, Aboyne in 1923. They had a daughter, Annie (a postie at 16). She married Charlie Lamont and they too lived at the Thomson Croft before moving to East Croft.

Peter Thomson was a strong and resourceful man, able to cut acres of corn with a scythe, barrow tons of fodder to his animals and work long hours daily. His wife Maria died before him and he went to stay at East croft with his daughter Annie and her family. He was grandfather to Alan and Peter Lamont. He was the last occupant of the croft. He left to live with grandson Alan and his wife Janet in Tarland. He died there aged 96.

**West croft**

Sometimes referred to as Top Croft. In 1873 Isabella Masson, widow of John Masson, was the tenant. John may have been related to the later Masson family. The 1901 census shows that the Young family were the residents. The Masson family became the next tenants; Sandy Masson and his wife Belle (Isabella, nee Ewan). They brought up a large family there. Their son Hector (Bunt, grandfather of Gillian) left the croft to go to Broomfield of Drummy after his father Sandy died. Sandy Masson was the last occupant of the croft.

West croft is being renovated, having stood derelict and sometime home to a combine harvester.

**Demise of the Crofts of Drummy**

It would seem that as people died or moved away the crofts were not reoccupied. Some stood empty and deteriorated over time. This way of life ceased to be attractive with the development of modern comforts, electricity, sophisticated heating and plumbing, labour-saving appliances etc... People aspired to an easier lifestyle; working the land has never been an easy option. As the land was no longer worked a cash crop of trees was planted and the remaining crofts demolished.

Drummy is very fondly remembered by the people and their descendants who were part of that period. It was a very close community with good times and bad times to share, binding people together.

## Drummy Woods and Drummy Moor

Recent evidence found at Walkmill (Neolithic shards of pottery) proves that Tarland was home to people 6,000 years ago. There is evidence (remains of hut circles and other structures) in Drummy Woods and on Drummy Moor to provide evidence of occupation 3,000 years ago. There may well have been more people in and around Tarland than there are today!!

### As we walk up the track ...

- **On the right** Glendeskry, the **old Manse** to the 'Free Church' which was on the corner of the track (no longer there).
- **On the right Drummy Moor**  
**What we know is there:**  
**Hut circles**, remains of late Bronze age/Early Iron Age circular dwellings; contemporary with Kinnord. Constructed with lower walls of stone which anchored a conical wooden structure thatched with heather, straw, bracken reeds or any suitable available material, They would have housed extended families of maybe fifteen people. Doorways often facing SE to catch morning sun. Floors sometimes paved with stones. Floors sometimes hollowed out to give greater internal height. What we see today is the circle of stones remaining.  
A **quern stone** (for grinding grain) was found on the moor.  
A **four poster**, a setting of four standing stones, small monoliths. It could be the remains of a stone circle?  
What little remains of the site of the **Blue Cairn**. This was almost completely robbed as late as the 1960s to shore up the road just before the Ordy Crossroads
- **On the left in Drummy Woods** towards the brow of the hill and below the ridge.
- There was a professional archaeological walk over survey carried out in 2003, commissioned by the MacRobert Trust. Several members of CHG took part in this. Afterwards the area was clear felled. This was to preserve the now scheduled area. Unfortunately, this allowed the broom to flourish and obscure the archaeology.  
**What we know is there:**  
**Post mediaeval walls** probably for animal management, marking boundaries and defining trackways.  
**Hut circles and other structures.**  
At least 3 hut circles  
A possible corn drying kiln (a pit, lined with stones similar to excavated corn drying kilns)
- **In the open area**  
**What we know is there:**  
**Cairns** several, possible cultural or field clearance

**Cairn excavated by CHG:** a cultural cairn one piece of flint, bone and charcoal. This cairn was surrounded by an incomplete circle of small monoliths some of which were unearthed using a 'tethered horse system'. Large **animal management system** with enclosure and associated hut circle planned by Nigel and myself years ago.  
Remains of **Brebner croft** and a **well** nearby.