

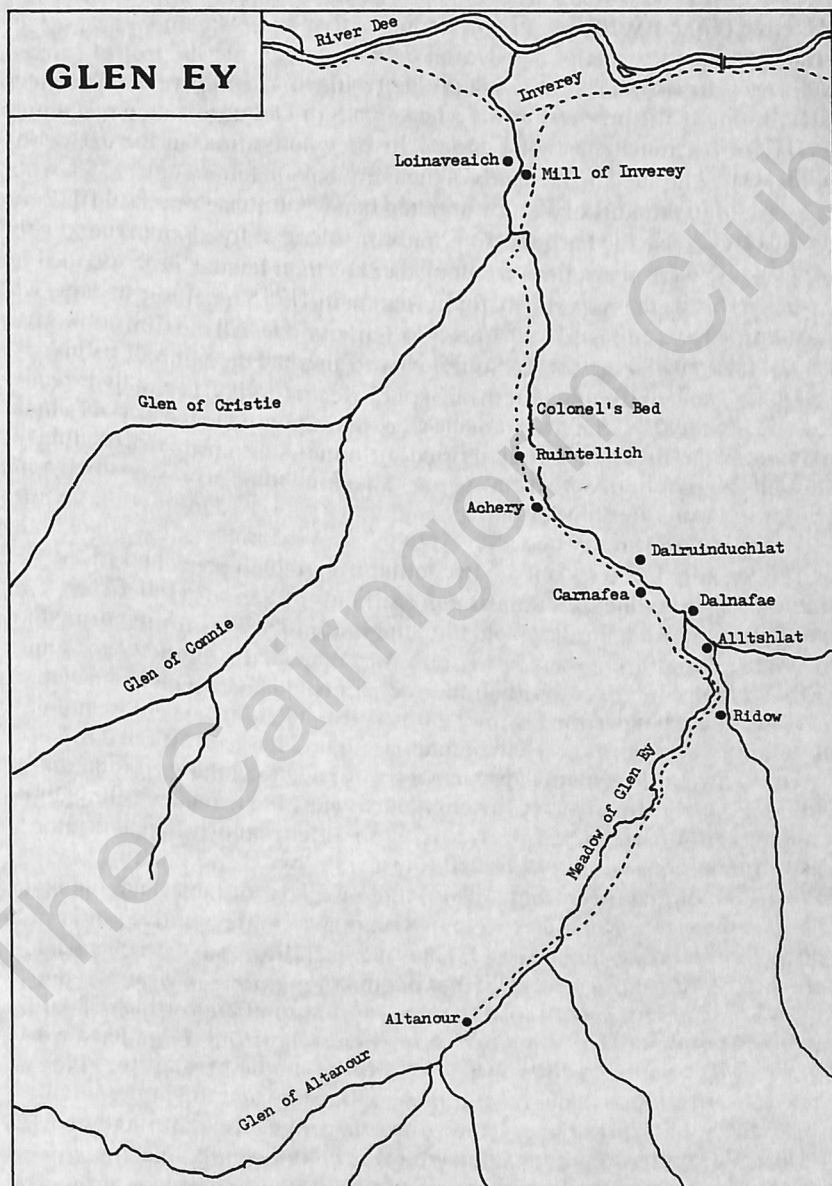
GLEN EY, A HISTORY

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Glen Ey or most of it, has always been part of the Estate of Inverey. The estate was originally the property of the Mackenzies of Dalmore, but was acquired by James Farquharson, first Laird of Inverey some time in the early 17th century. It continued in the hands of the Farquharson family until 1785, when it was sold to the Earl of Fife by another James Farquharson, the 11th Laird of Inverey. While the Farquharsons had considerable freedom in running the estate, there were restrictions put upon them by their Feudal Superior, the Earl of Mar. (He lost the Superiority for his part in the 1715 rebellion, and this was later bought by Lord Braco who became Earl of Fife). All the fir woods on the estate were the property of the Superior, who also had the rights of fishing and of hunting deer and game. For the last purpose there were designated areas of 'reserved forest' to which the tenants were not supposed to have access. In the early days, in addition to paying his feu duties, the laird was required to provide certain services to the Superior. These included provision of men and dogs to assist with hunting parties, and more seriously to provide men for military service if requested.

The tenants of the estate were required to pay their rents and to assist at shoots, help with the harvest and go on errands of various kinds. They were entitled to servitude timber from the Superior's fir woods for repairing their houses or barns, and for any other purpose connected with their agricultural activities. It is not clear whether there were any tenants in Glen Ey when the Farquharsons acquired the estate, but it seems likely that there would have been some in the lower part and perhaps as far up as Achery (spelled Auchelie on the O.S. map). Above there the glen was used as summer pasture by the tenants of Inverey and also Corriemulzie, as were the tributary valleys of the Connie and Cristie. The upper part of the glen, then called the Glen of Altanour, was part of the 'reserved forest'.

During the time the Farquharsons were in charge of the estate, the arable area of the glen was greatly expanded, perhaps as a response to increasing population pressure in the area. It is known that the population of the parish was expanding during this period. Although no one has lived in the middle part of the glen for 150 years, the ruins of old farm buildings and sheilings survive. The first place of interest seen when walking up the glen is the Mill or Millcroft of Inverey. The mill was situated on the bank of the river just beyond the locked gate at the entrance to the glen, and the miller's house a little farther on, below the drystone dyke close to the road. Little remains of the mill itself, but the course of the mill lade can be clearly seen travelling in a southerly direction towards the sheep pens, where it is crossed by the modern road, and comes back to the river bank just above the existing road bridge. At this point the lade bed is about a metre and a half above the river. It is not clear



how the water was raised to this height, as there is no sign of a substantial dam. It seems more likely that a wooden or dry stone structure had been built along the edge of the river from a point about 40m or so upstream. Whatever the structure was, it was not substantial enough to survive the test of time as nothing of it remains. There were problems in working the mill from time to time. In a court case heard in 1723 between Patrick Farquharson of Inverey and Kenneth Mackenzie of Dalmore, two witnesses gave the following evidence.

They could remember that for a period of 54 years (the other said 44), the tenants of Glen Ey carried their corn to the said mill for grinding, except at times when the mill was not in condition to serve, having been stopped by frosts or storms of snow, or carried away entirely by the Water of Ey.

The first written record of the Mill of Inverey found was in the Roman Catholic baptismal records for 1706, when a James Harro of Mill of Inverey had a son baptised James. From 1734 to 1773 the mill was run by a family called Downie. By 1810 the miller was Arthur Dingwall who was a founder member of the Braemar Wrights' Friendly Society, the group responsible for starting the Braemar Gathering. The mill continued in the ownership of the Dingwall family until its demise.

Almost directly across the river from the mill is Loinaveaich, which must be properly included as one of the settlements of the glen. In 1752 it was occupied by a William Lamond and from 1811 to 1881 by McIntoshes. This holding continued to be inhabited until the 1950s when, if my memory serves me right, the householder was called McDougall. In recent years a new keeper's house has been built on the site and so it is occupied again.

About 400m beyond the Colonel's Bed is Ruintellich. Here are found ruins of buildings on both sides of the modern road, which cuts off the corners of two of them. Little remains apart from the foundations but the layout of the buildings can be clearly seen. There are two at right angles to each other on a mound on the east of the road, with a corn kiln and store built into the north-east corner of the larger one. There were always two tenants on this holding. One is known to have owned a dwelling house, barn, stable, byre and peat shed, so there must have been more buildings at one time. The 1866 map shows four buildings on the west side of the road, only two of which can be found today. It is not known whether the missing buildings were lost due to construction of the modern road or whether the stones were removed earlier for other purposes. The tenants here in 1752 were John Farquharson and Charles Macdonald. In 1808 there was a Stuart and a McGregor, but from 1828 onwards both tenants were called McHardy.

At Achery the two prominent ruins which can be seen today do not date from the former farming community, but were more modern buildings constructed for gamekeepers. It is not certain when, but they are shown on the 1866 map. They were of stone and lime construction and had slate roofs, whereas the older buildings were made from dry stone and had thatched roofs, although

no trace of these remain. The dwelling house was still habitable in the 1950s until the estate removed the roof around 1964, either to prevent people using the building or to save having to pay rates on it. Little remains of the older buildings at Achery. In addition to the dwelling house there was a barn, stable, byre, cart shed and sheep cote. Some of them were situated alongside the existing road and had a small enclosure behind which has survived. A corn kiln and at least two other buildings are found higher up the slope nearer the Allt an Sionnach. Presumably, these buildings were robbed of their stones for the construction of the newer buildings described above. Beyond the house one can see an extensive area of cleared hillside stretching well up the slope, most of which has a favourable aspect facing the south-east. For much of its recorded history the farm had two tenants, being Duncan Shaw and Donald Downie in 1752. From around 1815 there was only one, an Angus Macdonald whose son, Charles, took over some time in the 1830s.

Beyond Achery is Carnafea. Although there are several ruins here and a corn kiln, there is not much evidence of improved land compared with the previously described sites. There is a small triangular enclosure which might have been a garden plot or for stock. A William Grant lived here between 1767 and 1773. No other written evidence of occupation has been found.

Across the river from Carnafea are the three farms of Dalruinduchlat, Dalnafea and Alltshlat. They can be reached by fording the river just above Achery or by going up to the road bridge and retracing one's steps on the other side. This area was originally a sheiling ground for the tenants of Corriemulzie and was not farmed until around 1670 at the earliest. The first mention of this is found in a memorandum from Mr John James to the Earl of Mar, dated 1707, in which it is stated that "the late Inverey, without my Lord's either liberty or knowledge, did labour and manure his sheilings in Glen Ey and remove his sheilings farther towards the forest, so that now, in effect, it is no forest at all". Further evidence came to light in the court case of 1723, already mentioned. Mackenzie of Dalmore made the case that the sheilings of Dalruinduchlat and Alltshlat had been thirled¹ to his Mill of Dalmore in the same way as the lands of Corriemulzie, and therefore the possessors of the new ploughed lands ought to be thirled to the Mill of Dalmore in the same way. John Mackland, one of the witnesses stated that the tenants of Dalruinduchlat and Alltshlat carried their grindable corn to the Mill of Inverey, and reported that they had done so since these lands were first laboured, which he heard was about 50 years' ago. This statement was confirmed by other witnesses. I do not know what the Earl of Mar's reaction was when he received the memorandum, but the farms remained where they were and the tenants of Corriemulzie continued to use the new sheiling area which lay to the south of Altanour. The tenants of Auchindryne were also given sheiling rights at Altanour, either at this time or perhaps somewhat later.

¹ Bind or oblige a person to give his services or custom to a particular person, in this case a miller.



The ruins of Dalruinduchlat in Glen Ey.



Lime kiln at Dalnafae in Glen Ey.

Dalruinduchlat is situated on the flat ground immediately to the north of Piper's Wood. Here are found some of the best preserved and most extensive ruins in the glen. There are eight separate buildings including a dwelling house, barn, stable, byre and cart shed. Apart from the cart shed which had a wide door, it is impossible to distinguish which was which. There is also the remains of a corn kiln or lime kiln set into the bank at the edge of the flat ground. The slopes above contain the remains of numerous sheilings which had been built by the tenants of Corriemulzie. Nothing is known of the original tenants, but between 1752 and 1769 Duncan Clark lived there. He was one of the suspects in the murder of Sergeant Davies, a Redcoat soldier who was killed in the Glen of Connie in 1749. Fenton Wyness recounts this amply in chapter 36 of his book "Royal Valley". The Lamonts came to Dalruinduchlat in the early 19th century. There were two tenants to begin with, Malcolm and William Lamont, but from 1824 onwards it was farmed by William Lamont on his own. I wonder if Malcolm Lamont was the piper Callum Lamont who is reputed to have given Piper's Wood its name.

Immediately south of Piper's Wood is Dalnafae. The ruins are less extensive than at Dalruinduchlat but there is an exceptionally well-preserved kiln. There was a house, barn, stable, byre, cottar house and sheep cote. Here too are ruins of several sheilings on the hill above. Dalnafae only had one tenant at a time. John Shaw lived there in 1752 and remained for at least 40 years. Donald Lamont was the tenant from the early 1800s.

Alltshlat was situated on the south bank of the burn of the same name. The house had a flagstone paved floor, part of which remains visible. There was also a barn and two byres. Ruined sheilings can be found on the hill above. The tenant in 1752 was John Grant, who was followed by William McDonald in 1773. From 1808 the farm was occupied by McIntoshes.

These three farms occupied an extensive area of flat land on the east bank of the River Ey. The ground is remarkably clear of stones, and stone clearance heaps can be seen along the river banks and elsewhere. The remains of drainage ditches are visible on the flat ground, still working to some extent although they are silted up. On the hillside above there is a ditch running horizontally to drain water from the hill away from the cultivated area. Despite some 150 years of neglect, this ditch still performs that function fairly well.

A few hundred metres to the south of Alltshlat is Ridow. Here one gets the impression of buildings older than any previously seen. One in particular is built with very large stones. Little reference is found of Ridow in any of the records, but in 1752 it was known as the sheiling of Alex Farquharson of Inverey. Two of his daughters were born here, Marjory on January 24, 1755 and Ann on December 2, 1756 – odd times of the year to be staying at a sheiling. The extensive area of flat land which extends to the south of this point to almost as far as Altanour, was called the meadow of Glen Ey. Presumably, this is where the Farquharsons of Inverey grazed their cattle in

the summer. If this area had been reserved for them, it would explain the almost complete absence of other sheilings in this area.

Altanour Cottage is at the end of the road. It was built by the Earl of Fife in 1838, and a plantation of pine trees established around it to provide shelter. It seems unlikely that it was ever lived in for any extended period, since in every census from 1841 to 1891 it is listed as uninhabited. It was probably only used in the shooting season. Like Achery, it remained intact until the 1950s or early 1960s when its roof was removed by the estate. Today the site is a scene of dereliction, with the ruins of the cottage surrounded by a wood which has been devastated by gales, and the fallen tress left to rot. The ruined sheilings of the tenants of Corriemulzie and Auchindryne are scattered over a fairly wide area some 500m to the south-west.

In addition to the holdings so far described, there must have been two others as their names are mentioned in the Precept of Clare Constat² given by the Earl of Fife to Charles Farquharson and others. They were called Riensleek and Delnabreck. Riensleek was probably situated to the north-west of Ruintellich where there are some ruins on both sides of the head dyke. Delnabreck was probably somewhere between Achery and Carnafea, but no substantial ruins have been found. So far, no record has been found of either being tenanted.

It is not clear why the tenants were removed from the glen. There are, however, many reports of tenants in the area poaching deer, allowing their cattle to graze on reserved areas of the hill, stealing wood and even starting forest fires. In addition, they were all in arrears with their rents, some of them seriously so. There is no doubt that the tenants caused a conflict with the proprietor's shooting interests, and that the shooting was much more profitable. In 1843 the Duke of Leeds paid £1200 for Mar Lodge shootings, whereas the total annual rent payable by the tenants of Glen Ey was only £78.

Conversion of the glen to a deer forest apparently began in the mid-1830s with the people of Little Inverey losing their grazing rights in the Glen of Cristie in 1836. Three years' later the Meikle Inverey inhabitants lost theirs in the Glen of Connie. This must have had serious implications for the viability of the village's small agricultural holdings, as they would have been very dependent upon their sheilings for summer grazing. The holdings in Glen Ey were much larger than those in the village of Inverey and consequently their rents were higher. The average rent in Glen Ey at this time was £13. This compares with an average for Meikle Inverey of £6 10s, while at Little Inverey the average was only £3 15s 3d. The McHardy's of Ruintellich lost their hill pastures in 1841, then in 1843 the tenants of the five holdings of Achery, Dalruinduchlat, Dalnafae, Alltshlat and Ruintellich were served notice of removal. The exact dates of removal are not known except in the case of the two McHardy families in Ruintellich, who were the last to leave at Whitsun 1844. It seems likely that the others left at Martinmas the previous year. All

² Precept of Clare Constat – a legal document by which an heir is recognised by the feudal superior and which lays out obligations and privileges of ownership of an estate.

were paid compensation for the value of their buildings. Angus Macdonald of Achery received a total of £19 17s 4d. The tenants of Corriemulzie and Auchindryne lost their grazing rights in the Glen of Altanour in 1844.

The first time that definite population figures for the glen became available was in 1841. At that time the total population was 52, of whom 41 lived in the middle part of the glen, the remaining nine in the lower section. Of these, 17 were employed, six farming plus five farm servants and four female servants, one miller and a tailor. Previous writers have assumed that the glen had a much larger indigenous population in earlier years. I must dispute this. In 1696 the poll book lists three tenants and seven sub-tenants, a total of 10. Between 1752 and 1810, for all the years checked, there were either eight or nine tenants or sub-tenants and after 1810 this fell to eight. These figures might suggest a slightly larger population in the 18th century than at the time of the clearances. Looking farther back to the 17th century only half the area we have looked at was cultivated, so presumably it would support fewer people. There were eight different surnames found in the glen in 1696, Farquharson, Young, Macdonald, M'Aver, M'Gilevie, Keir, Stewart and Duncan. By 1752 there were six, Farquharson, Macdonald, Shaw, Downie, Grant and Clark. At the time of the clearance there were only four, McHardy, Macdonald, Lamont and McIntosh. The only name to occur consistently is Macdonald, and it is known that Angus Macdonald who lived in Achery at the time of the clearance, was born at Dubrach in Glen Dee. I would therefore conclude that while these people were probably indigenous to Upper Deeside, they were not specifically native to Glen Ey.

What happened to the tenants after the clearance? Robert McIntosh of Alltshlat had died before the event and it is not known what happened to his family. Donald Lamont in Dalnafae moved with his family to the village of Inverey, where he stayed until his death in the 1850s. Four of his family were still living there in 1881. His youngest son Robert, who was only two years' old at the time of the clearance, became a gardener at New Mar Lodge. He lived at Alltchclair in Corriemulzie for some time in the 1870s, but moved back to Inverey in 1903 and lived there until his death in 1930. He is thought to have been the last survivor of the farming community in Glen Ey. William Lamont of Dalruinduchlat stayed on in the glen as a gamekeeper. When he died his wife moved to the village of Inverey with her daughter, Catherine (Kate), who survived until the 1920s and lived latterly in Moor of Inverey. What happened to Charles Macdonald of Achery is uncertain, but it is known that other members of his family settled either in Dunfermline or Forgandenny. Perhaps he followed them. George McHardy from Ruintellich settled at Croft Muickan in Glen Clunie (now part of the golf course), where he was described as a farmer of 30 acres, a fairly large holding at that time. James McHardy, the other tenant of Ruintellich, was visiting his brother, George, at the time of the 1851 census. He was the tailor mentioned earlier, but we do not know his permanent home after the clearance.

Donald Dingwall at the mill was not affected by the clearance and stayed on there until around 1860. It would appear that the mill no longer provided him with an adequate income by that time, and he was paid by the estate to do other jobs, such as erecting deer paling, driving sand to Corriemulzie Cottage and repairing bridges. By 1861 he had left the glen and settled in a small holding to the north of the Roman Catholic Church in Auchindryne. Five gamekeepers lived in the purpose-built house at Achery, starting with William Lamont in 1843 and ending with George Mitchell who left in 1921. Since George Mitchell left, the glen has been uninhabited with the exception of Loinaveich, now home to the gamekeeper.

Most of the information on which this article is based, derives from the Duff House papers which are held in the Special Collections Department of the University of Aberdeen Library.

