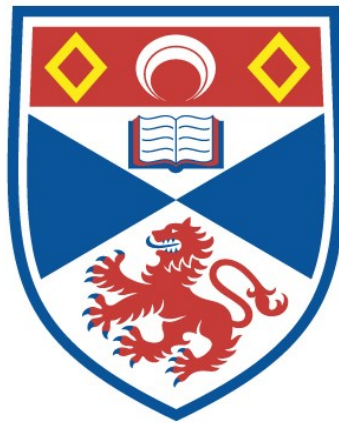


**THE FISHING INDUSTRY AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN ST. ANDREWS  
AND THE EAST NEUK BURGHS OF FIFE,  
C. 1785-1914**

Lee Davies

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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THE FISHING INDUSTRY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN  
ST. ANDREWS AND THE EAST NEUK BURGHS OF FIFE. c.1785-1914.

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Lee Davies.



St. Andrews 1977

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UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

THE FISHING INDUSTRY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN ST. ANDREWS  
AND THE EAST NEUK BURGHS OF FIFE. c.1785-1914

LEE DAVIES.

On the recommendation of the Examiners, this  
thesis, originally submitted for the degree of  
B.Phil., was re-submitted for the degree of Ph.D.  
and approved by the Examiners for that degree.

.....

June, 1978.

Supervisor

## SYNOPSIS OF THESIS.

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The thesis traces the development, between 1790 and 1914, of the two industries of fishing and tourism, which, by the end of the 19th century, dominated the economies of the Fife coastal burghs, stretching from St. Andrews to Earlsferry. Both industries expanded enormously throughout Scotland during the 19th century. Scotland's fisheries were long-established, but their prosperity after 1808 was based upon the rapid growth of the Scottish cured herring trade; the tourist industry, on the other hand, was a new area of economic activity, which developed with the ability of ever-increasing numbers of people to afford a holiday by the seaside.

The East Neuk burghs had the potential for expansion in both industries. For centuries, fishing had been an important occupation in the area, and the re-appearance of large shoals of herrings in local fishing grounds, particularly in the period 1840-1865, was the impetus required to stimulate the growth of a flourishing local curing industry. Equally, with their beaches, sea-bathing facilities, golf links and picturesque surroundings, the burghs were equipped, to varying degrees, to attract holiday visitors, particularly since the extension of the railway system made the East Neuk readily accessible to the population of the nearby large urban centres of Central Scotland.

The two industries were not incompatible - Anstruther had both a prosperous fishing community and numerous summer visitors by 1914. Compatibility was largely dependant upon the character of the resort. In St. Andrews and Elie, tourism had developed early, with an emphasis upon 'gentility' and peaceful repose; the simultaneous development of a large scale fishing industry was subsequently considered inconceivable. Thus, the major fishing ports such as Anstruther, did not become sizeable resorts until the close of the 19th century, when less affluent sectors of the population - who were less fastidious in the facilities and amenities which they demanded - were able to afford seaside holidays.

Accommodation for summer visitors in Pittenweem, St. Monance and Anstruther, had not been available in the mid-19th century when the area had been one of Scotland's premier fishing districts; housing accommodation did not expand quickly enough to supply the demands of the rapidly increasing local population. The decline of the local fisheries after 1870 promoted a rationalisation of the fishing industry. Larger and better boats were invested in, and though the

fleet remained based upon the East Neuk, catches were made and landed in other districts in Scotland, England and Ireland. However, even the need for increased capital outlay, particularly with the development of steam fishing boats, did not cause successful large fishing companies to become established, and in 1914, as in 1790, the fishing community was still a close knit, independent and distinctive feature of the East Neuk fishing ports.

## PREFACE.

---

I declare that this work has been composed by myself and that the work, of which it is a record, has also been done by myself. This work has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree either in the University of St. Andrews or elsewhere. I was admitted as a Research Student under Ordinance General NO. 12 in October 1974 and enrolled as a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy under this Resolution on June 20th, 1975.

The first year of my research was largely spent in St. Andrews. My initial task was to study the large number of printed works on the East Neuk burghs, the fishing industry and tourism, which are to be found in the University Library at St. Andrews. Among the more useful books read were the Old and New Statistical Accounts. Other secondary sources were consulted, in the Burgh Library in St. Andrews, the Library of the Scottish Fisheries Museum in Anstruther and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Having established from these secondary sources a general background from which to proceed, most of the remainder of the first academic year was spent studying the primary sources to be found in St. Andrews and the East Neuk. Of these, the most important were local newspapers - the Fife Herald, Fife Journal, Fife Sentinel, Northern Warder, Fife News, Pittenweem Register, East of Fife Record, St. Andrews Gazette and St. Andrews Citizen - which were to be found variously in St. Andrews, Cupar and Anstruther. These newspapers were a major source of information on tourism, but also provided important insights into the social composition of the fishing community. In St. Andrews, I also studied the burgh records of St. Andrews, of which the most important were the minutes of the Town Council meetings which are on microfilm in the University Library; these were very illuminating on the role played by the Town Council in the development of tourism in the burgh.

The remainder of my research was carried out in Edinburgh. The principal task was to work my way through the many volumes of records of the Anstruther Fishery District, which provided most of the information on the organization and development of the local fishing industry. These records are housed in New Register House, which is also the home of the records of Dissolved Companies which were the source of useful information on the short-lived steam fishing companies which were formed in the East Neuk.



Whilst in Edinburgh I also studied the burgh records of Earls-ferry, Crail and Elie which are kept in Register House. Register House was also the source of a large amount of statistical information gleaned from the Enumerator's Schedules for the various districts of the East Neuk for the Census between 1841 and 1891. This statistical data proved enormously valuable in helping to construct a picture of the social composition of the East Neuk burghs, and particularly of the fishing communities of the district.

A draft version of the written thesis was completed prior to the end of the second academic year. However, in October 1976, I enrolled upon the Diploma of Education course at Moray House College of Education and was unable to complete the final version during the duration of this course due to pressure of work. However, I was able to complete my work on the thesis during the summer of 1977, and the finished work was submitted on September 12th, 1977.

Lee Davies.

November 21st, 1977.

We confirm that Mr Davies has completed this thesis  
under our supervision in accordance with the  
Ordinances and Regulations of the University of  
St Andrews.

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Supervisors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTION	i
CHAPTER I: A Survey of the Development of St. Andrews and the East Neuk Coastal Burghs until the end of the 18th century.	1
CHAPTER II: The Development of the East Neuk Fishing Industry 1780-1838.	17
CHAPTER III: The East Neuk Fishing Industry 1838-1865: The Golden Years of the Lamma Drive.	45
CHAPTER IV: The Early Development of Tourism in the East Neuk Coastal Burghs: St. Andrews and Elie 1785-1870.	86
CHAPTER V: The Extension of Tourism in the East Neuk 1870-1895.	122
CHAPTER VI: Development of the East Neuk Fishing Industry 1865-1914	147
CHAPTER VII: The East Neuk Tourist Industry 1895-1914	184
CHAPTER VIII: The East Neuk Fishing Community c 1800-1914	201
CONCLUSION	226

TABLE of MAPS and DIAGRAMS.

	Page
Fife, 1804.	2
Anstruther and Cellardyke, 1832.	46
Pittenweem, 1832.	48
Newhaven 'Fifie', c.1848.	55
The East Neuk Fishing Village	58
St. Monance 'Fifie', c.1860.	73
Crail, 1832.	90
St. Andrews, 1832.	99
The Railway System of the Central Lowlands of Scotland, c.1900.	102
Major Herring Fishing Grounds visited by the East Neuk Fleet in the early 20th century.	157
St. Monance 'Fifie', c.1905	179

ABBREVIATIONS.

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes.

1. O.S.A.: The Statistical Account of Scotland  
(edited Sir John Sinclair).
2. N.S.A.: The New Statistical Account of Scotland.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N .

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INTRODUCTION

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Most Scots people today are familiar with the various burghs in that part of Fife known as the East Neuk, even if they have not visited them. St. Andrews, the seat of Scotland's oldest university, is better known throughout the world as the 'home of golf'; whilst the picturesque harbours of Crail, Pittenweem and other fishing ports between Fifeness and Earlsferry are to be found reproduced on countless pictorial calendars. But at what period in time did these latter burghs become picturesque havens rather than functional ports? Did the fishing industry in the district ever assume more than the peripheral importance it now enjoys, in the context of Scotland's fisheries? Whilst attempting to determine the solution to these two questions, it is also possible to try to relate the development of St. Andrews to that of its neighbouring burghs in the East Neuk; set geographically apart from Anstruther, Crail, Pittenweem, St. Monance, Elie, Earlsferry and Kilrenny, with its university and with the ruins of its castle and cathedral to remind the visitor of its distinguished past, yet it, too, has the crow-step gables characteristic of the East Neuk burghs and the little harbour from which a handful of boats still pursue the lobster and crab fisheries.

For the purpose of this investigation the period studied has been confined to that between 1790 and 1914; that is to say commencing with the evidence presented to one by the Old Statistical Account and ending with the outbreak of the Great War which necessarily led to considerable dislocation to the British fishing industry. However, the choice of years is not merely dictated by the convenience of these dates. It was during the course of the 19th century that the Scottish herring fisheries developed, with annual production increasing from 8,638 barrels in 1810 to 1,066,750 barrels in 1900; and it was during the 19th century, too, that the British seaside holiday resorts assumed many of the characteristics which, even today, many still possess. Therefore, from the point of view of both the tourist and fishing industries the 19th century was an era of important developments; one of the relevant questions which needed to be answered therefore was whether tourism and the fishing industry flourished contemporaneously in the East Neuk, or whether tourism filled a void in the economy of the area created by the

decline of the local fisheries.

Printed information on the Fife fisheries is surprisingly scanty. No book has been published on them per se, though there are numerous books about the burghs or the district as a whole. The majority of these, however, were primarily intended to provide information for visitors in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and are more intent upon the picturesque than the functional. Though there are a number of local histories, **these** are largely anecdotal, and, while they provide interesting information on the social structure of the fishing communities, afford little assistance when one is attempting to trace the development of the fishing industry.

For the latter, a good starting point is to be found in the First Statistical Account, though the quality of the data varies from parish to parish. Information on the subsequent development of the fisheries can be derived from the many books and articles on the Scottish fisheries that were published throughout the 19th century, and such books are particularly helpful when trying to form a picture of the national context within which the East Neuk fishing industry developed. However, by far the most important and abundant source of information on the Fife fisheries is to be found in the records kept by the local Fishery Officers, which are now preserved in West Register House in Edinburgh.

Such records were collected in all the Scottish fishery districts, and much of the data was published in the annual Fishery Board Reports. These reports are an invaluable source of information for the Scottish fisheries as a whole; but the Anstruther district records contain an enormous amount of additional statistical information which is supplemented by the comments, opinions and interpretations of the Fishery Officers who compiled them. These records provided the basis of those chapters dealing with the fishing industry. Some additional information was derived from local archives, particularly in regard to the attitudes of the various burgh councils towards the fisheries. Local newspapers provided anecdotal information which allowed me an insight into the situations which statistics so drily recorded. Principally, however, newspapers provided details of the social context in which the fisheries developed, building up a fascinating picture of life in the fishing communities. Statistical information on such particular aspects as housing, family sizes and the self-contained structure of the fishing



communities were gained from the enumerators' schedules for the censi of the period.

By comparison, information on the development of tourism was scanty. The various guide books provided some useful factual information together with an appreciation of the changing character of the British seaside resorts between 1820 and 1914. However, the principal source of information was local newspapers. Accordingly there is a dearth of regular statistical information though this is largely compensated for by the fact that one is able to construct a reasonably accurate picture of the character of the various resorts, the type of visitors each attracted and the image which each wished to present to the outside world; supplementary information on this can also be found in the minutes of the various Burgh Council meetings.

In compiling and presenting this information I am inevitably indebted to numerous people. Firstly, I must acknowledge the assistance received throughout the last three years from my supervisors at St. Andrews, Mr. Bruce Lenman and Mr. Allan Robertson. Their patience during my long, silent absences from St. Andrews has been particularly commendable. I would also like to record my appreciation for the assistance I received from Mr. Smart, the archivist at St. Andrews University, whose knowledge of the history of the town often prevented me from making elementary misconceptions. In addition, I must thank all the staff at the various branches of Register House in Edinburgh who assisted me during the long periods in which I worked on the Scottish Fisheries Records, the Censi and the burgh archives; and the staff at the National Library of Scotland where I wrote much of this thesis. Nor can I overlook the important contributions made by the curator of the Scottish Fisheries Museum in Anstruther or the staff at St. Andrews Town Library.

Finally, I would like to record particular appreciation for four people. Firstly, Mrs Chris. Blair, librarian at Anstruther Burgh Library who provided tea, cakes and friendly conversation during many long afternoons spent struggling through local newspapers. Secondly, there is my mother, who has typed this thesis for me and has willingly undertaken the smallest alterations without complaint. Thirdly there is my father, who has produced the duplicate copies and helped me to compile all the maps, graphs and diagrams - though this would not have been possible, had not the Post Office Engineers' Union allowed me the use of their duplicating facilities. Finally,

I would like to thank Doreen for forcing me to complete this thesis whenever it seemed that my enthusiasm or application were waning. I can only hope that the finished work will not have let anybody down.

Lee Davies. August 28th, 1977.

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CHAPTER I.

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A SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ST. ANDREWS AND THE EAST  
NEUK COASTAL BURGHS UNTIL THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY.

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In the Scottish National Dictionary<sup>1</sup> the word 'neuk' is defined as a 'corner ..... an out of the way place ..... a projecting area of land.' From such a definition, one can begin to construct a picture of the geographical location of the East Neuk of Fife. That part of Fife popularly given this name has no precise boundary, but can be said to lie to the east of an imaginary line drawn between St. Andrews and Largo Bay. Certainly it is the most easterly corner of the county; certainly, too, it projects into the North Sea, forming a triangle whose apex, Fife Ness, is the most easterly point in Fife; and certainly too, despite its proximity to such major centres as Edinburgh, Dundee, Stirling and Perth, it remains in many senses remote and isolated, not lying upon any main route connecting major centres of population, and therefore remaining an area which one is unlikely to visit by chance in the course of a journey, but only by design.

The coastline of this small area, however, is dotted with a succession of burghs, both royal and baronial. Geographically, St. Andrews stands apart, isolated from the other eight little burghs which lie in close proximity along a 12 mile stretch of the northern shore of the Forth between Fifeness and Largo Bay - namely Crail, Kilrenny, Anstruther Easter, Anstruther Wester, Pittenweem, St. Monance, Elie and Earlsferry. In many ways this geographical separation of St. Andrews from its neighbouring burghs typifies the differences which existed between St. Andrews on the one hand, and the remaining East Neuk coastal burghs on the other, at the close of the 18th century. Though all had enjoyed a greater or lesser role on the stage of previous Scottish history, one can but contrast the ecclesiastical and political importance of St. Andrews in the later mediaeval period with the more modest commercial importance intermittently enjoyed by such towns as Crail, Anstruther Easter or Pittenweem in the 16th and 17th centuries.

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1. William Grant and David Murison: The Scottish National Dictionary  
(Edin. 1965) vol. vi



Map I.1. Wife 1804 (from A New Travelling Map of Scotland by Thomas Richardson).

By the close of the 18th century, however, it seemed that not one of the burghs, St. Andrews included, could anticipate more than the most insignificant role in the future history of Scotland. By that period, indeed, the gulf between St. Andrews and the neighbouring coastal burghs was as narrow as it had ever been, or was ever to be again. The eighteenth century had, in many respects, been one of decline for the ancient city. Dr. Johnson, visiting St. Andrews in 1773, had written that 'the city of St. Andrews, when it had lost its archiepiscopal pre-eminence, gradually decayed: one of its streets is now lost, and in those that remain there is the silence and solitude of inactive indigence and gloomy depopulation.'<sup>1</sup> Nor was this merely the opinion of one traveller and albeit an Englishman; Francis Douglas of Abbot's Inch, visiting St. Andrews ten years after Johnson commented that 'it is truly humiliating to see a noble street almost without inhabitants terminated by the august ruins of a church so long the boast of this city. It is supposed that not above an eighth part of it is now inhabited.'<sup>2</sup>

However to rely upon the comments of such visitors to form an impression of St. Andrews in the late 18th century would be very dangerous. Men such as Johnson visited the city with a pre-conceived image of St. Andrews derived from its pre-Reformation importance. The spiritual pre-eminence of the city had long since disappeared, however, and with it much of its secular importance. The University after a brief halcyon period in the mid-17th century had undergone a rapid decline;<sup>3</sup> by 1730 the number of students was 50% less than they had been prior to the Revolution of 1688, while at Glasgow and Edinburgh their numbers were increasing by leaps and bounds.<sup>4</sup> By 1747, with numbers declining yet more catastrophically, and with the building collapsing about their ears, even the lethargic masters of St. Andrews

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1. Samuel Johnson: A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland (London 1775) p.9
  2. Francis Douglas: A General Description of the East Coast of Scotland (Paisley 1782) p.19
  3. Ronald Cant: The University of St. Andrews, a short history. (London 1946) for the best account of the history of the University in the 17th and 18th centuries.
  4. Ibid. p.83; Edinburgh had 600 students, Glasgow 400 and St. Andrews 150.

were compelled to consider what might be done to save the University from utter ruin; but the uniting Act for St. Salvator's and St. Leonard's Colleges led only to a temporary increase in numbers and in academic standards. Scarcely a quarter of a century later Johnson wrote of the University that 'to see it pining in decay and struggling for life, fills the mind with mournful images and ineffectual wishes.'<sup>1</sup> Nor had things improved by the close of the 18th century under the so-called 'Hill Regime' with its marked tendency towards nepotism.<sup>2</sup>

By the latter period, however, opinion in the burgh itself seemed to be looking optimistically forward to a new prosperity based upon commerce rather than mournfully backwards to more grandiose times which could never return. Whilst Hill and Johnson ruefully mused among the ruins of the past, the Rev. John Adamson could write that 'a spirit of enterprise has arisen among the inhabitants, new houses on an improved plan of size, accommodation and elegance are yearly rising, and there is every reason to believe that St. Andrews will continue to flourish and will gradually regain its former lustre.'<sup>3</sup> By the last decades of the 18th century there was a party within the town determined that St. Andrews should try to establish a future for itself as a centre of manufacture and trade, headed by Charles Dempster and his energetic son, Cathcart. Charles Dempster, though he had originally farmed St. Nicholas around the year 1760,<sup>4</sup> was described as a merchant when elected to the St. Andrews Burgh Council in 1782, in which year he was also elected bailie.<sup>5</sup> Previous to his election, he had proposed to repair the long disused town mill in connection with one of his enterprises;<sup>6</sup> and after election he was zealous in forwarding the

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1. Samuel Johnson: A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland (London 1775) p.15
  2. George Hill; Principal of St. Mary's College from 1791 to 1819 managed at one time to place members of his family in six of the thirteen Senate posts; see Ronald Cant: The University of St. Andrews, a short history (London 1946) p97-8.
  3. Rev. John Adamson: O.S.A., vol. XIII p.191
  4. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.53
  5. St. Andrews Town Council Minute Books, Sept 5th - Oct 1st 1782.
  6. Ibid, April 10th 1782.

extensions at the harbour where there was an increasing trade based upon the export of grain and the import of iron and timber. His son, Cathcart, was elected to the Council in 1798,<sup>1</sup> and among his attempts to re-establish the trade of St. Andrews was the erection of a factory near the foot of Abbey Street, which was recognised as one of the principal manufacturers of canvas in Scotland for the British Navy;<sup>2</sup> and it was this Cathcart Dempster, too, who was to try to revive the fishing industry in St. Andrews in 1803.<sup>3</sup> Between 1796 and 1805, the Dempsters monopolised the offices of Dean of Guild which, with absentee Provosts in the form of the Earls of Breadalbane and Kellie, was the senior position in the Burgh Council.

Though there was no return to the prosperity of those pre-Reformation days when two or three hundred vessels from all parts of the commercial world were said to have visited St. Andrews for the annual fair in April,<sup>4</sup> it does show that a spirit of regeneration was alive long before Playfair - the traditional saviour of St. Andrews' fortunes - became Provost.<sup>5</sup> Andrew Lang described St. Andrews in the late 18th century as 'dreary' and 'dilapidated',<sup>6</sup> but with its colony of weavers,<sup>7</sup> its canvas manufactory and an expanding role as a port for its agricultural hinterland, the city seemed able to anticipate a future of modest commercial prosperity at the beginning of the 19th century. It was in this sense that St. Andrews could be said to be developing a closer affinity to its neighbouring burghs in the East Neuk. Among these, commerce had always been the dominant interest, a commerce moreover heavily dependent upon fishing and the export of salt fish.

Though Crail had been chartered by Robert the Bruce,<sup>8</sup> and though

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1. St. Andrews Town Council Minute Books, Oct. 2nd 1798.
  2. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.53
  3. See below p.86
  4. Rev. John Adamson: O.S.A. vol. XIII p.191
  5. See below p.105-108
  6. Andrew Lang: St. Andrews (London 1893) p.318
  7. David Loch: Essay on the Trade, Commerce Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland (3 vols. Edin. 1778) vol. 2 p.50 states that there were 75 looms in the city in 1778.
  8. Rev. William Merson: N.S.A. vol. IX p.960



the Dreeel Burn mouth was serving the communities of Anstruther Easter and Wester as a haven as early as 1225,<sup>1</sup> it was in the late 16th and early 17th centuries that the East Neuk coastal burghs enjoyed their largest measure of prosperity. By Dutch standards, Scottish overseas trade in this period was never above the featherweight class, and was largely peripheral to the main stream of the country's economy. Scottish exports remained basically fish and raw materials - wool, salt, coal and malt - and it was upon this trade that the early prosperity of the royal burghs in the East Neuk was based. Fish was the staple of this trade; Pittenweem, in particular, rapidly acquired importance through its trade in fish and by 1542 was exporting 56% of Scotland's fish exports excluding salmon.<sup>2</sup> Crail and Anstruther shared in this trade and ships from these port were recorded taking shipments of herring to Dieppe,<sup>3</sup> Hull and Newcastle.<sup>4</sup> It is of little surprise therefore that harbour construction in these burghs should date from this period. A substantial breakwater existed in Crail in the later 16th century;<sup>5</sup> Anstruther Easter and Pittenweem were both created burghs with the right to build harbours in 1541;<sup>6</sup> whilst there is reference to the 'burn, port and haven' of Anstruther Wester in 1604 which probably dated from the 1580's;<sup>7</sup> Earlsferry was created a royal burgh and free harbour in 1589;<sup>8</sup> and major building operations were evidently undertaken at the harbour of Elie in 1582 with help from the Convention of Royal Burghs.<sup>9</sup> St. Monance and Cellardyke, on the other hand, established themselves as centres for the fisheries themselves rather than for the export trade in fish. Harbour works of some kind had existed at St. Monance since at least the later 16th century and mention of the village as a port is to be

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1. Angus Graham: 'Archaeological Notes on Some Harbours in Eastern Scotland' in Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians for Scotland 1968-9, vol. 101 p.214 (Hereafter Graham: 'Harbours'.)
  2. Peter McNeill and Ronald Nicholson: An Historical Atlas of Scotland c. 400-1600 (St. Andrews 1975) p.75
  3. S. G. E. Lythe: The Economy of Scotland in its European Setting 1550-1625 (London, Edinburgh 1960) p.138
  4. Ibid p.230
  5. Graham: Harbours p.226
  6. Ibid p.214
  7. Ibid p.215
  8. Ibid p.238
  9. Ibid p.271

found as early as 1565;<sup>1</sup> Cellardyke was described in 1579 as 'a new seaport ..... previously little used' and authorisation was given for its repair and construction in the interests of 'poor and unemployed fishermen.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus as early as the late 16th century, the East Neuk was already an important centre for the Scottish fisheries and fish trade; and though Sibbald's editor dates the decline of the East Neuk seaports from the accession of James VI to the English throne in 1603, thereby weakening Scotland's trading ties with France,<sup>3</sup> the evidence shows that, on the contrary, the first half of the 17th century saw a significant increase in Scottish trade with the Baltic, particularly in fish, and the Fife ports - Anstruther, Crail, Pittenweem, St. Andrews, Dysart, Kirkcaldy and Burntisland - were prominent in this trade.<sup>4</sup> Local fishermen were in the habit of fishing at the Orkney and Western Isles, as well as in the Forth, and though catches were fluctuating and uncertain in the 17th century as they were later to be in the 19th century, it was upon this foundation that the prosperity of the East Neuk coastal burghs was established. When Sir William Sandilands of Newark erected St. Monance into a free burgh of barony in 1622 the community of St. Monance agreed to pay to him and to his heirs in return for the privileges conveyed by the charter

'the sum of ten pounds usual money of Scotland yearly, together with 200 herrings for ilk drave boat passing to the Lentrone great lines, within the Scots Firth, ane keeling<sup>5</sup> and ane bannock fluke,<sup>6</sup> or one fish as good as ane bannock fluke yearly, if the same bees gotten conform to use and wont; and also for every bark, ship, creer of our said town that sails to the Isles in winter, being above half-loaded one barrel of sufficient, weel-made herrings, and being but half or within half-loaded to pay half a barrel sufficient herrings at their returning from the foresaid fishings in name of feu farm'<sup>7</sup>

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1. Graham: Harbours p.271
  2. Ibid p.223
  3. Sir Robert Sibbald: The History, Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross (Cupar edit. L. Adamson 1803) p.339
  4. S. G. E. Lythe: The Economy of Scotland in its European Setting 1550-1625 (London Edinburgh 1960) p.153-161. Though Holland dominated the Baltic trade between 1574 and 1640, carrying an average of 70% of the total traffic compared with Scotland's average of a meagre 3%, Scotlands share of the export of fish to the Baltic rose to 7% by the 1620's increasing from 177 lasts - about 2,000,000 herrings in 1587, to 570 lasts during the peak years of the 1620's
  5. a cod
  6. a turbot
  7. John Jack: An Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.71-2

Clearly the prosperity of St. Monance in 1622 was very much dependent on fishing. The pattern of the fisheries at this period was very similar to that in which it was to continue throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The emphasis was on herring fishing, fished for in the Firth of Forth in the summer - the Lammis drave<sup>1</sup> - and at the Orkney and Western Isles in the winter<sup>2</sup> - the winter drave. Though a number of smaller boats prosecuted cod and haddock fishing throughout the year, line fishing<sup>3</sup> was attended to by all crews during Lent when there was always a great demand for cod to supply the place of meat. The independent skipper, owning or part-owning his boat, was not the basis of the organization of the fisheries in the 17th century as it was to be in the 19th century. Rather, as in Pittenweem, all tax-paying inhabitants shared in the prosperity, each inhabitant being entitled to a share of the fish caught, at a price fixed by the magistrates, in proportion to the amount of taxes paid by him; the owners of boats were landmen or ship-masters who did not fish themselves, but were assigned a certain number of fishermen by the magistrates who were compelled to serve a specific shipmaster for an agreed period, during which any other person hiring them incurred a heavy penalty.<sup>4</sup>

For the first half of the 17th century, the East Neuk coastal burghs enjoyed unprecedented prosperity; dates on the lintels of old warehouses and 'magazines' in the burghs remain as a constant reminder of this golden commercial era. The principal export was, naturally enough, salt or dried fish; the main imports were timber, pitch, flax hemp and sailing tackle from the Baltic.<sup>5</sup> However, these halcyon days abruptly terminated as a result of the desertion of the Firth of Forth by the all-important shoals of herrings, and to a lesser extent by cod,

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1. 'drave' an older form of the word 'drive' is the term normally attributed to the herring fishing seasons on the east coast of Scotland, thereby indicating the organized nature of the preparations which took place in readiness for the arrival of the herring shoals.
  2. John Jack: An Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.75 Five or six creers, each manned by 10 men sailed annually from St. Monance together with others from Pittenweem, Cellardyke, Crail and the Anstruthers.
  3. Herring fishing was pursued by means of nets; cod, haddock, turbot etc. by means of hand-lines.
  4. D. Cook: Notes and Extracts from the Ancient Records of the Burgh of Pittenweem (Anstruther 1867) p.v
  5. George Gourlay: Anstruther, or Illustrations of Scottish Burgh Life (Cupar and Anstruther 1838) p.113

haddock and other fish.<sup>1</sup> An entry in the Kilrenny Burgh Records of 1642 remarked upon 'a scarcity of white fish along the east coast' to the hurt and hunger of the poor and beggaring of local fishermen.<sup>2</sup> John Lamont in his diary in Largo in 1658 recorded that 'this two yeares there was few or no herrings gotten in Fyfe side' and complained that the teind of fish normally reckoned as being worth 500 merks,<sup>3</sup> had yielded only twenty pounds to him.<sup>4</sup>

Trade and prosperity disappeared with the herrings and in all the burghs, harbour works fell into disrepair, largely as a result of storms, since the councils lacked the necessary funds to effect repairs. Crail harbour was described in 1689 as 'exceedingly broken down and overturned';<sup>5</sup> by 1691, Pittenweem, formerly one of the major fish exporting ports in Scotland had only two ships - one of 70 tons and the other of 90 or 100 tons - and one small ketch, whilst its fishing fleet consisted of six small line boats whose 'poor fishers in winter live on charitie.'<sup>6</sup> The two Anstruthers, which in the early 17th century had sent 35 large herring boats to the Bressay Sound, had only a combined fishing fleet of 13 boats of all sizes in 1693.<sup>7</sup> Anstruther Wester had suffered particularly heavily, the sea dykes having decayed to such an extent that 13 houses were washed away in a storm in 1670; between 1676 and 1689 nobody could be found in the burgh to accept the office of bailie.<sup>8</sup>

This correlation between the prosperity of the East Neuk burghs and the success or failure of the local fisheries was to remain the dominant feature of their economic development in the 18th century. A revival of the herring fishing in the Firth of Forth at the close of the 17th century, resulted in a renewed period of prosperity for the

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1. 18th century writers tended to attribute the decline of the burghs to losses at the Battle of Kilsyth (see for example, Rev. James Nairne: O.S.A. vol IV p.370). Yet Anstruther Wester which declined most severely in the later 17th century sent only 10 men of whom at least 3 are known to have survived. (see George Gourlay: Anstruther p.9)
  2. George Gourlay: Fisher Life or Memorials of Cellardyke (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.6
  3. The old scottish merk was worth 13s. 4d Scots.
  4. George Gourlay: Fisher Life (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.7
  5. Graham: Harbours p.226
  6. D. Cook: Notes and Extracts from the Ancient Records of the Burgh of Pittenweem (Anstruther 1867) p.101
  7. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.116
  8. Ibid p.9-10

East Neuk ports in the early 18th century. Crail became the great rendezvous for a large local fleet together with numerous boats from Angus, the Mearns and Aberdeenshire.<sup>1</sup> When Sibbald visited Fife in 1710, St. Monance had a herring fleet of twelve boats, Pittenweem fifteen boats, Cellardyke and Anstruther Easter each twenty four boats and Crail eight, each with a crew of seven men, representing a total fleet of 155 boats and 1085 fishermen employed in the Lammass drave, as well as the 200 boats mentioned as being present from other districts.<sup>2</sup> Trade revived with the fisheries; in 1710 Anstruther, formerly a creek of the customhouse of Kirkcaldy, was elevated to the status of port and customhouse established there.<sup>3</sup> Sibbald described Anstruther Easter as being 'a pretty large royal burgh, well built and popular and of great trade. They have good magazines and cellars for trade and are provided with all accommodations for making and curing of herrings; which is the staple commodity of this town, and of all the towns in this east coast of Fife.'<sup>4</sup> The merchant fleets of Anstruther and Crail had expanded from ten vessels and one vessel respectively in 1656,<sup>5</sup> to twenty four vessels and six vessels by 1710.<sup>6</sup> Even inhabitants of the burghs who were not full-time fishermen abandoned their workbenches and went to sea during the Lammass drave.<sup>7</sup> On the basis of their revised trade, both Anstruther Easter<sup>8</sup> and Pittenweem<sup>9</sup> were able to undertake extensive harbour improvements in the first half of the 18th century.

However the fisheries continued to prove an unreliable source of prosperity; by the mid 18th century the visits of the herring shoals had become increasingly infrequent, and both fisheries and fish trade once more declined in importance. By 1764 there were only two ships of 40 tons burden and three fishing boats belonging to Anstruther Easter, and one ship of 20 tons burden and two fishing boats to

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1. Rev. Andrew Bell: O.S.A. vol. IX p.444
  2. Sir Robert Sibbald: The History Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross (Cupar 1803) p.335,346
  3. 'A Friend to Statistical Enquiries': O.S.A. vol. XVI p.244
  4. Sir Robert Sibbald: The History Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross (Cupar 1803) p.339
  5. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.115
  6. Sir Robert Sibbald: The History Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross (Cupar 1803) p.339,346
  7. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.130
  8. Ibid p.117
  9. Graham: Harbours p.243

Anstruther Wester.<sup>1</sup> In 1778, David Loch a public-spirited inspector of fisheries visited the East Neuk and found the fishing industry there much contracted compared to the peak years of the early 18th century; only eleven herring boats fished from Crail, four from Pittenweem, thirteen from St. Monance and fifteen from Cellardyke.<sup>2</sup> Crail, having lost its local pre-eminence as a herring fishing centre largely through the inadequacy of its harbour,<sup>3</sup> by 1791 had only a small resident fishing population of about fifty fishermen, increasingly occupied in lobster fishing for the London market; 25,000 lobsters were annually sent there worth over £300.<sup>4</sup> St. Monance and Cellardyke had become the major fishing villages, the former having a fishing fleet of 20 line boats and 14 herring boats and a resident population of 80 fishermen by 1791.<sup>5</sup> The summer herring fishing in the Forth could occasionally prove extremely remunerative; Loch estimated that the drave of 1778 was worth £8500.<sup>6</sup> But the unreliability of the local fisheries was clearly indicated by the fact that the young men of the East Neuk were unwilling to engage in fishing all the year round preferring to engage themselves in voyages aboard whalers or merchant ships, returning only for the brief summer herring fishing season.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, with the traditional source of prosperity for the East Neuk burghs seemingly very much on the wane, the latter faced a growing need to diversify their industries and trade. In this respect Anstruther in the late 18th century enjoyed a certain affinity with St. Andrews; both were experiencing a mild prosperity as a result of new commercial links with their agricultural hinterland and through the establishment of new industries. In 1782 Douglas described Anstruther Easter as having 'a large manufacture of pond threads ..... a considerable trade in flax and a great deal of grain and kelp.'<sup>8</sup> By 1791 the two Anstruthers had a combined

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1. Rev. James Forrester: O.S.A. vol. III p.79
  2. David Loch: Essays on the trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland (Edinburgh 1778, 3 vols) vol. 2 p.47-9
  3. Rev. Andrew Bell: O.S.A. vol. IX p.456
  4. Ibid p.445
  5. Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.338n
  6. David Loch: Essays on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland (Edinburgh 1778, 3 vols) vol 2 p.49
  7. Rev Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.338n
  8. Francis Douglas: A General Description of the East Coast of Scotland (Paisley 1782) p.13

fleet of 20 vessels with a tonnage of 1172 tons manned by 94 men; of these, moreover, six were engaged in foreign trade, thirteen in the coasting trade and only one in the fishery trade.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, not one full-time fisherman resided in Anstruther Wester. Pittenweem, too, had diversified its economy largely as a result of the development of coal-mining near the burgh after 1770 by Sir John Anstruther.<sup>2</sup> In 1771 an agreement was entered into with Sir John Anstruther to ship coal from his mines by a company who undertook to form the basin at the harbour, erect new quays and rebuild a great part of the old pier.<sup>3</sup> By 1791, though there were only five fishing boats and twelve fishermen in the burgh, there were four trading vessels, 72 seamen and 36 colliers.<sup>4</sup> In both Pittenweem and Anstruther, this commercial revival led to the establishment of flourishing ship-building yards in the last decades of the century;<sup>5</sup> at Anstruther, Bailies Calman and Paton would sometimes have as many as five vessels simultaneously on the stocks.<sup>6</sup> Elie, too, was developing along similar commercial lines with seven vessels employed in foreign trade, and one sloop engaged in coasting. Manufacture was represented in the form of the rope factory of Messrs. Wood, whilst the eight local fishermen did little more than supply the needs of the community.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the East Neuk fishing seemed destined to continue only on a diminished scale; hand-loom weaving had become a more general occupation than fishing;<sup>8</sup> and if some fishermen were taking berths on whalers or merchant vessels, others were emigrating to other districts.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the East Neuk coastal burghs, though their past was inextricably associated with fishing and the trade in fish, shared a common link with St. Andrews, the ancient ecclesiastical city and

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1. Rev. James Forrester: O.S.A. vol. III p.86
  2. Rev. James Nairne: O.S.A. vol. IV p.373
  3. David Cook: Notes & Extracts from the Ancient Records of the Burgh of Pittenweem (Anstruther 1867) p.150
  4. Rev. James Nairne: O.S.A. vol. IV p.373
  5. David Cook: Notes & Extracts from the Ancient Records of the Burgh of Pittenweem (Anstruther 1867) p.153
  6. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.118
  7. Rev. William Pairman: O.S.A. vol. XVII p.539
  8. David Loch: Essay on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland (Edinburgh 1778, 3 vols) vol. 2 p.45-9
  9. Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.337

TABLE I.1: Population Movements in St. Andrews and the East Neuk  
Burghs 1753-1801.

	1755	1791-4 <sup>1</sup>	1801
Anstruther Easter	1000	1000	969
Anstruther Wester	485	370	297
Crail	2173	1710	1652
Elie	642	620	730
Kilrenny	1348	1086	1043
Pittenweem	939	1157	1072
St. Andrews	4913	4335	4566
St. Monance	780	832	852
Scotland	1,265,380	1,526,492	1,599,068

1. The Old Statistical Account was published in volumes between 1790 and 1797, the dates of surveys vary from parish to parish.



seat of learning: all seemed to have to face the necessity of having to abandon their reliance upon traditional sources of prosperity; and it is further noticeable that those burghs which found difficulty in adjusting to the new circumstances faced the future with a pessimism that contrasted sharply with the optimism to be found in St. Andrews, Anstruther<sup>1</sup> or Pittenweem.<sup>2</sup> In this connection it is of interest to examine the population figures for the various burghs as revealed by Webster's census of 1753,<sup>3</sup> the population returns found in the Old Statistical Account, and the returns of the first official census of 1801.<sup>4</sup>

The figures thus derived present a number of difficulties in interpretation. Foremost among these is the fact that they are calculated upon the basis of parish divisions which are not necessarily co-extensive with burgh boundaries. Though the difference in parish and burgh boundaries is only very small in the cases of the Anstruthers, Elie, Pittenweem and St. Monance, the landward portion of the parish is very sizeable in the cases of St. Andrews,<sup>5</sup> Crail<sup>6</sup> and Kilrenny.<sup>7</sup> The factors affecting rural population in East Fife were very different from those affecting the burghs, the trends being towards an increase in the size of arable farms and a conversion of other arable units into pastoral farms, both of which resulted in a decrease in rural population.<sup>8</sup> Thus the population of Denino, an agricultural parish situated between St. Andrews and Anstruther, dropped from 598 in 1753 to 326 in 1801, a decrease of 45.5%; in the rural parish of Kingsbarns, on the other hand, within

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1. Though in fact two separate burghs, Anstruther existed in practice as one economic and social unit.
  2. Comparison of the various surveys in the Old Statistical Account for Kilrenny, Crail and St. Monance with those of St. Andrews, the Anstruthers and Pittenweem, reveals this.
  3. Rev. Alexander Webster: 'An Account of the Number of People in Scotland in the Year 1753' (in Publications of the Scottish Historical Society 3rd series vol. XLIII, Edinburgh 1952)
  4. Official Census Returns for Scotland 1801.
  5. In 1791, 1596 people lived in the landward portion; Rev. John Adamson: O.S.A. vol. XIII p.202
  6. In 1791, 409 people lived in the landward portion; Rev. Andrew Bell: O.S.A. vol. IX p.446
  7. Kilrenny was the parish of which the fishing village of Cellardyke constituted the major portion.
  8. See O.S.A. vol. I p.411; vol. XI p.357

which there was a sizeable village with a community of weavers and part time fishermen, the decline in population during the same period was by only 4.5% from 871 to 832.<sup>1</sup>

Thus when trying to draw conclusions from the figures for Crail, Kilrenny and St. Andrews, one has to consider the influence rural depopulation might have exerted upon population movements in these parishes; that is to say, that an overall decline in the population of a parish might not necessarily entail a decline in the population of a burgh within that parish. Thus, though a decline in the population of the parish of Crail is to be expected as a result of the decline of the fishing industry in the burgh of Crail, the possible effect of rural depopulation must be carefully considered. Fortunately in the case of Crail the Old Statistical Account reveals the fact that 409 people lived in the landward portion of the parish in 1791. This means that even accepting the possibility that this figure is the result of a decline of 45.48% in the rural population of the parish since 1753 - the maximum figure for rural depopulation in East Fife between 1753 and 1801 - then the population of the burgh still declined by 8.6% during the same period. Clearly then there was a marked decrease in the population of the burgh of Crail in the late 18th century which at the very least was of 8.6% and was very probably rather more; and this decrease can safely be attributed to the decline in the fishing industry in the burgh.

In view of the decline in the rural population of East Fife, the population figures for St. Andrews clearly reveal the effects of the commercial revival which St. Andrews was enjoying at the close of the 18th century; for, though the population of the parish had dropped by 11.76% between 1753 and 1791, during the ensuing decade, the population showed an increase of 5.33%, despite the fact that 36.8% of the population lived in the landward quarter. In Pittenweem and Elie, increasing commercial activity had led to increases in population of 14.2% and 13.7% respectively between 1753 and 1801.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the figures for Anstruther are less informative due

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1. See Rev. James Beaton: O.S.A. vol. IV p.254-8

2. Though the figures for Pittenweem show an apparent decrease of 7.35% between 1791 and 1801, this is because the figures for the O.S.A. were calculated on the somewhat unreliable basis of the number of baptisms in the parish.

to the unreliability of those for Anstruther Easter;<sup>1</sup> all that can be said with any degree of certainty is that the figures accurately reflect the gradual decline of the smaller burgh of Anstruther Wester, whose harbour had steadily decayed, and with it all trade, so that by 1791 it did not admit ships of burden, and did not even have a single fishing boat, excepting four manned only during the summer drave.<sup>2</sup>

Though compared to the figures for Scotland in the same period these population increases are all below the national average,<sup>3</sup> these figures nevertheless do reveal the fact that it was in those burghs which at the close of the 18th century were attempting to diversify their economies and break their reliance upon traditional sources of prosperity, that population was expanding or that the process of decline had been arrested. Thus St. Andrews, whose population increase between 1791 and 1801 of 5.33% compared very favourably with the national average of 4.75%, far from being in decline could look forward with some optimism to a new commercial future; whilst, on the other hand, Crail and Cellardyke heavily dependent upon the success of the fisheries for their prosperity, were in noticeable decline due to their over-reliance upon the precarious and irregular presence of fish in the Firth of Forth.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The survey in the Old Statistical Account (vol. XVI p.243-4) is extremely short and reveals the fact that there was probably no accurate attempt made to calculate the population in either 1753 or 1791. The population for 1744 is given as the same rather generalised figure of 1000 as well. A figure of 900 is also given for 1764. The safest conclusion to be drawn is that the population of the burgh had remained relatively static in the late 18th century despite the decline of the fisheries.
  2. Rev. James Forrester: O.S.A. vol. III p.79, 86.
  3. The population of Scotland increased by 26.4% between 1753 & 1801.
  4. St. Monance would appear to be an exception, since though essentially a fishing village without commercial interests, its population rose by 9.23% between 1753 and 1801. However, St. Monance folk were notoriously insular; see John Jack: An Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.142 and Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.337. Yet the latter reveals that despite this unwillingness to leave St. Monance, which many avoided by joining whaling vessels and merchant ships for part of the year, emigration from the burgh was beginning to be more evident by the last decade of the century.

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CHAPTER II.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST NEUK FISHING INDUSTRY 1780-1838.

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Though the importance of the fishing industry to the economy of the East Neuk had been receding in the later decades of the 18th century, it was from this traditional source that the coastal burghs were to derive a renewed period of prosperity in the 19th century. St. Andrews and Elie, it is true, were to diverge from their neighbouring burghs in the East Neuk by seeking to establish themselves as resorts and residential centres from the earliest decades of the century. But the extension of the tourist industry throughout the East Neuk was only gradual, and was largely a product of the closing decades of the 19th century. Indeed, both as a source of employment and of income, tourism remained very much of secondary importance to the fishing industry in the economy of the East Neuk burghs until the outbreak of war in 1914.

To understand the development of the East Neuk fisheries in the 19th century, one must not consider their growth in isolation but rather as an example of a trend which was experienced, to some degree at least, in all the fishing districts along the east coast of Scotland during the course of the 19th century. The major feature of this trend was to be a change in the emphasis of the entire east coast fisheries; herring fishing, which had previously existed only in a restricted and uncertain scale, was to dominate the development of the industry and it was the fishermen of the east coast who most successfully adapted to changing conditions. Decade by decade, the indicators of activity - numbers of boats, value of capital invested, size of landings - rose. In 1810, only 8638 $\frac{1}{2}$  barrels<sup>1</sup> of herrings were cured<sup>2</sup> on the entire east coast of Scotland - though many more herrings would have sold fresh in local markets; by 1840 the number had risen to 412,764 $\frac{1}{2}$  barrels, by 1870 the number had reached

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1. Report by the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1810
  2. Curing was the preservation of herrings, commonly by the use of salt, though in the case of red herrings, bloaters, kippers etc. by smoking.

607,123 $\frac{1}{2}$ , and by 1900 the figure was 1,066,750.<sup>1</sup> The herring came to dominate the life of the fisherman, and the whole system of activity which was set in motion every year for a few summer weeks came to rank as one of the main industries of the country employing by the 1870's, at sea and on shore, some 60,000 people on the east coast alone.<sup>2</sup>

By comparison with the booming Scottish herring fishery of the later 19th century, the 18th century East Neuk fishing industry was, at best, modest in prosperity, small in scale and local in terms of markets. This was despite the significant role which fishing had played and continued to play in the economy of the area;<sup>3</sup> but it had been a fishing industry that was static both in terms of technology and economic growth. Indeed there still remained a somewhat mediaeval character throughout the 18th century Scottish fishing industry. Such out-dated exactions as 'size money' and 'last night's fishing' were widespread until their abolition in 1747.<sup>4</sup> Equally unpopular, but continued well into the 19th century was the levying of teinds upon all fish brought for sale into a particular harbour, either by the local Town Council, or a local landowner, depending upon who was the superior of the harbour - though often they were leased to tacksmen<sup>5</sup>, or were a gift to the local kirk.<sup>6</sup> Nor were such exactions merely nominal; in 1782 the fish teinds of Crail were leased for £18. 10s., whilst the teind of summer herrings fetched an additional £1. 2s.;<sup>7</sup> by 1801, the teind of fish was roused for as high as £30. 5s., and that of summer herring for £5.<sup>8</sup> Their value dropped rapidly in the early 19th century, in the face of opposition from the expanding fishing industry,<sup>9</sup> to only £2. 3s. and 12s. 6d. respectively by

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1. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1900 p.129-132
  2. Malcolm Gray: 'Organization and Growth of the East Coast Herring Fishing 1800-1885 (in Studies in Scottish Business History edited Payne, London 1967) p.187 Hereafter Gray: East Coast.Herring Fishing.
  3. See above p.5-12
  4. George Pitcairne: A Retrospective View of the Scots Fisheries (Edin. 1787) p.9 'Size money' was a fee to 16s. 8d. to the grand owner for wetting one's nets; 'last night's fishing' was a levy to the grand owner upon the last night's fishing of any week.
  5. In Crail, local tradesmen including a baker, a wright and a smith leased them between 1780 and 1800. See Minutes of the Town Council of Crail.
  6. e.g. Anstruther Wester. See Rev. James Forrester: O.S.A. volIII p.86
  7. Minutes of the Town Council of Crail May 8th 1782. £222 Scots & £13. 4s. Scots respectively.
  8. Ibid May 13th 1840.
  9. Anstruther, Pittenweem or St. Monance were used as markets in preference to Crail.

1839,<sup>1</sup> until a composition of 5s. annually for each boat using the harbour was accepted by the Town Council in 1840;<sup>2</sup> but as late as 1853,<sup>3</sup> the Town Council was still trying to lease the teinds which by that time were highly incongruous when one considers the vast scale upon which the herring fishery was pursued both in Scotland and in the East Neuk.<sup>4</sup> Equally archaic was the necessity of having to offer all fish caught for sale in the burgh or village before contemplating its sale to outside buyers. In St. Andrews fishermen were obliged to stay at the Fish Cross with their catch for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours in summer and for 2 hours in winter; prosecutions for transgressing this regulation were still to be found in the early 19th century.<sup>5</sup> Indeed there was even talk of enforcing this regulation during the dispute between the Town Council and the fishing community over the issue of the mussel scalps in the mid-19th century.<sup>6</sup>

That such exactions and regulations could have still existed in the late 18th century only serves to further illustrate the limited scale of the fisheries of that period. Their disappearance resulted from the impracticality of their enforcement when the fishing industry underwent rapid expansion in the 19th century. Thus, though David Loch might write of Cellardyke in 1778 that 'a good fishing is carried on here,' at that time the Cellardyke fishing fleet numbered only fifteen herring boats and a similar number of small yawls.<sup>7</sup> St. Monance, described in 1793 as 'one of the principal fishing towns upon the coast' had at that time a fleet of 14 herring boats and 20 smaller craft,<sup>8</sup> with a total of approximately one hundred full-time fishermen. Though this represented almost  $12\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the total population of St. Monance,<sup>9</sup> and is indicative of the importance of the fisheries to the local economy, at the same time the capital value of boats and nets was low; a herring boat could be built and equipped for not much more than £50,<sup>10</sup> and the smaller yawls, when

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1. Minutes of the Town Council of Crail May 15th 1839
  2. Ibid May 13th 1840
  3. Ibid April 28th 1853
  4. An attempt to revive the teinds of Anstruther in 1840 was defeated due to the opposition of large-scale curers such as James Methuen of Leith. See Fife Herald July 2nd 1840; Jan 26th 1841.
  5. D. Hay Fleming: The Fish Cross of St. Andrews in St. Andrews Citizen March 21st 1903.
  6. See below p.106-108
  7. David Loch: Essays on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland (Edin. 1778, 3 vols) vol. 2 p.49
  8. Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.337
  9. Population in 1793 was 832. Ibid p.343
  10. Gray: East Coast Herring Fishery p.210

equipped with lines for the white fishing, would have cost no more than £35,<sup>1</sup> thereby representing a gross capital value of £1500 for the St. Monance fleet.

St. Monance was, in the late 18th century, reasonably typical of all the fishing centres which stretched along the east coast of Scotland from Eyemouth to Caithness. In general there were two distinct forms of fishing; herring fishing was pursued in the summer months between July and September in the larger herring boats manned by seven or eight men employing nets - the so-called Lammas drave; and the remainder of the year was spent in line fishing for cod, ling, haddock, turbot, plaice etc in the smaller yawls manned by crews of three to five men.<sup>2</sup> The East Neuk ports were also the centres for a second herring fishing, virtually unique to the Firth of Forth, the winter drave<sup>3</sup> which extended between January and late March, but which varied considerably in its annual profitability; in addition, too, they were the centres for a flourishing lobster fishing industry<sup>4</sup> which in the 1780's was worth an estimated £1000 annually.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the latter, which were primarily despatched by fast sloop to the London market,<sup>6</sup> the greater proportion of all fish caught were sold fresh to fish-hawkers,<sup>7</sup> who sold them throughout the rural hinterland of the various fishing villages, in market towns and in nearby industrial centres. For the East Neuk fisheries the major markets were rural Fife, Cupar, St. Andrews, Stirling, Perth, Dundee and Edinburgh. St. Monance, indeed, was one of the major suppliers for the Edinburgh market which was served by what was termed the 'couping' system, whereby boats from Fisher-row would travel once or twice a week to the East Neuk, purchase fish from St Monance and other East Neuk boats whilst still at sea, and then return with the catch to Edinburgh.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Line-fishing yawls were only 16ft-25ft in length; herring boats were 30ft-35ft.
  2. Normally termed 'white' fishing as opposed to herring fishing.
  3. Mentioned in an Anstruther burgh charter as early as 1580; see George Gourlay: Fisher Life (Cupar 1879) p.4
  4. Crabs were only in local demand until the mid-19th century; East of Fife Record April 19th 1869
  5. Rev. James Forrester: O.S.A. vol. III p.78
  6. Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.338n
  7. Termed 'cadgers' and sometimes the wives of fishermen as in Newhaven.
  8. Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. IX p.338n



The design of fishing boats had changed little since mediaeval times. Decks were considered impractical since it was held that they would impede the use of oars, make the boat top heavy when laden with a big catch, and impair the use of both nets and lines.<sup>1</sup> The smaller boats were mere skiffs and were under 18 feet in length. The larger vessels, the herring boats, averaged 30-35 feet in length of keel, were 13 feet 3 inches in width and 4 feet 3 inches in depth, with a carrying capacity of about 17 tons.<sup>2</sup> Clench built,<sup>3</sup> and copper fastened, most were fitted with only one mast with a huge, dipping lug sail;<sup>4</sup> four or six oars were carried and extensively used. Such boats belonged to one of two distinct designs - the 'scaffie' or the 'fifie'. In Fife, as throughout the area from Eyemouth to Banff, the boats were of the 'fifie' type, with vertical stem and stern posts;<sup>5</sup> the 'scaffie' favoured on the remainder of the east coast of Scotland was rounded in both stem and stern.<sup>6</sup> Naturally such small open boats were of limited scope and capacity; they could only fish in certain weather, had a limited range and required skilful handling. The smaller yawls used for line fishing were particularly hazardous and it was not uncommon for a crew to have to go down to the harbour in the morning to be faced with the prospect of baling out their boat. Indeed clay was normally carried on board to help keep out the water.<sup>7</sup>

Equipment, too, had remained largely unaltered for centuries. During the line-fishing each crew member provided three strings of lines, each 150 fathoms in length with hooks placed 28 to 30 inches apart.<sup>8</sup> These hand-lines were employed for haddock fishing, whilst for cod and ling the great or 'gart' lines were used with their larger hooks.<sup>9</sup> Lines were baited with mussels, normally obtained

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1. Edgar J. March: Inshore Craft of Great Britain (London 1970 2 vols) vol. 1 p.83
  2. Ibid p.83
  3. Clench or clinker built boats were constructed with the planking overlapping as opposed to carvel built boats in which they were flush with each other and required caulking to ensure watertightness.
  4. A four-cornered sail bent upon a yard which is slung about one-third or one-quarter from its end, and so hangs obliquely. Larger boats were twin-masted.
  5. Edgar J. March: Inshore Craft of Great Britain (London 1970 2 vols) vol. 1 p.267
  6. James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.51
  7. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.58
  8. Ibid p.59
  9. James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.70

from the River Eden beyond St. Andrews, though whelks, sand eels, crabs and herring were employed as well.<sup>1</sup> During the herring drave, each boat carried instead a fleet of from 14 to 20 nets, hand made from hemp by fishermen's wives and daughters. Each boat and its gear was owned by a compact group composed of fishermen working in the boat, men who would often be close relatives and would certainly all be drawn from a close-knit fishing community.

The boat itself would normally be owned by one man - normally the skipper - though boat-owning partnerships were quite common. Nets and gear, however, were provided by members of the crew.<sup>2</sup> During the line-fishing which was pursued solely by fishermen engaged in fishing the whole year round, each crew member provided his own lines and bait and received in return an equal share of the catch, with a further share going to the boat owner to cover his additional capital outlay.<sup>3</sup> However during the herring drave, two or three crew members would provide the nets for the entire crew, which was normally completed by hiring seasonal workers - agricultural workers, artisans, tradesmen - for whom a good drave could provide the extra luxuries which might otherwise have been beyond their means;<sup>4</sup> in a boat crewed by seven men at the herring fishing, each crew member would receive 1/15 of the net profits, 1/15 would go to the owner of the boat, and the remainder would be distributed proportionately among the owners of the nets. Thus a hired man would receive only one share, and was known as a half-dealsman. The most significant factor was that no person outside the boat's crew had any permanent share in its ownership or in its proceeds;<sup>5</sup> the whole of the physical capital employed in fishing was owned by the working fishermen themselves, and each boat was worked as a completely separate unit. The large companies which were to dominate fishing in England were not to be a feature of either the East Neuk or the east Scottish fisheries until the introduction of steam fishing boats, which necessitated a larger capital outlay, in the late 19th century.<sup>6</sup>

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1. James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.70
  2. Gray: East Coast Herring Fishery p.193
  3. Ibid p.194
  4. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.130
  5. Very infrequently a widow retained ownership of her husband's boat.
  6. Gray: East Coast Herring Fishery p.193

Such boats, such equipment and such a system of ownership and payment were to be the basis of the East Neuk fishing industry with only small modifications, until the late 19th century. The radical development of the East Neuk fishing industry - and that of Scotland as a whole - relied not upon technological advances nor, primarily, upon economic re-organization, but rather upon the marked change of emphasis already referred to - the increasing importance of the Scottish herring fishery and the simultaneous development of the herring curing industry in Scotland. The cured herring industry had been dominated by the Dutch since the 16th century - a domination based upon the close government supervision of the industry; herrings were divided into a series of classes, with a system of government inspection to ensure quality.<sup>1</sup> Though the Dutch herring reached its peak in the mid-17th century,<sup>2</sup> and was in fairly rapid decline during the 18th century, the main challenge to Dutch supremacy in the second half of that century came not from Britain, but from Sweden where large shoals of herring made their annual appearance off Bohuslan after 1754,<sup>3</sup> and which led to a Swedish domination of the Baltic herring market, with exports reaching as much as 200,000 barrels annually.<sup>4</sup>

Jealousy of the Dutch, who were thought to be robbing Britain of her fish,<sup>5</sup> was the primary factor in stimulating the British government to try to realize at least part of the potential value of a native-based herring curing industry on a scale capable of challenging the Dutch, Swedes, Danes and Norwegians. Thus in 1749 the Society of the Free British Fishery was founded by Act of Parliament with a capital of £120,000.<sup>6</sup> A bounty of 30s. per ton was given to every new vessel of over 20 tons in burden fitted out for the herring fishing, and £3. 10s. was paid on every £100 employed in the fishery, for a period of fourteen years; an additional bounty of 2s. 8d. was paid on every barrel exported. Under this stimulus, British herring exports reached a peak of 10,942 barrels in 1758;<sup>7</sup> and to further stimulate this growth the

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1. James Coull: The Fisheries of Europe (London 1972) p.73
  2. In 1669, 20% of the population of Holland, some 450,000 people, were employed ashore or afloat in the herring curing trade.
  3. George Pitcairne: A Retrospective View of the Scots Fisheries (Edinburgh 1787) p.7
  4. John Knox: Observations on the Northern Fisheries (London 1786) p.28
  5. The Dutch fishing fleet was based off the Shetlands in late spring and early summer.
  6. John Knox: Observations on the Northern Fisheries (London 1786) p.25
  7. Ibid p.29

bounty was increased to 50s. per ton in 1759.<sup>1</sup>

The number of busses<sup>2</sup> in Scotland increased from 3 to 261 between 1759 and 1766, and in the latter year 27,033 barrels of herring were exported.<sup>3</sup> But the enterprise of mercantile adventurers on the Clyde<sup>4</sup> could not prevent the bankruptcy of the Free British Fishery Society. Though a second society was founded by a further Act of Parliament of 1786, with a new set of bounties upon tonnage and barrels exported, the basis of the British herring fishing industry continued to be the Clyde merchant companies fitting vessels at Greenock, Rothesay, Port Glasgow and Campbeltown for the herring fishing off the Hebrides.<sup>5</sup> By 1776, 50,165 barrels were being exported,<sup>6</sup> and by the early 19th century, as many as 80,000 barrels annually were being cured on the west coast of Scotland.<sup>7</sup>

However the principal defect of the government legislation to foster the herring fishery in the 18th century, was that the principal financial stimulus, the tonnage bounty, was proportional to the burden of the ship, and not to its success or skill in fishing. Its major effect therefore was to make ships be fitted out not to catch herring but to catch the bounty (See Table II.1.). The figures clearly illustrated the high cost, in terms of bounties paid, of bringing the herrings to market. What the legislators had failed to realise was that the domination by the Dutch and later the Swedes of the continental cured herring market was primarily attributable to the consistently high quality of their cured herrings. Thus Scottish cured herrings continued to make little impact upon European markets. In price alone, Scottish exporters could not hope to compete with the Swedes and Dutch. Whilst Swedish herrings were reaching the market at 7s. to 8s. per barrel in the 1780's,<sup>8</sup> the price for Scottish

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1. C. A. Goodlad: Shetland Fishing Saga (Shetland Times 1971) p.166
  2. Small, two-masted vessel of Dutch design used in the herring fishery. (from the Late Latin 'bussa').
  3. John Knox: Observations on the Northern Fisheries (London 1786) p.41
  4. The major centre for the British herring fishery until the rise of Wick in the early 19th century.
  5. P. White: Observations upon the Present State of the Scotch Fisheries (Edinburgh 1791) p.55
  6. John Knox: Observations on the Northern Fisheries (London 1786) p.126
  7. Report by the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1810
  8. John Knox: Observations on the Northern Fisheries (London 1786) p.28

TABLE II.1: Effect of the Bounty System upon the Herring Curing Industry in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

Years	Average Annual Cure	Average Annual Bounties Paid
1750-54	161.3barrels	£345 19s
1760-69	10,288	£14,302 1s 9d
1770-79	18,815	£10,906 19s 3d

TABLE II.2: Expansion of Scottish Herring Curing Industry 1809-1814.<sup>2</sup>

Year	Herring cured in Scotland	Cured on East Coast	Total Exported <sup>3</sup>	Exported from East Coast
1809	89,417barrels	32,251barrels	34,534barrels	10,964barrels
1810	89,934½	8,638	38,133	4,274
1811	105,097½	14,184	55,229	10,236
1812	137,640	29,243	72,726	17,958
1813	100,046	51,635	83,791	44,755
1814	144,919	61,141	98,622	47,950

TABLE II.3: Importance of Wick in the Scottish Herring Curing Industry 1810-39

Years	Annual average cured in Scotland	Annual Average cured in Wick	Percentage cured at Wick
1810-14	115,582barrels	14,868barrels	12.9%
1815-19	247,292	56,722	22.9%
1820-24	329,330	77,548	23.5%
1825-29	332,857	102,539	30.8%
1830-34	367,050	102,368	27.9%
1835-39	455,478	82,111	18%

1. George Pitcairne: A Retrospective View of the Scotch Fisheries (Edinburgh 1787) p.24
2. Report by the Commissioners for the Herring Fisheries 1809-1814
3. Total exported direct from Scotland; large numbers were shipped coastwise to London for exportation.
4. Reports by the Commissioners for the Herring Fisheries 1810-39

cured herrings varied between 22s. and 26s.<sup>1</sup>

Equally important was the fact that Scottish cured herring were considered much inferior by continental buyers to those cured by the Danes, Swedes and Dutch.<sup>2</sup> Lack of regulations and supervision by the British Government meant that the quality of cure was variable even within the same firm. In Holland, for example, all herring were divided into classes and cured in high quality Spanish or Portuguese salt which had previously been examined by inspectors; whilst in Britain no classification existed, and any salt - home or foreign, pure and impure - was used. Moreover, herring caught on different nights were mixed together in Britain, and a significant proportion of all herrings were cured ungutted; in Holland, by contrast, herring were gutted immediately after capture and herring caught on different nights were always kept separate.<sup>3</sup> Such regulations maintained the high quality of Dutch cured herrings, and at the same time ensured the virtual exclusion of British herrings from all European markets, including Ireland.<sup>4</sup> Nor did such fraudulent practices as filling barrels with stones and rubbish enhance the reputation of British curers.<sup>5</sup> The only British herring which could find a market in Europe were red, or smoked, herrings;<sup>6</sup> salted herrings exportation was confined almost entirely to the heavily protected West Indian market,<sup>7</sup> where they were known as 'the food of negroes'.<sup>8</sup>

Thus at the close of the 18th century, the British herring fishery was principally confined to the west coast of Scotland, whilst in the East Neuk, and along the east coast of Scotland in general, the herring curing industry existed only on a very small scale, with the fisheries mainly concerned with the provision of fresh fish for the large towns and inland centres. In the East Neuk, indeed, the herring drave was

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1. Lewis McCulloch: Observations upon the Herring Fisheries upon the North and East Coasts of Scotland (London 1788) p.2
  2. P. White: Observations upon the Present State of the Scottish Fisheries (Edinburgh 1791) p.66
  3. C. A. Goodlad: Shetland Fishing Saga (Shetland Times 1971) p.169
  4. P. White: Observations upon the Present State of the Scotch Fisheries (Edinburgh 1791) p.66
  5. John Knox: Observations on the Northern Fisheries  
(London 1786) p.54
  6. P. White: Observations upon the Present State of the Scotch Fisheries (Edinburgh 1791) p.67
  7. George Pitcairne: A Retrospective View of the Scotch Fisheries  
(Edinburgh 1787) p.17
  8. C. A. Goodlad: Shetland Fishing Saga (Shetland Times 1971) p.169

particularly unreliable. The phenomenon whereby the herring abandoned their traditional haunts in the Firth of Forth is a recurrent factor in the development of the Fifeshire fisheries. It is mentioned in the 17th century<sup>1</sup> and was to recur periodically until the late 1860's, from which period the large scale lammas fishing in the Firth of Forth can be said to have discontinued.<sup>2</sup> Overfishing is hardly likely to have been the cause of the disappearances in the 17th and 18th centuries; rather it seems to have been the result of complex and still largely unexplained hydrographical factors.<sup>3</sup> Superstitious fishermen, however, chose to attribute such disappearances to such disparate causes as the ringing of church bells on the Sabbath, or the firing of cannonballs by warships in the Forth.<sup>4</sup> Nor was this phenomenon confined solely to herring; in 1790 haddock, too, disappeared from the East Neuk fishing grounds and did not return for 7 years.<sup>5</sup> Thus, though a successful drave such as that of 1778 could bring £2,000 sterling to the town of St. Monance alone, in the course of a few weeks,<sup>6</sup> the variability of the drave meant that by the close of the 18th century, many of the younger men preferred to engage themselves in whaling ships or merchant vessels. Thus in 1791, 72 of the 541 males resident in Pittenweem were sailors, but only 12 were full-time fishermen;<sup>7</sup> in Anstruther Wester, at the same date, 36 of the 324 residents of the burgh were seamen.<sup>8</sup> Whaling vessels from Dundee, Leith and Kirkcaldy continued to engage large numbers of men from the East Neuk until the mid-19th century;<sup>9</sup> there was even a short-lived whaling venture based on Anstruther in the late 18th century.<sup>10</sup>

However the pattern of the fishing industry throughout the east coast of Scotland was transformed by two factors. The first of these

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1. See above p.9
  2. See below p. 147-150
  3. The decline of the Hansa can be attributed to the failure of the herring fishery on the Bohuslan coast, for similar reasons, and is a graphic illustration of the effects of such a disappearance.
  4. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Anstruther and Cupar 1888) p.131
  5. George Gourlay: Memorials of Cellardyke (Anstruther and Cupar 1879) p.22
  6. David Loch: Essays on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland (Edin. 1778, 3 vols.) vol. 2 p.48
  7. Rev. James Nairne: O.S.A. vol. IV p.372
  8. Rev. James Forrester: O.S.A. vol. III p.82
  9. Fife Herald Aug. 29th 1839; March 28th 1844; Sept 30th 1847.
  10. Pittenweem Register June 7th 1851.

took the form of renewed government legislation to stimulate the herring fishery. A flood of literature on the subject of the Scottish herring fishery<sup>1</sup> finally prompted the government to pass an Act in 1808 for 'the further encouragement and better regulation of the British White Herring Fishery'<sup>2</sup> For the first time, an adequate system of government supervision and inspection was introduced, with fishery officers appointed to supervise the curing and packing of herring and to apply the appropriate Government Brand to barrels containing fish which conformed to certain high standards of quality, and were cured and packed to the satisfaction of the inspecting officer. As a further stimulus, a bounty of 2s. was paid upon every barrel of herring cured in the British herring fishery.<sup>3</sup>

The Act came at an opportune moment since it coincided with the appearance of large shoals of herring off the east coast of Scotland, principally off Caithness. Notwithstanding the annual fluctuations to which the drave was always subject, the results were both immediate and beneficial.<sup>4</sup>(See Table II.2.) Despite a drop in production in 1813, the overall trend in the production of cured herring in Scotland between 1809 and 1814 was one of steady expansion; production increased by 62% whilst exports direct from Scotland rose by 1777% during the same period. On the east coast the expansion was even more rapid, especially when one considers the exceptionally good fishing of 1809, with production increasing by 90% in the same period, and exports by 332%. In 1815, a new Act replaced that of 1808 'to continue and amend several Acts relating to the British White Herring Fishery',<sup>5</sup> whereby the bounty was increased to 4s. per barrel, and which reinforced the supervisory powers of District Fishery Officers over the curing and packing of herrings, for which a code of rules and regulations was issued to ensure the new high standard of British cured herrings.

Under the additional impetus of this new Act, the number of barrels cured continued to rise reaching a total of 414,574 $\frac{3}{4}$  by 1830,

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1. e.g. John Knox, David Loch. Lewis McCulloch, George Pitcairne and P. White.
  2. Michael Graham (edited): Sea Fisheries, their Investigation in the United Kingdom (London 1956) p.54-55
  3. For details see James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.195-204
  4. Reports by the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1809-1814
  5. James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.205-11 for abstract of the Act.



of which 367,088<sup>5</sup>/<sub>4</sub> barrels were cured on the east coast; exports soared, too, with a total of 197,733 barrels exported from the whole of Scotland, of which 163,749 barrels were shipped from east coast ports.<sup>1</sup> In the course of just two decades, Scotland's curing industry had expanded by an enormous 364%, and its export trade by 456%. Though Lord Ripon advocated the removal of bounties in 1824,<sup>2</sup> by which time they were costing the government over £55,000 annually, and they were gradually reduced until their final abolition in 1829,<sup>3</sup> the end of the bounty system did not lead to any recession within the industry. The stimulus had been sufficient, and the total number of barrels cured continued to rise throughout the course of the 19th century, with only the impact of the Great War sufficient to seriously dislocate the industry.

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The most important feature of the development of the Scottish herring fishery in the twenty years after 1809 was the rapid growth of the east coast fishery. While production on the west coast, the traditional centre of the Scottish herring fishery, declined from 80,298 barrels in 1810 to 47,486 barrels in 1830, that on the east coast expanded by over 1,000% between 1809 and 1830, and assumed a dominance in the industry which it was to maintain throughout the 19th century. The role of the East Neuk in the rapidly expanding industry, however, was at first insignificant; it is a measure of the comparative unimportance of the district at the time, that when the new fishery districts were being created to be supervised by the officers appointed by the Act of 1808, the East Neuk was incorporated in a district centred upon Burntisland and including the entire Fife coast. The centre for the rapidly expanding east coast fishery was Wick, 'the emporium of the Scottish herring fishery'.<sup>4</sup> It had become by the early 19th century the centre for that British Fisheries Society established by the Act of 1786;<sup>5</sup> by 1810 a new inner harbour was completed at a cost of £16,000 to shelter the large number of boats which attended the summer drave there<sup>6</sup> - the only significant herring fishery on the entire

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1. Report by the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1830
  2. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.viii
  3. Ibid p.viii
  4. James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.15
  5. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.viii
  6. Edgar J. March: Sailing Drifters (London 1952) p.224

east coast at that time. But in the decades after 1810 the expansion of the summer fishing at Wick was so rapid that by the mid-19th century it stood 'on a proud pre-eminence in the United Kingdom as the head and chief focus of the fishing industry'.<sup>1</sup> The figures in Table II.3. clearly illustrate the importance of Wick as a curing centre in the first half of the 19th century. Whereas 200 boats fished from Wick in 1795,<sup>2</sup> by 1830 there were nearly 600.<sup>3</sup> A new outer harbour had to be built between 1824 and 1831 at a cost of £22,000 to accommodate them.<sup>4</sup> Between the years 1810 and 1840, over 22% of the total amount of herrings cured in Scotland were cured at Wick. Moreover, Wick also became the major herring exporting port in Britain, as the former coastal trade to London prior to export abroad, was replaced by the direct export of herrings from the port of cure in the later 1820's.<sup>5</sup>

By comparison, the herring fishery at Anstruther and the adjoining fishing villages remained insignificant. Although the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery considered the East Neuk important enough to warrant its establishment as a separate fishery district from that of Burntisland, and appointed William Jamieson as Fishery Officer for the coast between Leven and the north shore of the Tay at the request of local curers in 1817,<sup>6</sup> the East Neuk curing industry remained on a small scale while the herring drave continued to be unreliable. Between 1818 and 1837 the total cure of herrings amounted to 69,774 barrels, an average of 3,488 $\frac{3}{4}$  barrels annually.<sup>7</sup> Among the factors contributing to keep the total so low was the proximity of the large urban centres of Dundee and Edinburgh, - and to a lesser extent Perth, Stirling, Dunfermline, St. Andrews and Cupar - where a ready market was to be had for fresh herrings. Thus

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1. James Thomson: The Value and Importance of the Scottish Fisheries (London 1849) p.15
  2. Edgar J. March: Sailing Drifters (London 1952) p.224
  3. Report by the Commissioners for the Herring Fisheries 1830 p.16
  4. Edgar J. March: Sailing Drifters (London 1952) p.224
  5. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fisheries; between 1810 and 1825 as many as 45,000 barrels were sent from Scotland to London for export; but from 1825 to 1870 Wick was the major herring exporting port in the U.K.
  6. Letters and Reports, Anstruther Fishery District 1817; AF 19/3/1 (Hereafter Letters and Reports)
  7. Ibid 1818 - 1837; AF 19/3/1-3

in 1818, though the total catch during the Lammas drave was estimated at over 20,000 crans,<sup>1</sup> only 9035 barrels of herrings were cured.<sup>2</sup> At Wick, on the other hand, geographical isolation ensured that only the tiniest proportion of all herring landed was sold fresh; only the introduction of steam transport - most notably the railways - allowed fish to be sent to urban markets, from the more remote fishing centres, in a fresh state. In the East Neuk, however, cadgers were present in large numbers to compete with curers for the purchase of the catch. This certainly proved advantageous to the fishermen, since, though curers were normally willing to pay only 7s. to 7s. 6d. a cran for herring<sup>3</sup> - and never more than 10s. - cadgers, not relying upon a speculative market for their profits, were willing to pay 12s. to 14s.<sup>4</sup> During the best-fished draves, fully one-half of the total catch was sold fresh in this manner.<sup>5</sup>

However, more important was the variability of the herring fishing. Though a series of moderately successful draves in the years after 1810 had prompted the establishment of a fishery district based at Anstruther, the number of barrels cured in the district never reached ten thousand until large shoals of herring arrived in the Firth of Forth after 1837 (See Table II.4.). Indeed the total cure was often under 1,000 barrels and in 1826 was only 45. In 1822, when only 56 barrels were cured, the local Fishery Officer, James Reid, wrote

'it is now truly pitiable to see so many fishermen and coopers going about the harbour idle - along with the great number of poor people that used to be employed gutting and packing, lamenting to each other for want of employment and eagerly enquiring if any of the boats belonging to the small towns east or west the coast have been successful'.<sup>6</sup>

By 1828, Reid was reporting a blank summer herring fishing for the fourth successive season, with herring being sought only as bait for cod; nets were set at sea and left unattended for days and sometimes even weeks.<sup>7</sup>

The continuous failure of the Forth herring fishery eventually led to the annual migration of the East Neuk herring fleet to more northerly stations, notably Wick, Helmsdale, Lybster and Peterhead,

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1. Letters and Reports Sept 21st 1818; AF 19/3/1
  2. Ibid Annual Report 1818; AF 19/3/1. A cran contained  $37\frac{1}{2}$  imperial gallons, a barrel  $26\frac{2}{3}$  imperial gallons.
  3. Ibid Aug 15th 1819; AF 19/3/1
  4. Ibid Aug 9th 1823; AF 19/3/1
  5. Ibid Aug 25th 1825; AF 19/3/2
  6. Ibid Sept 12th 1822; AF 19/3/1
  7. Ibid May 3rd 1828; AF 19/3/2

to fish for herring from July to September.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1823, only 18 boats were left in the district during the Lammis drave, and those manned by old men and young boys. When a good fishing set in, local curers were driven to write to Dunbar and Eyemouth to try to engage boats to fish in the Firth.<sup>2</sup> By 1826, about one hundred East Neuk boats were annually attending the northern herring fishing.<sup>3</sup> Though shoals might arrive in the Firth, normally the fishing lasted only a few days before the herring disappeared again. Though the Fife Herald might complain that East Neuk fishermen should not 'spend part of their hard-earned money in the counties of Sutherland, Caithness, Banff etc. when their own dear Fife folks are in as much want as either of the other counties',<sup>4</sup> economic necessity dictated the fishermen's actions. Though an unseccessful northern fishing, such as that of 1826, could prove highly expensive for East Neuk fishermen and often leave them in debt,<sup>5</sup> due to the additional expenses incurred during their six weeks absence, good average takes could normally be guaranteed; in the decade after 1825, the average annual take at Wick exceeded 100,000 crans,<sup>6</sup> which produced an average of over 100 crans per boat when divided among the fleet of 900 to 1,000 boats which fished there during the summer months. Moreover, the boats of the East Neuk herring fleet could normally expect to exceed the average, since being 30 to 35 feet in length and as much as 18 tons in burden,<sup>7</sup> they could proceed further to sea, were less restricted by weather and could carry larger catches, than many of the smaller second and third class boats from the Moray Firth fishing ports which accounted for over one half of the fleet at the northern herring fishing, some being merely two-oared skiffs manned by two men. Indeed catches of 300 crans or more were not uncommon among the Fife boats,<sup>8</sup> worth as much as £150, and on occasions the average among the East Neuk fleet was as high as 250 crans.<sup>9</sup>

Preparations for the drave were begun in late June, when the

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1. Rev. George Dickson: N.S.A. vol. IX p.973; Fife Herald July 31st 1826
  2. Letters and Reports Aug 1st 1823; AF19/3/1
  3. Fife Herald Oct 19th 1826
  4. Ibid June 24th 1830
  5. Letters and Reports Sept 7th 1826; AF19/3/2
  6. See Table II.3.
  7. George Dickson: N.S.A. vol. IX p.973
  8. Fife Herald July 29th 1830
  9. Ibid Aug 29th 1833

line-fishing boats were beached and the larger herring boats hauled down into the sea from their resting places in the sheltered bays of the East Neuk. Nets were 'barked'<sup>1</sup> and thorough overhauls were given to all the boats. The latter, though still undecked, were by this period largely twin-masted and cost £80 to £100 to buy. Nets were above 50 yards in length and 17 inches deep and cost £4 each.<sup>2</sup> Crews of seven were normally composed of between three and five full-time fishermen with the remainder being seasonal 'halfdealsmen' often Highland or West Coast crofters.<sup>3</sup> The normal practice during the drave was for a boat to be engaged by a curer at a fixed price for each cran caught, which varied inversely in accordance with the success or failure of the previous season's fishing,<sup>4</sup> the bargain was agreed to have been fulfilled when either 250 barrels had been fished, or six weeks had passed.<sup>5</sup>

At a busy port, such as Wick, over 100 curers would be competing for the services of the boats during the 1830's.<sup>6</sup> In the East Neuk, the unreliable draves of the 1820's and early 1830's prevented the development of a large-scale, local curing industry. With an annual cure which averaged under 3,500 barrels no large-scale industry could be expected to flourish; at Wick, with an annual production of up to 150,000 barrels,<sup>7</sup> individuals curers would produce that number of barrels and more. In Anstruther district, by comparison, the average annual cure for each curer or curing firm was only 197½ barrels between 1818 and 1837; 43% of the curers engaged were producing under 100 barrels a year, and only 6½% over 500 barrels annually, the latter group being responsible for 25½% of the total production and the former only 14%. (See Table II.4.). Large curing firms from Wick, Leith, Dundee, Burntisland and Montrose, accustomed to having agents in most east coast fishery districts, had by 1826 dispensed with even the formality of having representatives present in the East Neuk due to the lack of profitability in establishing curing stations there during the drave. The summer herring fishing had become what was

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1. Browned in kutch in order both to cleanse and preserve.
  2. Rev. Robert Swan: N.S.A. vol. IX p.346
  3. Ibid p.346
  4. Gray: East Coast Herring Fishery p.197
  5. Rev. Robert Swan: N.S.A. vol. IX p.346
  6. Reports by the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1825-1840
  7. Ibid 1830; in that year 153,000 barrels were cured

termed 'a cadger's drave' with almost the entire catch being bought up by fish-hawkers for sale in a fresh state.

That herring curing took place at all in the East Neuk in the early 1830's was due to a revival of the equally unreliable winter drave. All locally caught herrings cured in the district between 1826 and 1836 were cured in March or early April.<sup>1</sup> The winter drave had been steadily growing in importance since 1810; in April 1818, as many as 1,000 crans were loaded in one day.<sup>2</sup> By the mid-1820's, it had completely eclipsed the summer drave, so that the only herrings cured in the district in summer were those imported by Dundee and Leven curers from Caithness, in order to provide work for their coopers, and to use up stocks of salt and barrels stored up in the event of a summer fishing taking place in the Firth.<sup>3</sup> Even local curers such as George Sharp and George and John Darsie went to more northerly fishing stations during the summer months.<sup>4</sup> But as the winter draves developed, it was the turn of both curers and fishermen from outside the East Neuk to converge on the Firth of Forth. In 1822, only 20 boats a day were engaged in the winter drave;<sup>5</sup> by 1833, 200 boats and 1100 men from all parts of the east coast of Scotland were fishing from East Neuk ports during the winter drave.<sup>6</sup> Prices were high since the winter drave, being virtually unique to the Firth of Forth, attracted curers from Glasgow, Berwick, Leith, Dundee and Montrose, as well as large numbers of cadgers, so that prices reached as high as 18s. per cran, with a general average of 12s.;<sup>7</sup> boats were not engaged to curers as at the summer fishings of the north, but rather fish were sold by the system prevalent in the East Neuk, namely 'at the price of the day'. The competition created by the presence of so many outside curers was thought by the 1830's to be worth an additional 6s. on the price of a cran;<sup>8</sup> certainly the price had risen from only 6s. in 1822,<sup>9</sup> to 12s. and upwards by the early 1830's.<sup>10</sup> In 1829, 4,000 crans

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1. Anstruther District Herring Coast Fishery Book 1826-1836; AF19/16/1-2. (Hereafter Herring Coast Fishery Book)
  2. Letters and Reports April 10th 1818; AF19/3/1
  3. Ibid Sept 12th 1822; AF19/3/1; Oct 25th 1825, AF19/3/2
  4. Fife Herald June 20th 1825
  5. Letters and Reports Feb 13th 1822; AF19/3/1
  6. Ibid Jan 31st 1833; AF19/3/2      7. Ibid April 16th 1829; AF19/3/2
  8. Ibid Feb 13th 1822; AF19/3/1
  9. Ibid Feb 16th 1836; AF19/3/2; Feb 6th 1838; AF19/3/3
  10. Fife Herald Feb 5th 1835; Letters and Reports Feb 16th 1836; AF19/3/3

valued at £2,400 were landed in the East Neuk<sup>1</sup> and the numbers continued to rise to a total of 13,000 valued at £10,000 by 1839.<sup>2</sup> Record catches were reported annually,<sup>3</sup> and as many as thirty cart-loads daily set out into the countryside, laden with fresh fish.<sup>4</sup> Boats from Glasgow and Berwick anchored off Anstruther and Pittenweem to transport herrings to the former ports for subsequent curing.<sup>5</sup>

Though the scale of the winter drave was small when compared with the summer fishing at Wick, or even Helmsdale or Fraserburgh, its very existence ensured the continuance of a herring curing industry in the East Neuk, and attracted the major east coast curers of that time to Fife - the Davidsons of Dundee and Wick, Thomas Dunn, John Harvey and the Adamsons of Leith, Thomas Napier of Montrose, and most notably, James Methuen of Burntisland and Leith who was to become the major fish-curer in Scotland, with agents in all the major ports from Eyemouth to Wick by the time of his death in 1863;<sup>6</sup> between 1828, when his agents first began to cure herrings in the East Neuk, at Pittenweem, and 1837, he was responsible for almost 12% of the annual production of cured herring.<sup>7</sup> His closest competitor was William Davidson, a member of a long-established family of curers from Dundee,<sup>8</sup> who was to establish a successful business based at Liverpool, and who was responsible for 9% of the annual production during the same period.<sup>9</sup>

Few local curers could achieve even the local importance of such men. Many were local tradesmen who regarded the curing business in the same way as many agricultural workers regarded the herring fishing - as a seasonal undertaking which might provide handsome profits; the Town Clerk of Anstruther, Matthew Connolly, was just such a speculator in 1823.<sup>10</sup> Others were grocers, drapers or even inn-keepers.<sup>11</sup> Comparatively little fixed capital was needed for curing. The minimum equipment consisted of the farlin - a broad rectangular trough into

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1. Letters and Reports April 16th 1829; AF19/3/2
  2. Fife Herald March 14th 1839
  3. Letter and Reports Feb 15th 1834; Feb 7 th 1835; AF19/3/2
  4. Ibid Feb 15th 1834; AF19/3/2    5. Ibid Feb 8th 1832; AF19/3/2
  6. East of Fife Record April 4th 1863
  7. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1826-1837; AF19/16/1-2
  8. Other members who cured in the East Neuk were James, David, Peter and Thomas.
  9. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1826-1837; AF19/16/1-2
  10. Anstruther District Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1823; AF19/24/1 (Hereafter Herring Shore Curing Book)
  11. George Gourlay: Fisher Life (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.65

TABLE II.4: Organization of East Neuk Herring Curing Industry 1818-1837.

Year	total cure	no. of curers	no. barrels per curer	no. curing under 100 barrels	no. curing over 500 barrels	no. of non-resident curers	barrels cured by non-res. curers
1818	9038	38	237.8	19	5	6	1755
1819	5267 $\frac{1}{2}$	36	146.3	16	-	3	574
1820	8957	40	223.9	15	4	1	315
1821	5644	27	209	11	3	2	249
1822	56	4	14	4	-	-	-
1823	7254 $\frac{1}{2}$	32	226.7	12	1	3	578
1824	684	9	76	8	-	1	45
1825	1191	15	79.4	12	-	1	46
1826	45	2	22.5	2	-	-	-
1827	537	7	76.7	6	-	-	-
1828	1311	8	163.9	4	1	2	796
1829	4475	12	373	4	3	3	1251
1830	1589	NO	FIGURES AVAILABLE FOR 1830				
1831	4253	10	425.3	3	2	2	868
1832	4856	18	269.6	4	1	8	2476
1833	1134 $\frac{1}{2}$	13	87.2	10	-	4	539
1834	2096	14	149.7	7	-	5	1163
1835	958 $\frac{1}{2}$	11	87.1	9	-	2	429 $\frac{1}{2}$
1836	3406 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	179.2	5	1	5	1432
1837	7020 $\frac{1}{2}$	30	234	6	3	13	612 $\frac{1}{2}$

Figures include barrels cured during both winter and summer draves  
 Figures from Anstruther District Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1817-1826; AF19/24/1  
 and Anstruther District Herring Coast Fishery Book 1826-1837; AF19/16/1,2



which the herring were thrown after being gutted, in order to be carried to the empty barrels for the fish packing.<sup>1</sup> Curing stances were normally open and unprotected spaces near the harbour, or on the quays, with only a temporary awning to protect the gutters. In the permanent yards, a cooper or coopers would be at work the whole year round preparing barrels for the coming drave.<sup>2</sup> However, for many of the curers in the East Neuk, the scale of their activities was so small that they could not even afford to employ one cooper full-time, and were forced to rely upon the precarious system of buying barrels and salt as and when they were required. Of the non-seasonal local curers, many were themselves coopers whose sons were apprenticed to the trade as quickly as was practicable.<sup>3</sup> Into this category fell the Welches of Pittenweem, John Darsie of Anstruther, the Todds of Anstruther and Andrew Innes of Crail. Some, such as Thomas Brown of St. Monance, were journeymen coopers who risked their limited savings in establishing themselves as curers.<sup>4</sup>

The risks were great since circulating capital was required to finance much of the work for a season which needed to be done prior to any return from that season's produce; salt had to be brought in, and a supply of barrels established. East Neuk curers were fortunate, in that the bounty system - whereby fishermen were engaged for a season with an additional bounty to seal the agreement - was never as popular in Fife as it was in the north. But bankruptcy was a constant danger, since, if markets were glutted, prices for cured herring dropped rapidly, and returns sometimes did not cover the price paid to the fishermen for the herring, without such additional

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1. Within 24 hours of capture, normally immediately upon landing, the herring were 'roused' - lightly salted to clean off blood - gutted and sorted into one of four recognised grades. The fish were then tightly packed in layers separated from each other by a controlled admixture of salt, in barrels of 26 $\frac{2}{3}$  imperial gallons in volume, each barrel containing about 750 fish. The barrels were then left open and upright for two days to allow the fish to settle, after which they were filled up with more fish before being closed and laid on their sides. After a further ten to twelve days, surplus pickle was drained off and the barrels topped up with fresh salt before being dispatched. Each barrel was the work of a particular team of three female gutters who were responsible for the entire process.
  2. Gray: East Coast Herring Fishery p.196-7
  3. Enumerator's Schedules, Census of 1841 (Cen 1841/452) for coopers' families in the East Neuk such as the Welches of Pittenweem.
  4. Letters and Reports April 18th 1839; AF19/3/3

expenses as gutting, packing and freight. Thus Thomas Brown was declared bankrupt in 1836 after 15 years as a curer in the East Neuk, and was forced to fish for the herrings he had formerly cured.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, few local curers had the resources to operate on any significant scale, and only a handful of locally based firms had anything resembling a continuous and stable existence during the 1820's and 1830's.<sup>2</sup> Of these the largest and most successful was that of George Darsie, who cured 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the herrings in the Anstruther fishery district between 1818 and 1837.<sup>3</sup> Himself a tanner, he was descended from a long-established Anstruther family, one of whom had been a bailie of Anstruther Easter in 1721.<sup>4</sup> Darsie was the first of a succession of fishcurers who were to play a prominent part in East Neuk local government, being Provost of Anstruther Easter between 1836 and 1845.<sup>5</sup> His cousin, John Darsie, was also among the more established local curers; others were James and Robert Todd, two Anstruther coopers, George Sharp, an Anstruther merchant and ship-owner, George Forbes, Thomas Brown and Andrew Crawford.

But of the 56 local curers who operated between 1818 and 1837, 25% were in business for less than a year.<sup>6</sup> The output of even the more established curers was distinctly moderate. The Todds, for example, cured a total of 1,450 barrels between 1818 and 1837; during the same period George Sharp and John Darsie cured 2936 and 2416 barrels respectively. In a number of seasons, no herring at all would be cured due to lack of supply.<sup>7</sup> This lack of herrings and the generally low level of the annual cure meant that curing techniques were poor due to inexperience of the gutters, and non-local curers imported more expert fishworkers from such places as Burntisland.<sup>8</sup> Few local curers either, had the resources to venture directly into the export market. Between 1818 and 1828,

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1. Letters and Reports April 18th 1839; AF19/3/3
  2. Herring Shore Curing Books 1817-1826, AF19/24/1; and Herring Coast Fishery Books 1826-1837, AF19/16/1-2
  3. Ibid
  4. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.88
  5. Ibid; others were John and Robert Todd, George Sharp and J. T. Darsie in Anstruther and the Welshes in Pittenweem.
  6. Herring Shore Curing Books 1817-1826, AF19/24/1; and Herring Coast Fishery Books 1826-1837, AF19/16/1-2
  7. Ibid
  8. Letters and Reports April 16th 1829; AF19/3/2

TABLE II.5: Exports of Cured Herring from Anstruther District  
1818-1828

Year	Ireland	W. Indies	Germany	Gibraltar	Russia	Total	Total for Scotland
1818	2539	-	500	-	-	3039	227,162
1819	1264	-	-	-	307	1571	253,516
1820	2579	-	-	-	256	2815	294,805
1821	1060	-	-	-	-	1060	214,956
1822	-	115	-	500	-	615	170,445
1823	1322	522	640	-	260	2857	239,630
1824	-	400	-	-	-	400	202,016
1825	-	-	300	-	-	300	217,073
1826	-	-	-	-	-	-	166,406
1827	150	201	-	-	-	351	211,659
1828	-	-	430	-	-	430	205,875

only 13,218 barrels were exported direct from the East Neuk ports - principally from Anstruther.<sup>1</sup> Most cured herrings were shipped to Leith, Burntisland or London for exportation by the large merchant concerns; even 30% of those exported from the East Neuk were shipped by Leith or Dundee curers.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes a few small local curers would join together and hire a ship to carry a consignment of herrings.<sup>3</sup> But the expenses were great and only George Darsie,<sup>4</sup> Robert Taylor<sup>5</sup> and William Walker<sup>6</sup> made regular exports to Ireland, the West Indies or the Continent.<sup>7</sup> After the failure of the summer fishing, however, exports from the district discontinued until the revival of the Lamma Drave in 1837.<sup>8</sup>

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But if the East Neuk was of only secondary significance as a centre for herring fishing and curing, there could be no doubt of its importance as a centre for line-fishing, and particularly the great line-fishing for cod. The traditional role of the East Neuk ports as a supplier of fresh fish to the Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow markets continued, and indeed expanded to include London, which was supplied by fast smaeks. An Edinburgh Fish Company had been founded in 1825 to combat the trend whereby the best locally caught fish were absorbed by the London market, suppliers of which were inducing Fife fishermen to tow the best cod on lines behind their boats, in order to preserve them fresher.<sup>9</sup> However, the coupling system<sup>10</sup> still flourished in the 1820's to be supplanted in the early 1830's by the system whereby one or two boats daily delivered freshfish from the respective East Neuk ports to Fisherrow or Newhaven.<sup>11</sup>

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1. Anstruther District Herring Fishery Shore Curing and Exportation Books 1818-1859; AF19/26/1 (Hereafter Shore Curing and Exportation Books)
  2. Ibid; e.g. James Methuen, Thomas Shand and David Kid of Leith; William Macleod, Neigh and Smart of Dundee.
  3. George Gourlay: Fisher Life (Anstruther and Cupar 1879) p.65
  4. Darsie exported 2615 barrels during this period, representing 20% of the total exported.
  5. Taylor, a local grocer, exported 2831 barrels, or 22% of the total, despite dying in 1823.
  6. Walker, operating from Earlsferry and St. Monance, exported 1302 barrels, or 10% of the total
  7. Shore Curing and Exportation Books 1818-1859; AF19/26/1
  8. See below p.68-70
  9. Fife Herald Oct 19th 1826
  10. See above p.20
  11. Letters and Reports March 3rd 1835; AF19/3/2

Two distinct seasons existed: one from September to December after the close of the summer herring fishing; and the other from March till June after the close of the winter drave. Some yawls even ignored the herring fishing, and fished with lines throughout the year. Unlike the herring fishery, cod fishing was not an inshore pursuit, and boats proceeded 40 or 50 miles to sea.<sup>1</sup> Nor was the market confined solely to that for fresh fish, since large quantities were cured, either in pickle after the manner of curing herrings, or by drying in the sun. By 1829 James Reid, the local Fishery Officer, could point out that despite the failure of the herring fishing in the Forth, Cellardyke was still one of the chief fishing ports in the country, providing one half of the fresh fish for the Glasgow and Edinburgh markets.<sup>2</sup> In the same year, curers and fishermen from Cellardyke petitioned the Fishery Commissioners for aid in building an improved harbour, and claimed that the fame of the port was so extensive as a cod fishing centre that 'the Cellardyke brand'<sup>3</sup> is earnestly sought after and obtains a preference to any other in the London market, which can be attributed to nothing else but the superiority of its fish, the extent of its supply and the clean and beautiful mode of its curing.<sup>4</sup> Cellardyke alone sent 30 boats and 200 men daily to the deep-sea fishing during the cod fishing season.<sup>5</sup>

Since Fishery Officers were instituted primarily to oversee the curing of fish, there are no figures available for the amount of cod and ling sold fresh in the Anstruther district until 1843, when 13,270 cwts were sold fresh, 20% of Scotland's entire production.<sup>6</sup> But earlier statistics do reveal the importance of the district in the curing of cod, and particularly in the production of pickled cod. Between 1821 and 1837, 35% of Scotland's entire production of pickled cod came from the East Neuk,<sup>7</sup> from where it was shipped to Glasgow, Dundee, London and Liverpool.<sup>8</sup> The quality of locally cured cod was

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1. Rev. George Dickson: N.S.A. vol. IX p.973
  2. Letters and Reports Feb 11th 1829; AF19/3/2
  3. Until 1829, cod like herring, were included in the bounty system and therefore inspected and branded.
  4. Fife Herald Aug 13th 1829
  5. Ibid
  6. Report of the Commissioner for the Herring Fishery 1843
  7. Ibid 1820-1837
  8. Letters and Reports July 31st 1826; Jan 4th 1828; AF19/3/2

such that it was said to fetch 5s. per cwt more than that from the north, or from the Shetlands.<sup>1</sup> The curing was largely carried out by local curers, only 9.8% of the entire production of pickled cod between 1820 and 1837 being cured by outside curers.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, since the entire annual Scottish production was below 10,000 barrels, the scale of production was comparatively small. Nevertheless the annual average for local curers was 166 barrels, which compared very favourably with that for the curing of herrings in the district.<sup>3</sup> Nor was the trade as fragmented as that of the herring curing, with an annual average of only twelve curers operating in the district.<sup>4</sup> Moreover 50% of the curers involved were in business for a period of more than five years,<sup>5</sup> since it was a trade engaged in by full-time curers, rather than those seasonal curers willing to temporarily neglect other pursuits during the herring fishing.

Thus the trade was dominated by local curers, of whom Thomas Brown of St. Monance, Alex Elder of Pittenweem and George Sharp of Anstruther were together responsible for 35% of the entire production between 1820 and 1837,<sup>6</sup> though some curers such as George Darsie and Robert Todd, who were among the major local herring curers, played a less prominent role in the cod-curing trade. But this did not mean that the cod trade was less valuable; cured cod fetched between 21s. and £4 a barrel in the London market,<sup>7</sup> producing an annual turnover of £4,000 to £5,000. For their part, the fishermen, proceeding to sea twice or three times a week, landed catches of 14 to 30 score fish which sold at 4d. to 8d. each,<sup>8</sup> according to the engagements entered into with the curers beforehand - since unlike the herring fishing, the 'price of the day' system was only followed by those concentrating on supplying the fresh fish market.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Letters and Reports April 5th 1827; AF19/3/2
  2. Anstruther District Cod and Ling Fishery Shore Curing Books 1820-1836; AF19/27/1-2 (Hereafter Cod and Ling Shore Curing Books).
  3. 197½ barrels annually.
  4. Cod and Ling Shore Curing Books 1820-1836; AF19/27/1-2
  5. Ibid
  6. Ibid
  7. Letters and Reports Aug 6th 1825; Feb 4th 1827; Apl 16th 1829; AF19/3/2.
  8. Ibid Oct 25th 1825; Feb 4th 1827; Af19/3/2
  9. Ibid Feb 4th 1827; Af19/3/2

TABLE II.6: Employment in the Fishing Industry in the East Neuk 1837.

	Boats	Fish- mongers	Coopers	Gutters	Labourers	Total
Cellardyke/Anstruther	62	245	26	200	12	483
St. Monance	51	170	8	80	2	260
Pittenweem	33	80	10	100	4	194
St. Andrews	6	30	2	4	-	36
Crail	5	25	2	6	-	31
Elie	2	14	2	-	-	16
Kingsbarns	1	5	-	-	-	5
<b>Total for District</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1025</b>

From Anstruther District Herring Coast Fishery Book 1837; AF19/16/2

TABLE II.7: Population Figures for East Neuk Villages 1801-1841.

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	% increase
Anstruther	1265	1401	1501	1437	1434	13.5
Pittenweem	1072	1096	1200	1317	1329	25.9
St. Monance	852	849	912	1110	1150	23.3
*Crail	1652	1600	1854	1836	1765	6.8
Kilrenny	1043	1233	1494	1705	2039	95.5

N.B. Figures for Crail for entire parish; population of burgh declined from 1301 in 1791 to 1227 in 1841, a drop of 6.3%. Figures for Cellardyke are not available before 1841, since it formed only a part of the parish of Kilrenny. In 1841, however, the population of Cellardyke was 1502, almost 75% of that of Kilrenny.

The combined effect of this flourishing line-fishing and the winter drave were sufficient to maintain the importance of the East Neuk as a fishing centre during the early 1830's despite the handicap of not having a large-scale summer herring fishing. Under their stimulus, the industry gradually expanded; in 1827 there were 131 boats in the district, and a total of 866 fishermen, coopers, gutters, packers and labourers found employment in the industry;<sup>1</sup> by 1837 the figures were 160 boats and 1025 people, increases of 22% and 19% respectively.<sup>2</sup> Though this did not compare favourably with the statistics for Wick with its fleet of over 500 fishing boats and work force of 5,500 employed in the industry,<sup>3</sup> a measure of the increasing importance of the East Neuk was the fact that by the late 1830's, it had supplanted Burntisland - the fishery district in which it had formerly been incorporated - in importance as a fishing centre.<sup>4</sup>

Within the East Neuk, the most important ports were Cellardyke and St. Monance, each with fleets of over fifty boats. Pittenweem had thirty three, but a measure of the decline of Crail was that the port which had once been the centre for a fishery engaged in by over 200 boats,<sup>5</sup> by 1837 had a fleet of only 5 boats manned by 25 fishermen. The expansion of the fishery is reflected in the population figures between 1801 and 1841 (see Table II.7). Whilst St. Monance, Pittenweem and Anstruther expanded along with the fisheries, Crail continued to decline; the population of Kilrenny increased by 95%. All this, moreover, was before the enormous expansion of the herring fishery after 1837, which was to lead to the East Neuk fishing fleet becoming the largest and most valuable in Scotland in the late 19th century, and which was to make Fife fishermen renowned as the most successful and enterprising in Britain.

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1. Letters and Reports Annual Report 1827; AF19/3/2
  2. Ibid Annual Report 1837; AF19/3/3
  3. Report of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1837
  4. Ibid 1830-1837
  5. Rev. Andrew Bell: O.S.A. vol. IX p.444



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CHAPTER III.

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III

THE EAST NEUK FISHING INDUSTRY 1838-1865

THE GOLDEN YEARS OF THE LAMMAS DRAVE.

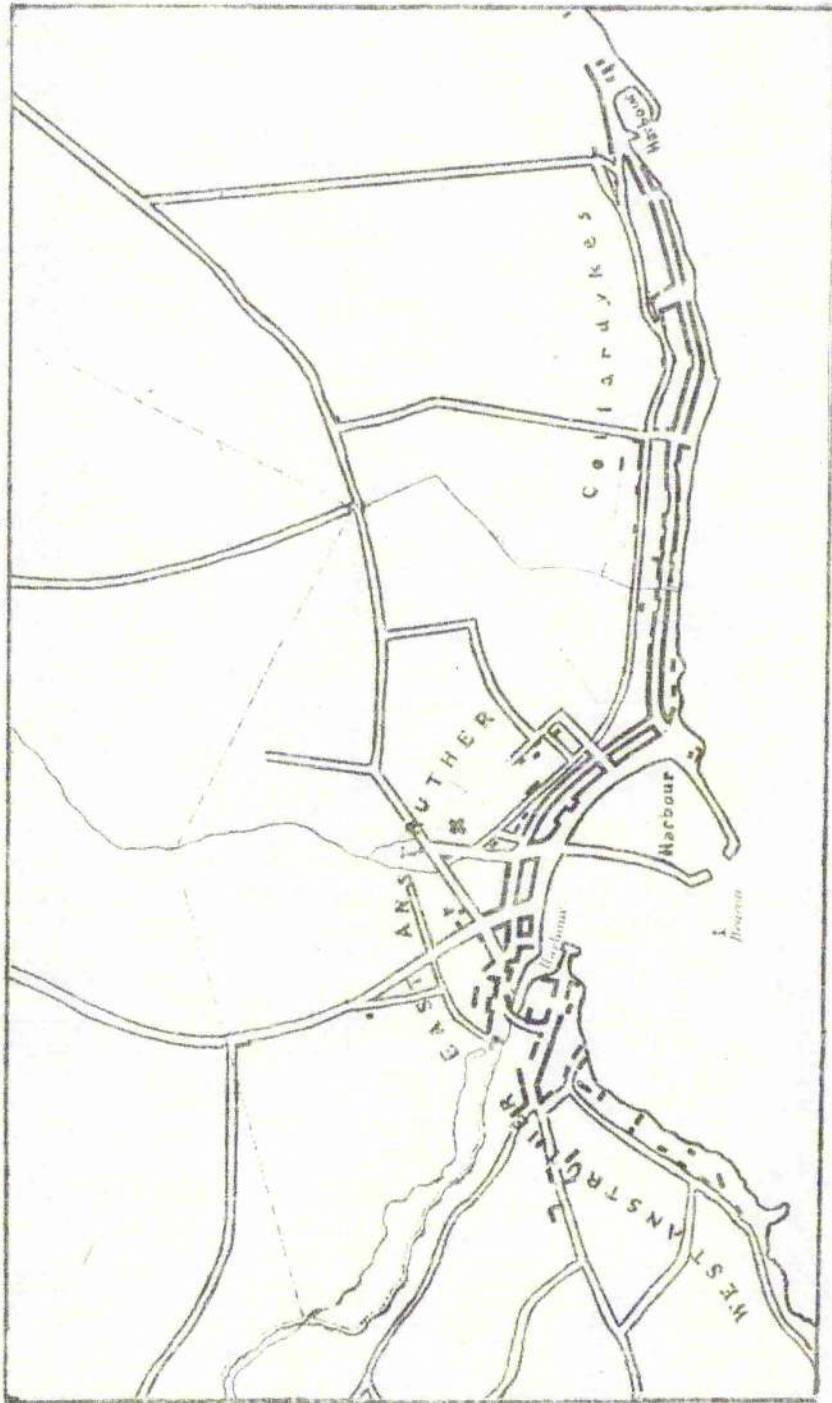
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After an absence of over a decade, the return of the summer herring shoals to the Firth of Forth in 1837 came as an unexpected bonus to the East Neuk fishermen. Only thirty boats of all sizes had stayed in the Firth that summer - primarily to engage in lobster or line-fishing.<sup>1</sup> Shoals first appeared in early August, and remained until September,<sup>2</sup> by which time boats returning from the northern fishing were able to partake in the local drave. Boats landed catches of thirty, forty or fifty crans and were often forced to leave nets behind when returning to port.<sup>3</sup> One Cellardyke boat, having fished its complement of 250 barrels at Helmsdale, landed 103 barrels from the Auld Haiks.<sup>4</sup> Prices dropped from 20s. a cran in early August to 8s. by early September, as Burntisland and Dundee curers arrived to purchase herrings.<sup>5</sup> Nor did this prove to be an isolated good fishing; the following year surpassed the highest expectations of both curers and fishermen. Between seventy and eighty boats remained in the Firth to fish that summer instead of proceeding to the north,<sup>6</sup> and their optimism was rewarded with an average catch unprecedented in Scotland of almost 350 crans per boat - with one boat landing 600 crans.<sup>7</sup> Fishery Officer George Smith considered that the district had at last established itself as a herring fishing centre, and that more extensive preparation would be made in future.<sup>8</sup>

Nor did this prove to be an optimistic hope. The Lammas drave of 1839 exceeded all expectations. Fifty boats from Cellardyke alone remained to fish in the Firth,<sup>9</sup> and their gamble proved highly successful.

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1. Fife Herald Sept 7th 1837.
2. Letters and Reports Aug 12th-Sept 2nd 1837; AF19/3/3
3. Ibid Aug 24th 1837; AF19/3/3
4. Fife Herald Sept 7th 1837. The 'Auld Haiks' or 'Old Haiks' were an inshore fishing ground stretching along the coast from Kingsbarns to Fifeness.
5. Letters and Reports Sept 2nd 1837; AF19/3/3
6. Ibid Aug 1st 1838; AF19/3/3
7. Ibid Sept 3rd 1838; AF19/3/3
8. Ibid Aug 25th 1838; AF19/3/3
9. Fife Herald Aug 8th 1839.

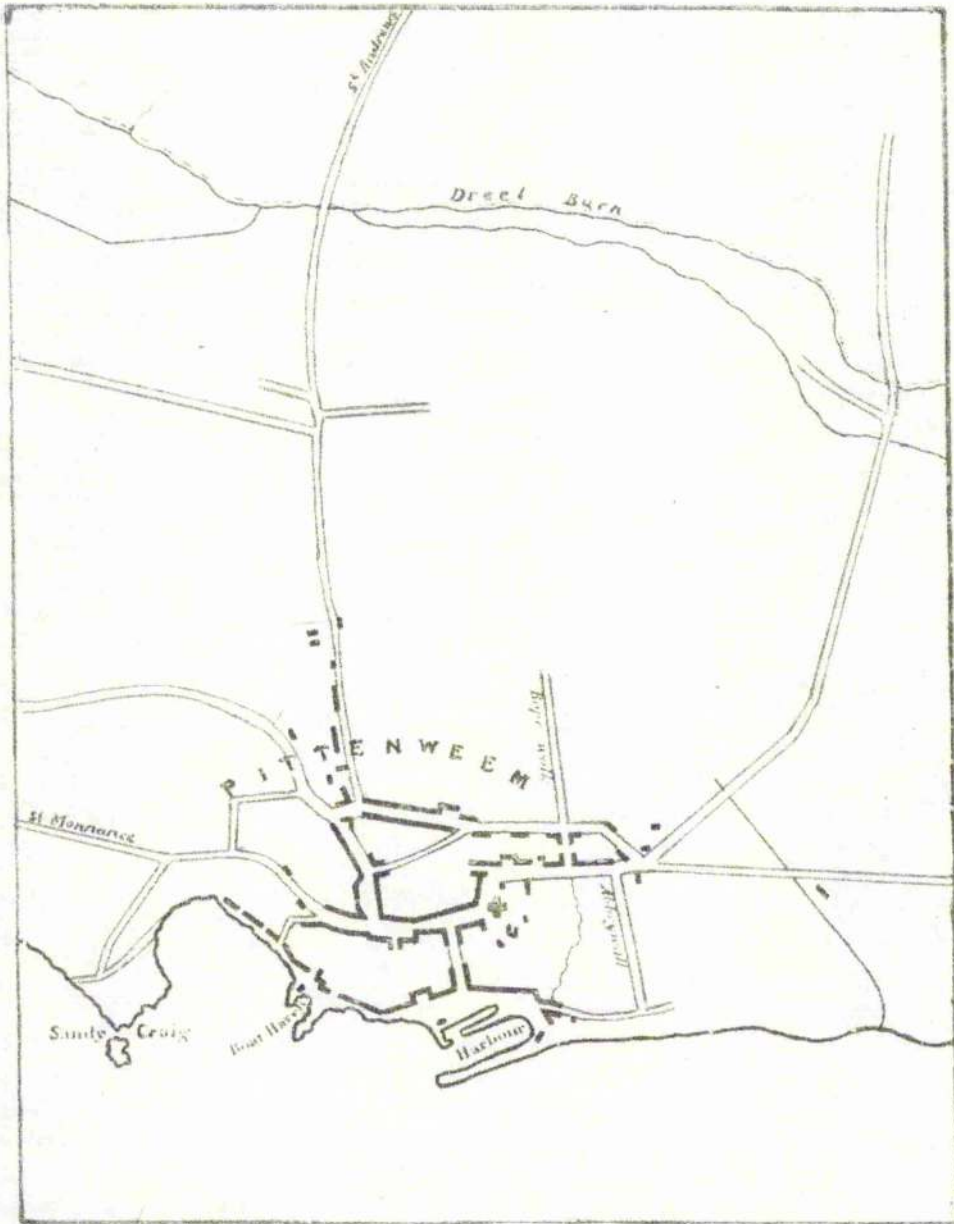


Map III.1: ANSTRUTHER AND CELLARDYKE 1832 (from Report on the Boundaries of Several Cities, Burghs and Towns in Scotland in Respect to the Election of Members to serve in Parliament. Scale 6 inches : 1 mile).

Some boats fished over 600 crans, whilst the general average was 390 crans.<sup>1</sup> The streets of Anstruther and Cellardyke were the scenes of great activity as the successful fleet returned daily with its catch. 'Our streets from Rodger Street to Cadies Burn' reported the Fife Herald 'are literally crammed with barrels - in many places just room for a cart to pass.'<sup>2</sup> Every available space at the quay-side was used as a curing stance, and barrels had to be imported from Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Stonehaven, Montrose and Dundee,<sup>3</sup> as curers exhausted stocks of 1500 to 2000 barrels.<sup>4</sup> Crail, conveniently situated near the principal fishing ground at the 'Auld Haiks', entertained hopes of a revival in its fortunes as the small local fleet<sup>5</sup> averaged almost 4000 crans per boat.<sup>6</sup> Flushed by this sudden addition to the prosperity of the district, the Herald opined that all local boats should in future abandon all idea of attending the summer fishing in the north since Anstruther was now the best fishing station in Britain and since 'we wish to keep our ain fish guts to our ain seamaws.'<sup>7</sup> Most local boats followed this advice readily, although the majority of the St. Monance fleet fished from northern stations in the early summer until the mid-1840's.<sup>8</sup> But the large scale exodus of the East Neuk fleet to the northern fishing ports during the entire summer now ceased, and was not to recommence, despite tempting offers made by northern curers,<sup>9</sup> until the failure of the local fishing in the 1860's. The number of boats engaged rose swiftly from 80 in 1838<sup>10</sup> to 200 in 1840;<sup>11</sup> at its peak in the early 1860's as many as 500 boats and 2795 fishermen were engaged,<sup>12</sup> and in 1860 when an enormous 83,000 crans were landed, 3280 gutters, packers and labourers were employed by curers to handle the catch.<sup>13</sup>

By the mid-1850's, Anstruther district was clearly established as the third most important herring fishing centre in Scotland, surpassed

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1. Fife Herald Sept 12th 1839
  2. Ibid Aug 29th 1839
  3. Letters and Reports Sept. 7th 1839; AF19/3/3
  4. Fife Herald Aug 29th 1839
  5. In 1839, the Crail fleet consisted of 6 boats.
  6. Fife Herald Oct 24th 1839
  7. Ibid Sept 12th 1839
  8. Ibid July 24th 1845
  9. Letters and Reports May 21st 1856; AF19/3/4
  10. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1838; AF19/16/2
  11. Letters and Reports Aug 29th 1840; AF19/3/3
  12. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1860-65
  13. Ibid 1860



Map III.2: PITTENWEEM 1832 (from Report on the Boundaries of Several Cities, Burghs and Towns in Scotland in Respect to the Election of Members to serve in Parliament. Scale 6 inches : 1 mile).

only by Wick, and rivalling Peterhead. Though always trailing far behind Wick in terms of barrels of herrings cured throughout the period 1836 to 1870, the importance of the East Neuk as a herring curing centre should not be underestimated. At its peak between 1856 and 1860, Anstruther district was responsible for the production of almost 10% of all herrings cured in Scotland (See Table III.1). Moreover, as one would expect, a considerable quantity of herrings were dispatched fresh from the district - an average of 9773 crans annually between 1843 and 1870.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the district produced 12½% of all the herrings for the fresh fish market during the 1840's and 1850's.<sup>2</sup>

Though the winter drave remained profitable, and indeed continued to increase in terms of catches between 1840 and 1870, both in terms of the number of barrels cured and of the total number of crans of herring landed, it remained very much of secondary importance until the late 1860's.<sup>3</sup> Fishermen and curers might look forward to the winter drave as a means of compensating for the occasional poor summer fishings such as that of 1851,<sup>4</sup> but it was upon the Lammass drave that the East Neuk's importance as a fishery district was based after 1838. During the quarter century that followed failures in the Lammass drave were infrequent, and in terms of boats employed, curers engaged and average annual catches, the period was one of overall expansion (See Table III.2). Though far behind Wick in total production of herrings, Anstruther was nevertheless frequently the best fished station in Scotland in terms of the average catch per boat. Before the advent of the poor draves of the 1860's, the average rarely fell below 100 crans, and frequently exceeded 200 crans;<sup>5</sup> in 1846, for example, the general average was 263 crans per boat,<sup>6</sup> representing average earnings of £130 for each crew - or £8 to £9 for each half-dealman and as much as £25 for each crew member providing nets.<sup>7</sup> Naturally it was the prospect of such rewards which attracted the increasing number of boats to the Forth, rising from 80 at the summer

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1. Letters and Reports 1843-1870; AF19/3/3-6
  2. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1843-58.
  3. Anstruther District Weekly Report of Fishing 1854-70; AF19/12/1-4
  4. Only 8546 barrels were cured during the summer.
  5. In 1838 it was 350 crans; an average of 200 crans was exceeded in 1839-40, 1842, 1845-47, 1849-50, 1854-55, 1858 and 1860.
  6. Letters and Reports Sept 19th 1846; AF19/3/3
  7. See above p.22 for organization of crews and payment of earnings in the Lammass drave.

TABLE III.1: Importance of Anstruther District in the Scottish Herring Fishery - Annual Average Number of Barrels Cured.  
Quinquennial Period 1836 - 1870.

	<u>Anstruther District</u>			<u>Wick</u>	<u>Peterhead</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
	<u>a)summer</u>	<u>b)winter</u>	<u>c)total</u>			
1836-40	17,275	3,450	20,725	74,003	61,224	512,574
1841-45	25,482	2,722	26,204	107,705	83,304	588,942
1846-50	40,844	5,241	46,085	122,876	81,685	622,803
1851-55	44,728	6,699	51,427	179,994	55,132	634,264
1856-60	45,380	9,747	56,127	108,353	49,029	568,276
1861-65	26,450	12,747	39,197	112,693	67,926	613,667
1866-70	12,024	12,904	24,928	82,802	100,773	719,052

TABLE III.2: Growth of Lammes Drave in the East Neuk - Annual Averages  
Quinquennial Period 1836 - 1870.

	<u>Barrels cured</u>	<u>Boats engaged</u>	<u>Curers engaged</u>
1836-40	17,275	98	40
1841-45	25,482	180	62
1846-50	40,844	200	62
1851-55	44,728	268	76
1856-60	45,380	391	110
1861-65	26,450	453	97
1866-70	12,024	328	59

fishing of 1838 to 415 by 1860.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the Forth summer fishing continued to attract non-local crews even after the drave had begun to decline after 1860, so that the size of the fleet engaged did not reach its peak until 1864, when it totalled 500 boats.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

By the 1860's the Lammas drave had established a regular routine for the local fishermen and curers which changed little from one year to the next. At the end of June the line-fishing was generally abandoned and fishermen began to undertake those preparations necessary to ensure a successful drave. Boats that had been beached since the previous herring fishing were relaunched, and trimmed up for the coming drave. Throughout the 1840's and 1850's, this relaunching was a work of some magnitude, each launch requiring the labour of as many as 50 men and being followed by a prodigious drinking boat financed by the skipper.<sup>3</sup> By the early 1860's, however, machinery was increasingly employed, whilst labour costs were kept to a minimum by the formation of clubs among the skippers for the purpose of launching their boats. Members had only to intimate via the medium of the public crier the desire to launch their boats, and all the club's members were bound to turn out to assist. In Anstruther there were six of these clubs, each with a membership of 15 skippers, each skipper being obliged to turn out with one assistant at each launch, thereby providing a total labour force of 30 men.<sup>4</sup>

After launching, the boats were repaired and renovated according to their needs. Nets were brought out from net stores or attics and barked and skippers undertook the work of forming crews. The organisation of crews for the Lammas drave remained the same as it had been in the early 19th century, with crews normally comprised of three or four full-time fishermen providing nets, whilst the remainder consisted of hired seasonal workers, receiving only a 'half-deal'. The system was widely criticised by local papers which considered that by continuing to depend upon it, the fishermen were ruining their own trade,<sup>5</sup> since, by training too many men to become fishermen, they were depriving them-

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1. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1860
  2. Ibid 1864
  3. East of Fife Record July 11th 1863
  4. St. Andrews Gazette July 18th 1863
  5. Fife Herald Sept 26th 1844



selves of a living.<sup>1</sup>

Most half-dealsmen, however, were landsmen who had no intention of making a full-time career as a fisherman. Though some were local men,<sup>2</sup> the majority were Highlanders who converged on the East Neuk in early July eagerly looking for places in crews, and normally returning to their homes in September after fulfilling an engagement of eight weeks.<sup>3</sup> By 1861, their numbers were so great that a special weekly service in Gaelic was held for their benefit.<sup>4</sup> But though their labour was essential given the disparate size of the line and herring fishing fleets in the East Neuk,<sup>5</sup> the half-dealsmen were regarded with fear and suspicion, particularly by the local press whose hostility was based upon their unruly behaviour, rather than a protectionist feeling towards local fishermen. Drinking and brawling were considered endemic amongst them. 'However meagre the result of their enterprise', commented the Fife Herald, 'these strangers seldom leave the town without a copious inspiration of the raging spirit and a lusty game of fisticuffs'.<sup>6</sup> After a good drave things were even worse. In 1854, when some half-dealsmen earned as much as £20 to £24, their paying off was said to resemble the Battle of Sheriffmuir; brawling and drinking were the order of the day and one Skye man was reported to have been knocked through a brick partition into somebody's living room.<sup>7</sup>

There were preparations, too for the curers to undertake. Throughout the year, the cooperages of the district were engaged in the production of barrels for the summer fishing - those for the winter drave or for pickled cod comprising only a small proportion of their annual output.<sup>8</sup> The number of coopers working in the East Neuk steadily expanded during the 1840's and 1850's from 48 in 1838 to 203 by 1860.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Fife Herald July 24th 1845.

2. e.g. Arncroach colliers: Fifeshire Journal Sept 10th 1840

3. Fife Herald Sept 21st 1854

4. Ibid August 1st 1861

5. In 1857, the Cellardyke cod fleet consisted of 30 boats and 240 men, whilst the same port launched 138 herring boats crewed by 390 men during the drave. Even allowing for fishermen engaged in haddock or shell-fishing, a considerable amount of labour had to be introduced to meet this deficiency.

6. Fife Herald Sept 26th 1844

7. Ibid Sept 21st 1854

8. About 2000 barrels of cod were pickled annually; the winter drave averaged 7644 barrels between 1836 and 1870, the Lammis drave 30312.

9. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1838, 1860; AF19/16/3,5

By the latter date, the more sizeable establishments such as that of Welch Brothers of Pittenweem, or Thomas Cormack of Cellardyke were equipped with machinery which aided in the dressing and preparation of staves and ends.<sup>1</sup> Outside curers from Leith, Montrose, Peterhead etc. brought their own stocks of barrels and all curers had to bring in supplies of salt<sup>2</sup> and notify the Fishery Officer of their intention to cure locally.<sup>3</sup> Arrangements did not end there however; stances had to be acquired at the various harbours, and since Anstruther, St. Monance and Pittenweem had the largest fleets and most suitable harbours, competition was always greatest for stances at these ports. Though curing operations were carried out in Crail, St. Andrews, Elie and even Kingsbarns, the scale of activities in these ports was always small.<sup>4</sup> Between 1840 and 1860, 49% of all the curing stances in the East Neuk were in Anstruther, 25% in Pittenweem, 15% in St. Monance and 9% in Crail.<sup>5</sup> But even these figures disguise the fact that in terms of output, Anstruther was by far the most important centre for the drave; it was here that most of the local curers were based - Robert Todd, the Cormacks, Robert Forbes, the Darsies, George Sharp - and most of the important non-local curers or their representatives in the East Neuk;<sup>6</sup> in Crail, by comparison, curing stances were occupied by local grocers and businessmen such as Robert Morris or Andrew Hutcheon who rarely cured more than 100 barrels each. Curing stances were normally auctioned publicly in late June,<sup>7</sup> and were a lucrative source of revenue to the burgh councils; when the drave was at the height of its prosperity in 1856 those of Anstruther fetched £444, and those of Pittenweem £180.<sup>8</sup>

Having secured stances, curers then went about the engagement of boats to fish for them. The organization of the herring fishing upon the engagement system was never firmly established in the district.<sup>9</sup>

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1. East of Fife Record June 27th 1863
  2. Between 80 and 90lbs of salt were required for each barrel of herrings cured. Curers like William Davidson had as much as 16000 bushels in stock at Anstruther. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1840; AF19/16/3
  3. Herring Shore Curing Books 1817-57; AF19/24/1-5
  4. Crail was often the scene of brief periods of feverish activity when shoals of herring were present in the Auld Haiks; East of Fife Record Aug 16th 1863; Sept 17th 1864
  5. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1840-1860; AF19/16/3-5
  6. e.g. In Anstruther, Angus Mackay for David Davidson, and John Caldwell for James Methuen.
  7. St. Andrews Gazette June 20th 1863
  8. Letters and Reports May 21st 1856; June 21st 1856; AF19/3/4
  9. See above p.34

With a sizeable market for fresh herrings and as many as fifty cadgers competing with curers for the purchase of catches,<sup>1</sup> fishermen continued to find it more profitable to sell their fish at the price of the day rather than engage with curers at a fixed price for the entire season. Even in the late 1840's and 1850's when the engagement system had become more general, many skippers adhered to the older system and remained unengaged.<sup>2</sup> But it was in the interest of the curers to promote the engagement system, since they, themselves, were normally under engagement to Leith merchant companies to provide a specific number of barrels of cured herring at a fixed price,<sup>3</sup> so that if they relied upon an open and competitive market to obtain their fish, they were sometimes faced with the choice of either buying herrings at a price which would entail making a loss,<sup>4</sup> or paying an indemnity for non-fulfillment of their quotas.<sup>5</sup> This was a primary factor causing an increase in the price of herrings during the 1840's and 1850's, since only by offering more attractive terms could curers hope to induce fishermen to enter engagements. Prices rose from 8s - 11s in 1837<sup>6</sup> to 16s by 1860;<sup>7</sup> moreover, bounties offered by curers rose from £2 a boat in 1841<sup>8</sup> to £12 by 1862.<sup>9</sup> Yet even such inducements as this were unable to tempt many East Neuk fishermen, and during poor draves such a policy proved very lucrative, as in 1857 when many local boats by remaining unengaged were able to average 20s to 30s per cran.<sup>10</sup>

Preparations having been completed, the actual fishing began in late June or early July, in a modified form employing not nets, but hand-lines known as 'jig' or 'dandy' lines. Each crew member had a line to which was attached a 1½lb lead weight; upon this line, at distances of about one foot, pieces of stiff wire or whalebone were fixed crossways, to each end of which were attached hooks, to the number of about twenty upon each line. The herring attracted by the glitter of the hooks, were caught by the tail, fin or whatever, as the hook sank - herrings caught in this manner being known as 'daft' herrings.<sup>11</sup>

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1. Fife Journal Aug 5th 1841
  2. Ibid Aug 12th 1841; Letters and Reports Dec 31st 1856; AF19/3/4
  3. Letters and Reports Dec 11th 1856; AF19/3/4
  4. Ibid April 13th 1843; AF19/3/3
  5. Ibid Dec 11th 1856; AF19/3/4
  6. Letters and Reports Aug 24th-Sept 2nd 1837; AF19/3/3
  7. Anstruther District Weekly Reports of Fishing 1860; AF19/12/2
  8. Fife Journal Aug 5th 1841
  9. Anstruther District Weekly Reports of Fishing 1862; AF19/12/3
  10. Fife Herald Sept 10th 1857
  11. Fife Journal Aug 5th 1841

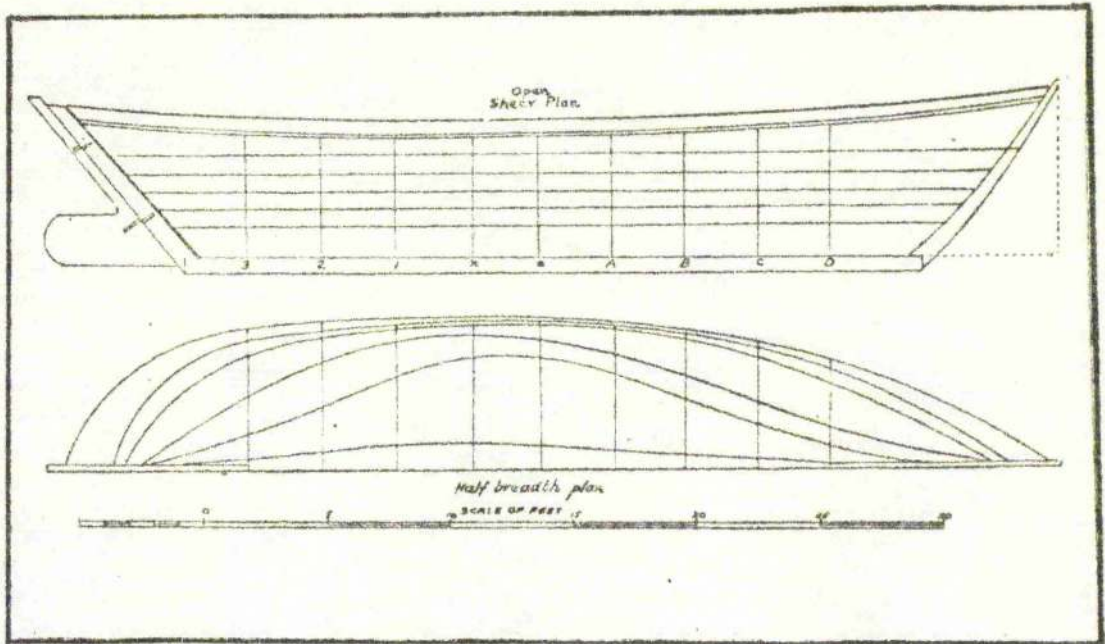


Fig. III.1: MORAY FIRTH 'SCAFFIE' c1848  
(built by John Booth, Peterhead).

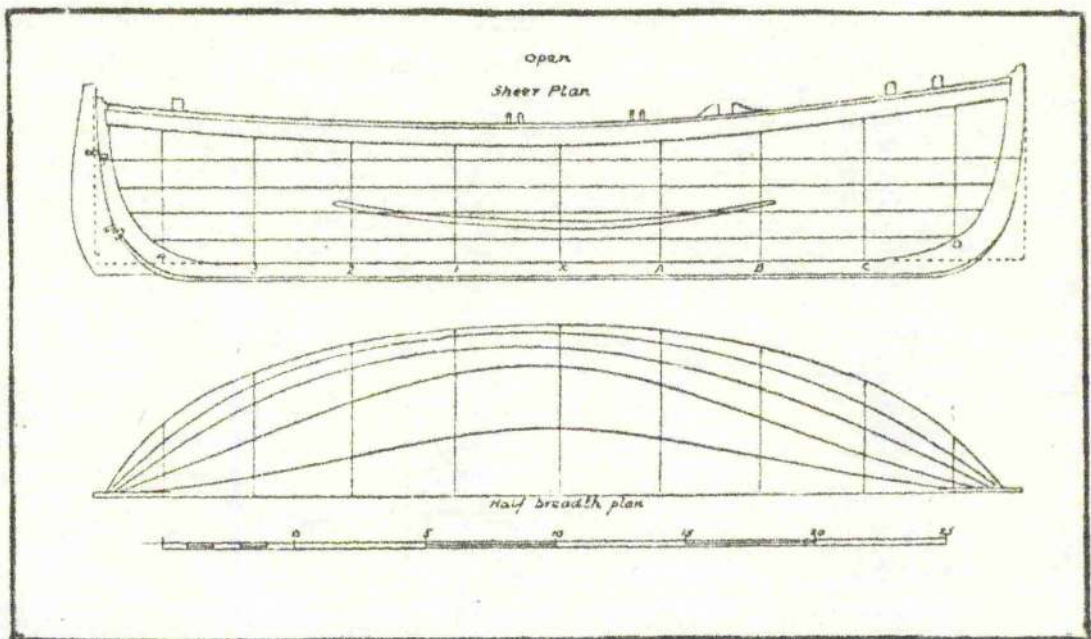


Fig. III.2: NEWHAVEN 'FIFIE' c1848  
(built by Messrs. Rose & Son, Leith).

Such fishing was pursued normally by only a small portion of the fleet, but when jig-line catches indicated that large shoals were present near the coast, drift nets replaced the lines and the entire fleet began to put to sea every night<sup>1</sup> - except the Sabbath<sup>2</sup> - from the various ports.

The boats were still essentially the same as those employed at the herring fishing since the late 18th century - clench-built, lug-rigged, open 'Fifies' of 35 to 40 feet in length, costing £130 when fully equipped.<sup>3</sup> Though decked boats had been built in Buckie and Eyemouth in 1855 and 1856 respectively,<sup>4</sup> the first to be built in the East Neuk was in 1863 and this had to be manned by Englishmen due to its unpopularity among local fishermen.<sup>5</sup> Decked boats were not to be widely adopted in the East Neuk until after the decline of the Firth summer fishing, when their advantages in terms of comfort were more readily appreciated by fishermen travelling to the northern and English herring fisheries.<sup>6</sup>

The only major technological advance in the fishing industry during this period was the adoption of cotton nets, which were first used by East Neuk crews in 1857.<sup>7</sup> The drift nets used in herring fishing floated with the tide and presented a perpendicular wall of nets 10 yards deep and as much as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles long, in which the herrings enmeshed themselves.<sup>8</sup> Previous to the invention of a loom for spinning cotton nets by James Patterson of Musselburgh in 1856,<sup>9</sup> each boat had carried a fleet of 24 nets made of hemp, each 40 yards in length, 6 - 7 yards in depth and weighing 25lbs; by comparison, the cotton nets were 50 - 60 yards long, 10 yards deep and weighed only 12 to 14lbs, thereby allowing each boat to carry as many as 50 or 60 nets and significantly increase its fishing capacity.<sup>10</sup>

Fishing grounds naturally varied according to the presence of shoals. Sometimes crews went as far as the Bell Rock in search of

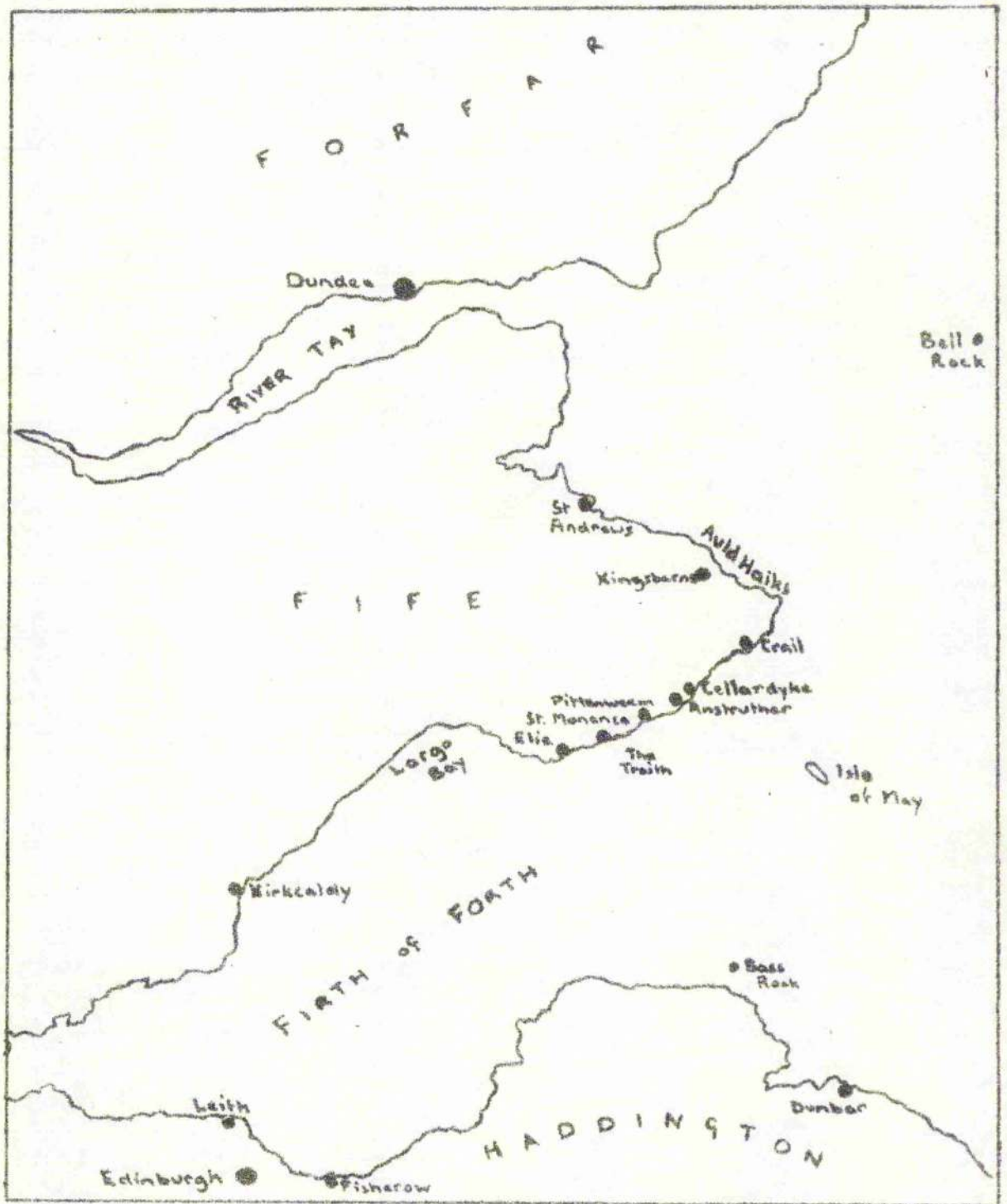
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1. Daylight fishing was said to scare the fish so that the shoals sank to the bottom of the sea.
  2. Fife Herald Aug 16th 1855; Aug 28th 1856; Sept 12th 1861; Feb 18th 1862
  3. Ibid July 25th 1861
  4. Peter F. Anson: Fishing Boats and Fisher Folk on the East Coast of Scotland (London 1930) p.26
  5. East of Fife Record May 16th 1863; July 11th 1863
  6. Ibid Oct 4th 1867
  7. Letters and Reports Dec 31st 1857; AF19/3/4
  8. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.xxx
  9. Edgar J. March: Sailing Drifters (London 1952) p.243
  10. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.xxii

herring; at other times the fleet could be found off the Isle of May. But the most productive fishing grounds during the peak years of the drave were the Auld Haiks and the Traith - the latter, two miles offshore from Pittenweem even acquiring the nickname of 'California' because of its productivity.<sup>1</sup> The fishing, however, was rarely what could be termed as regular; just as the catch could vary enormously from one season to the next, so, too, could it vary from one week to the next, with a succession of barren weeks followed by one or two weeks of heavy fishing.<sup>2</sup> Even when large shoals were to be found locally, it was not uncommon for some boats to catch almost nothing whilst others landed heavy takes.<sup>3</sup> But in general, local fishermen were sufficiently rewarded for their efforts - sufficiently enough to prefer the local drave to that of the northern ports, and to turn down tempting inducements from northern curers.<sup>4</sup>

The arrival of large shoals in the fishing grounds was always a heartening sight for the local press. Busy streets, piers and harbours were the promise of a further increase in local prosperity. Catches were often so heavy that the local curing industry was taxed to its limits. Towncriers paraded through Pittenweem, St. Monance, Anstruther and Cellardyke to summon all women and girls to appear at the curing stances without delay during heavy landings of herring in 1852.<sup>5</sup> At other times local labour proved insufficient, and women had to be brought to Anstruther from Leith and St. Andrews to help gut and pack the fish.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, when shoals appeared in the Auld Haiks, the smaller curing trade of Crail and Kingsbarns had to be supplemented by a large influx of skilled female workers from Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance.<sup>7</sup>

At such times, the streets of the various burghs became almost impassable with every available spot appropriated for some phase of the process of gutting, packing and storing herrings. Streets were blocked with enormous mountains of barrels, and by the vast number of carts employed in transporting the herrings from the harbour to the curing stations.<sup>8</sup> Local farmers joined in the prosperity of the

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1. St. Andrews Gazette Aug 15th 1862
  2. East of Fife Record Aug 9th-23rd 1863
  3. Ibid Aug 16th 1863
  4. Letters and Reports May 21st 1856; AF19/3/4
  5. Fife Herald Sept 9th 1852
  6. Ibid Sept 2nd 1845; East of Fife Record Aug 23rd 1862
  7. East of Fife Record Aug 16th 1863
  8. Ibid Sept 1st 1860



Map III.3: THE EAST NEUK FISHING VILLAGES (with their local fishing grounds marked. 6 miles : 1 inch.)

drave by hiring out horses and carts which were always in great demand when heavy catches were landed.<sup>1</sup> Supplies of salt and stocks of barrels were sometimes exhausted; in 1854, barrels became so scarce in Pittenweem that fish were stored in the holds of vessels, whisky puncheons, and even in the old Relief Chapel.<sup>2</sup> At such times crews of writer's clerks,<sup>3</sup> coastguards,<sup>4</sup> and even women,<sup>5</sup> were reported putting to sea to help land this marine harvest. A significant portion of the entire season's catch could be landed in a matter of days. Thus in 1858, nearly 19,000 crans - over 25% of the total catch for the season of 70,534 crans - were landed in one week in early September;<sup>6</sup> in 1862, 7,000 crans - 20% of the entire season's catch - were landed at Anstruther in one day.<sup>7</sup> During such times boats would put to sea twice in one day, conscious of the fact that only one such large shoal might appear all season.<sup>8</sup> Takes of as high as 124 crans by one boat were recorded.<sup>9</sup> Nets were often known to sink, overloaded with fish.<sup>10</sup> But prices naturally dropped steeply as the market became glutted, and un-engaged skippers were forced to sell their catches at low prices, even to local farmers for use as manure at as little as 1s 6d per cran.<sup>11</sup>

The bustling appearance of the streets of the East Neuk burghs was enhanced by the arrival of large numbers of hawkers, beggars, musicians and travelling showmen eager to share in the rewards of the drave, 'all attracted by the scent of gold, like vultures to the field of slaughter'.<sup>12</sup> Such attractions as a band of strolling players performing a representation of the Crimean War in a large tent,<sup>13</sup> or 'Macarte and Clarke's Great Champs Elysees Cirque'<sup>14</sup> vied with vendors of every conceivable article of merchandise for the fishermen's money. Hawkers were considered particularly undesirable by the local press. 'The importunity with which the qualities and prices of their goods is urged is beyond all conception,' commented the East Fife Record. 'The thing has become an almost intolerable nuisance to the inhabitants and

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1. East of Fife Record Aug 16th 1863.
  2. Fife Herald Sept 14th 1854
  3. Ibid Aug 25th 1842
  4. Ibid Aug 30th 1849
  5. Ibid Aug 23rd 1849
  6. East of Fife Record Sept 11th 1858
  7. Ibid Aug 23rd 1862
  8. Ibid Sept 11th 1858
  9. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 17th 1864
  10. Ibid
  11. Ibid
  12. Fife Herald Sept 23rd 1858
  13. Ibid Aug 31st 1854
  14. East of Fife Record Sept 3rd 1859



means must be adopted to secure the public peace'.<sup>1</sup> Fishermen were considered virtually incapable of looking after their own money, and the Fife Herald piously hoped that 'Providence would either send them less siller or mair sense to guide it'.<sup>2</sup>

But the fishermen evidently enjoyed spending their money - particularly on the almost interminable drinking bouts, equally despised by the press, which accompanied the drave. In 1850, a petition was made by Total Abstinence supporters - including a lord and a baron - to the local fishcurers not to grant spirituous liquors to fishermen over whom they had any control. A correspondent to the Fife Herald suggested that they might alter their views if they changed places with the fishermen for just one year.<sup>3</sup> It was the custom for any bargain to be ratified by the parties involved sharing a drink; good catches were often a cause for celebration, as indeed were successive weeks of poor fishing an excuse for deriving consolation from a bottle.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the curers and coopers celebrated the end of a drave with a Ball,<sup>5</sup> crews tended to part their earnings and indulge in protracted drinking sprees. The East of Fife Record considered that it was the 'opinion of a good many who go to the fishing that getting drunk at the end of it is a regular part - and the best - of the work of the drave'.<sup>6</sup> Drunkenness and brawling were not confined solely to the half-dealsmen. Fishermen, carters and cadgers were also regularly before the courts for such offences. Though the Press encouraged them to put their earnings into Savings Banks,<sup>7</sup> unruly scenes continued to be a prominent feature of the drave. By 1860 it was deemed necessary to station two extra policemen at Anstruther during the summer fishing<sup>8</sup> since 'one could scarcely go out of doors without meeting one or more in a beastly state of intoxication'.<sup>9</sup> Only the decline of the drave led to the partial disappearance of such occurrences.

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Though altogether much smaller in terms of boats and men involved, and in the size of the catch landed, the winter drave was not entirely

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1. East of Fife Record Sept 13th 1862
  2. Fife Herald Aug 29th 1839
  3. Ibid July 30th 1850
  4. East of Fife Record Aug 7th 1858
  5. Ibid Sept 25th 1858
  6. Ibid Sept 9th 1870
  7. Fife Herald Nov 23rd 1848
  8. East of Fife Record Aug 18th 1860
  9. Ibid Sept 17th 1859

dwarfed by the summer drave in its importance to the local economy. Between the periods 1841-45 and 1866-70, the annual average number of barrels cured during the winter drave rose by 374%. (See Table III.1). The significant feature of the winter drave, however was not so much its size, as its value, which soared dramatically in the 1850's as a result of the extension of the railway system into East Fife: The effect of this was to bring into the East Neuk large numbers of English buyers intent upon providing the large English urban markets with fresh or slightly salted herrings.

The effect upon the Lammis drave was minimal, since the English markets could be adequately supplied from Lowestoft, Yarmouth, Shields, Scarborough etc. during the summer months.<sup>1</sup> But the winter drave in the Firth of Forth was a unique source of herrings during the winter and spring months in the mid-19th century, and had long provided Fife, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh with fresh herrings.<sup>2</sup> The herrings were generally of inferior quality to those caught during the summer, and were considered unsuitable for curing in pickle for the continental market, though quantities had been exported to the West Indies prior to the emancipation of the slaves.<sup>3</sup> A new market had been thereupon opened up by the manufacture of Yarmouth bloaters for the English market; but the overall cure had remained low throughout the 1840's, as had the price which averaged 8s. per cran,<sup>4</sup> though it occasionally reached as high as £1 per cran.<sup>5</sup> Competition among curers was very small with James Methuen, George Sharp and Robert Todd dominating the market.<sup>6</sup> Methuen, indeed, was responsible for  $\frac{1}{3}$  of all herrings cured in the East Neuk during the winter drave between 1840 and 1849.<sup>7</sup>

But the extension of the railway as far as Kilconquhar in 1854,<sup>8</sup> and Anstruther itself in 1863,<sup>9</sup> brought additional buyers into the

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1. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1843-58, for fresh herring sales in England.
  2. Letters and Reports Feb 17th 1824; Feb 8th 1832; Feb 7th 1835; AF19/3/2.
  3. East of Fife Record Feb 12th 1869
  4. Ibid
  5. Fife Journal March 5th 1840
  6. East of Fife Record Feb 12th 1869
  7. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1840-49; AF19/16/3
  8. A. A. Maclean: North British Album (London 1975) p.7
  9. East of Fife Record Aug 2nd 1863

district, and the resultant competition for the purchase of herrings, immediately forced up prices. In the 1840's there had been an annual average of 13.2 curers in operation in the East Neuk; by the following decade there were 26.2 and by the 1860's the annual average was 57.6.<sup>1</sup> The first English buyer to arrive was George Addy of Hull in 1849;<sup>2</sup> by 1854 he was joined by William Wood of Huddersfield, William Smith of Bilston, mGeorge Tubby of Birmingham, Joseph Murrell of Lowestoft and London, Timothy Cragg of Fleetwood and William Tyhurst of London;<sup>3</sup> in 1855 there were a dozen,<sup>4</sup> and by 1865 eighteen.<sup>5</sup> Already by 1855 prices averaged 30s. in the winter compared with only 11s. 6d in the summer; by 1860, the prices were 35s. and 14s. 6d respectively.<sup>6</sup> By 1865, the winter drave had become the sole pursuit of most local fishermen between January and mid-April,<sup>7</sup> and was beginning to surpass in importance the declining Lammas drave.

By the 1860's the average number of boats engaged annually in the winter drave had risen to 225 from only 80 to 100 in the 1840's.<sup>8</sup> Owing to the season, however, fishing was often impossible for days on end due to severe storms.<sup>9</sup> During one such storm in February 1856, 42 of the boats anchored in Anstruther harbour were severely damaged.<sup>10</sup> Quite frequently nets were lost during heavy seas entailing losses of up to £80 for a complete set.<sup>11</sup> But the rewards could be very high with boats realising as much as £100 in a week.<sup>12</sup> The fleet was smaller than during the summer drave, since fishermen made up crews from amongst themselves without having recourse to half-dealsmen; but as many as 70 or 80 stranger boats were present by the 1860's.<sup>13</sup>

During a heavy fishing the streets of Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance assumed much of the bustle and stir of a good week during

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1. Herring Coast Fishery Books 1840-49, 1852-63; AF19/16/3-5. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Books 1849-51, 1863-70; AF19/24/2,5,6.
  2. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1849; AF19/24/2
  3. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1854; AF19/16/4
  4. Ibid 1855; AF19/16/4
  5. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1865; AF19/24/5
  6. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1855, 1860; AF19/12/2
  7. East of Fife Record Feb 12th 1869
  8. Letters and Reports 1840-1870; AF19/3/3-6
  9. St. Andrews Gazette Feb 7th 1863
  10. Fife Herald Feb 14th 1856
  11. St. Andrews Gazette Feb 14th 1863
  12. Fife Herald March 1st 1855
  13. East of Fife Record Feb 14th 1863

	<u>WINTER</u>				<u>SUMMER</u>			
	Gross Catch	Av per boat	Gross Value	Price per oran	Gross Catch	Av per boat	Gross Value	Price per oran
1857	9,135crans	46	£16,443	36s	23,981orans	79½	£51,137	14s 6d
1858	11,220	59	£19,076	32s	70,534	235	£19,865	14s
1859	7,946	37½	£11,919	30s	28,379	70½	£60,175	14s 6d
1860	14,465	68½	£24,439	35s	83,000	202	£29,983	15s
1861	20,230	100	£30,345	35s	28,300	63	£13,754	19s
1862	15,380	65½	£17,225	26s	12,504	26½	£30,689	24s 6d
1863	13,250	50	£14,400	40s	32,304	66	£10,780	26s 6d
1864	7,200	31	£24,075	45s	14,950	36½	£26,775	23s
1865	10,700	48½	£21,780	40s	8,800	26	£15,840	24s
1866	10,890	49½	£27,675	30s	22,300	36½	£13,512	24s 6d
1867	18,450	86	£20,086	22s	13,200	36½		
1868	18,260	81½	£22,193	33s	11,030	35½		
1869	13,450	29½	£15,510	47s	10,250			
1870	6,600							

TABLE III.3: Relative Importance of Winter and Lammas Draves, Anstruther District 1857 - 1870.

the Lammas drave. Since the main markets were in England, hundreds of carts laden either with fresh herrings or boxes of bloaters, jammed up all the approaches to the railway station at Anstruther,<sup>1</sup> the undisputed centre for the trade, where upwards of 50% of the total catch for the district was landed.<sup>2</sup> During a good week, 3,000 to 4,000 crans were landed there, and the railway company was often unable to provide sufficient goods accommodation; extra trains were laid on,<sup>3</sup> and additional trucks were attached to passenger trains.<sup>4</sup> Carters were even reported fighting among themselves to secure the dispatch of their loads when trucks were in short supply.<sup>5</sup>

Though the total catch never matched that of the summer fishing at its peak, by the late 1850's the winter drave was firmly established as a lucrative source of income for both fishermen and curers. The annual average catch per boat between 1852 and 1870 was 61 crans though it rose as high as 100 crans in 1861 and dropped to as low as 31 crans in 1864.<sup>6</sup> But since engagements were never entered into,<sup>7</sup> prices fluctuated according to supply, and the average price could be as much as 45s. per cran in less well fished years. Thus in 1865, 10,500 crans were sold for £24,075, whereas in 1868, 18,260 crans fetched only £20,086.<sup>8</sup> The average price by the late 1850's and 1860's was 33s. 6d per cran, which meant average earnings of £100 for each boat's crew. By the 1860's this was far in excess of the earnings obtained at the Lammas fishing in the Firth of Forth, since the average catch per boat never exceeded 100 crans after 1860<sup>9</sup> at a price which averaged only 21s. per cran between 1860 and 1869.<sup>10</sup> By the latter date, indeed, the winter drave had resumed its position as the most important of the local fisheries, after an interval of only three decades. (See Table III.3) In 1871, the winter drave was to surpass the Lammas drave both in terms of value and size of catch for the first time since 1836, and the

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1. East of Fife Record Feb 14th 1863
  2. See figures printed weekly in the East of Fife Record during the winter drave.
  3. East of Fife Record Feb 21st 1868
  4. Ibid Feb 15th 1869
  5. Ibid
  6. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1854-70; AF19/12/2-4
  7. Due to the smaller scale upon which fish-buyers operated. See below p.66-67
  8. Letters and Reports Annual Reports 1865 and 1868; AF19/3/5,6
  9. Weekly Report of Fishing 1860-69; AF19/12/2-4
  10. Ibid

TABLE III.4: The East Neuk Herring Curing Industry - Average Annual  
Figures for Quinquennial Periods 1841 - 1865.

	Total barrels cured	Total curers	Average per curer	Cured by non-local curers	Non-local	Av. per non-local curers
1841-45	26,204	59	471	12,340	22	561
1846-50	46,085	55.5	829	20,318	22.5	903
1851-55	51,427	60	815	24,601	30	820
1856-60	56,127	74	742	22,146	36	615
1861-65	39,197	77.5	546	13,816	34	406
Av 1841-65	43,808	65	674.5	18,644	29	661

positions were to remain that way until 1914.

A direct result of the expansion in both the winter and the Lammas draves was that the small scale East Neuk curing industry which had existed prior to the revival of the Lammas drave in 1837<sup>1</sup> was replaced by a curing industry on a scale which compared favourably in terms of the size of individual firms, with any along the east coast of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> During the quarter century from 1841 to 1865, when the Lammas drave was at its peak, the average numbers of barrels of cured herring produced by each firm was 674.5. Indeed, of all the curers engaged during that period, 17.8% cured over 1,000 barrels annually, and only 17% cured under 100 barrels.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, these figures are somewhat misleading since they include all curers whether engaged in the winter or the Lammas drave. Curing operations were necessarily smaller during the winter drave due to the smaller catch; and after 1849 in particular, large numbers of English buyers began to arrive,<sup>4</sup> few of whom produced quantities larger than 250 barrels, and most of whom sent between 50 and 150 barrels to the English market.<sup>5</sup> The effect of this can clearly be seen in Table III.4 which shows that the increase in the number of curing firms operating in the East Neuk between 1850 and 1860 was largely the result of an increase in the number of non-local curers caused by the attendance of English buyers at the winter drave; and a direct result of this increase in the number of curing units operating in the district was a decrease of 10.5% in the average output for each firm, and of 31.9% in the average output for non-local curing firms. As a result of the attendance of these English buyers at the winter drave, the number of firms curing under 100 barrels annually rose from an average of 6.2 per annum - or 11% of the total - between 1841 and 1850, to 16.7 - or 22% of the total - between 1856 and 1865. Clearly, therefore, the increase in the

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1. See above p.36-39

2. Malcolm Gray: East Coast Herring Fishing p.202 gives the average for Fraserburgh as 1276 in 1850, but it is dangerous to rely on selected years for an average in as variable an industry as the fisheries. The average for Anstruther was 1000 in 1850. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1850; AF19/24/2

3. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1841-49, 1852-63; AF19/16/3,5. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1849-51, 1863-65; AF19/24/2,5

4. See above p.61-62

5. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1852-63; AF19/16/5. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1849-51, 1863-65; AF19/24/2,5

number of small-scale curing units between 1841 and 1865 was not due to any fragmentation of the industry, but rather to the peculiar market factors that existed at one season of the year.

Not that all the smaller curing firms were English buyers present during the winter drave; many local businessmen, principally growers, such as James Tosh of Pittenweem, Andrew Hutcheon, John Wyllie and John Law of Crail, made brief excursions into the curing trade when draves were heavy.<sup>1</sup> But the brief presence of such names on the local curing list for a year or two disguises the essential stability of the curing industry in the East Neuk during this period. Malcolm Gray has been able to show the stability of the curing industry at Fraserburgh by a breakdown of the periods for which each firm operated.<sup>2</sup> At Fraserburgh, however, there was a continuous herring fishery throughout the 19th century upon a large scale whereas the East Neuk only experienced this for a brief period in the mid-19th century, and therefore did not encourage the concentration of production into a smaller number of large firms during the course of the century, as was the case at Fraserburgh.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless a small number of firms rapidly assumed prominent roles in the East Neuk curing industry, and it was upon these firms that production was concentrated.

Since 44% of the curing firms in the East Neuk were not locally based, and since these were responsible for 42½% of the total output, it is understandable that the largest of these firms played a prominent role. James Methuen, for example, produced an average of 4157 barrels annually between 1840 and 1865, or 9.5% of the total output for the district. Production on that scale would have required a workforce of 125 people, and would account for the catches of 30 boats each season.<sup>4</sup> Close competitors, however, were the larger local firms such as Robert and John Todd who were together responsible for 8.3% of the total cure during the same period, or the Buckhaven curer, John Ireland, who produced a further 5%. Indeed the six largest producers, Methuen, the Todds, Ireland, James Davidson of Dundee, and George Welch of Pittenweem were together responsible for almost 30% of the total production between 1840 and 1865.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1852-63 AF19/3/5

2. Malcolm Gray: East Coast Herring Fishing p.203-204

3. Ibid p.202

4. Ibid Gray states that the average firm producing 500-1000 barrels required a labour force of 15-30 people.

5. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1841-49, 1852-63; AF19/16/3,5. Herring Fishery Shore Curing Book 1849-51, 1863-65; AF19/24/2,5



TABLE III.5: Comparison of Herring Exports from Anstruther District with those from Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Wick, Annual Averages for Quinquennial Periods, 1836 - 1870.

	<u>Anstruther</u>	<u>Wick</u>	<u>Fraserburgh</u>	<u>Peterhead</u>
1836-40	1,750barrels	53,062barrels	18,932barrels	19,142barrels
1841-45	3,165	89,809	26,977	29,759
1846-50	1,249	97,719	31,411	30,319
1851-55	3,657	117,176	28,186	20,405
1856-60	13,274	100,839	30,095	23,606
1861-65	8,293	99,834	36,999	41,461
1866-70	4,761	71,765	77,636	72,264

TABLE III.6: Markets for Exports of Barrels of Cured Herring from Anstruther District, Annual Averages for Quinquennial Periods, 1836 - 1870.

	<u>Ireland</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Russia</u>	<u>France/Belgium</u>	<u>Australia</u>	<u>Elsewhere</u>
1836-40	1,660	90	-	-	-	-
1841-45	937	507	41	1,629	-	64
1846-50	-	557	-	692	-	-
1851-55	709	2,888	-	60	-	-
1856-60	3,359	6,667	-	1,248	-	-
1861-65	1,652	5,281	-	1,360	-	-
1866-70	-	2,159	-	2,384	228	-

However, though the output of the curing industry increased rapidly after 1838, the export trade in the district never reached significant proportions, largely as a result of the inadequate harbour facilities.<sup>1</sup> Even when the Lammas drave was at its peak between 1856 and 1860, under 25% of all the barrels cured in the district were exported directly from the East Neuk.<sup>2</sup> Most local curers were engaged to supply large exporting concerns based in Leith,<sup>3</sup> so the greater proportion of the output was sent to Leith for export to the Continent, though occasionally the Leith merchant companies did export some herrings direct from the East Neuk. The firm of Beda Eschricht, for example, exported 6786 barrels from Anstruther in 1860, whilst that of Elsworth and Hoppner exported 15,600 barrels between 1862 and 1869. James Methuen, too, exported a part of his East Neuk output directly from the district; but the 15,000 barrels exported by him between 1855 and 1869 represented only a fraction of his total production in the district.<sup>4</sup>

Of the local curers only Robert and John Todd, George Welch and George Sharp exported significant shipments abroad. Most curers, though they might make an occasional venture into the export trade, were content to leave this most speculative part of the curing industry in the hands of the large merchant companies whom they supplied. The major market was Germany, principally the ports of Stettin and Harburg; but Ireland, too, was an important market though it was normally served by Irish curers such as Isaac Arnott and Robert Hendry, both of Belfast, who visited the East Neuk each summer to buy and cure herrings for shipment to Dublin, Belfast, Sligo and Newry.<sup>5</sup> French buyers, too, were present in large numbers, particularly in the 1840's; but like the Irish curers, the French preferred to cure their own herrings on board ship, anchoring off the East Neuk and only purchasing cured herrings in order to complete their own cargoes. Paradoxically, by the time the Union Harbour at

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1. See below p. 81-82
  2. Herring Fishery Shore Curing and Exportation Book 1818-59; AF19/26/1. Herring Branding and Exportation Book 1860; AF19/19/1
  3. See above p. 54
  4. For details of individual exporters see Herring Fishery Shore Curing and Exportation Books 1818-59; AF19/26/1 and Herring Branding and Exportation Books 1860-70; AF19/19/1
  5. Herring Fishery Shore Curing and Exportation Books 1818-59; AF19/26/1 and Herring Branding and Exportation Books 1860-70; AF19/19/1.

Anstruther was completed,<sup>1</sup> the summer herring fishing in the Forth was already in decline, so that improved harbour facilities were available too late to allow any significant export trade to develop from the district. Accordingly, Anstruther district continued to play a subsidiary role to Wick, Peterhead and Fraserburgh in the international fish trade.

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Increased concentration by fishermen upon the flourishing herring draves inevitably led to a decline in the relative importance of the line-fishing. More surprising, however, was the fact that not only did the relative importance of the great line-fishing for cod decrease, but also the overall size of the catch. This is all the more surprising when one considers that three factors were operating after 1838 which should have ensured the growth of the deep sea fishing. Firstly, the increased size of the East Neuk fishing fleet which expanded from 140 boats and 569 fishermen in 1838 to 487 boats and 2019 fishermen by 1865 in the district between St. Andrews and Elie;<sup>2</sup> secondly, the expansion of the potential market for fresh cod and ling brought about by the extension of the railway system into East Fife after 1854;<sup>3</sup> and thirdly, the greater suitability of the larger, decked boats of the 1860's for pursuing the deep-sea fishing.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly the basic structure of the great-line fishing did undergo some profound changes under the influence of these factors. In the early 1840's the cod fishing remained much the same as it had been since the late 18th century; providing fresh fish for the Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Fife markets,<sup>5</sup> and drying and pickling cod primarily for the London, Liverpool and Glasgow markets. But the extension of the railway opened up the fresh fish markets of urban England, and in the wake of the railway, representatives of most major English fish merchants arrived in the East Neuk during the 1850's.<sup>6</sup> Primarily such buyers arrived to dispatch fresh or lightly salted herrings to the English

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1. See below p.81-82

2. Herring Curing and Branding Books 1838; AF19/21/1. Anstruther District Private Herring Book 1865; AF19/15/1. (hereafter Private Herring Book).

3. A. A. Maclean: North British Album (London 1975) p.7

4. East of Fife Record Dec 6th 1862; April 4th 1863; July 13th 1866; Oct 4th 1867.

5. Letters and Reports March 6th 1844; AF19/3/3 and Northern Warder Jan 1st 1846.

6. Herring Coast Fishery Book 1849-63; AF19/16/3,5.

market during the winter drave, but it became their practice to remain in the East Neuk for a month or so after the close of the herring fishing to provide London and other English urban centres with fresh cod at the latter end of Lent.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of their presence upon the winter drave had been to increase the price of winter herrings from between 11s. and 16s. in the late 1830's<sup>2</sup> to an average of 35s. by 1861.<sup>3</sup> The effect upon the cod fishery was twofold. Firstly it broke the monopoly formerly enjoyed by local fishcurers and fishmerchants over the cod trade;<sup>4</sup> and secondly, by increasing the competition for catches, led to an increase in the price of cod from that of 7s. to 8s. 6d per score, at which it had remained stable throughout the 1830's and 1840's,<sup>5</sup> to 16s. 8d a score by 1853,<sup>6</sup> 25s. a score by 1857,<sup>7</sup> and 30s. a score by 1865.<sup>8</sup> In view of this beneficial effect of the railways upon the price of fresh fish, it is not surprising that when it was proposed to extend the East of Fife Railway from its terminus at Killoonquhar<sup>9</sup> to Anstruther in 1860, the issue was quickly over-subscribed with curers, fishermen and even female gutters and packers among those said to have contributed.<sup>10</sup> The East of Fife Record exhorted local fishermen to take up stock 'since to no class of men would it be more advantageous, than to the fishermen of Cellardyke and other towns along the coast'.<sup>11</sup> The fishing village of Cellardyke contributed £800 towards the necessary capital of £11,000 which was considered 'highly creditable both to the heads and purses of the fishermen'.<sup>12</sup>

But if the extension of the railway and the arrival of the English buyers served to increase the price of fresh fish, it was at the same time largely responsible for the decline of the cod and ling curing industry in the East Neuk. Previous to 1838, the East Neuk had been the premier cod curing centre in Scotland;<sup>13</sup> James Methuen, the

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1. East of Fife Record March 26th 1889.
  2. Letters and Reports Feb 6th 1838; AF19/3/3. See above p.
  3. Ibid Jan 8th 1861; AF19/3/4.
  4. East of Fife Record March 26th 1869
  5. Ibid; Letters and Reports Nov 20th 1832; AF19/3/2
  6. Fife Herald Nov 3rd 1853
  7. Letters and Reports Oct 12th 1857; AF19/3/4
  8. Ibid Nov 2nd 1865; AF19/3/5
  9. 2 miles west of Elie. Fish were carried there by cart at 5s. per load. East of Fife Record Aug 8th 1863
  10. Fife Herald Nov 29th 1860
  11. East of Fife Record Oct 13th 1860
  12. Ibid Nov 17th 1860
  13. See above p.41-43.

Leith curer, had described Cellardyke as 'the cod emporium of Scotland'.<sup>1</sup> But though the district fishing fleet expanded rapidly under the stimulus of a succession of successful Lammas draves after 1838, there was no corresponding expansion in the number of boats engaged in the deep-sea fishing for cod. Whilst the Cellardyke fleet expanded by 175% from 62 vessels in 1838<sup>2</sup> to 171 vessels in 1857,<sup>3</sup> the deep-sea fishing fleet in 1857 remained the same as it had been in 1829, a mere 30 boats.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the local Fishery Officer did not consider the catch very high for the number of boats engaged.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the annual average catch declined from 22,000 cwts for the period 1843-45, to only 15,100 cwts for the period 1863-65.<sup>6</sup>

This decline was partly due to the increased difficulty in obtaining catches; boats were forced to proceed further to sea and by 1865 were ranging 80 or 90 miles to sea to fish for cod.<sup>7</sup> In this respect the introduction of partially decked boats in the late 1850's,<sup>8</sup> and of decked boats after 1862,<sup>9</sup> proved a great asset, since the hazards involved in proceeding to sea for such distances in open boats were as considerable as the discomforts. But the longer distances involved also meant that fewer trips to sea were possible during the course of the week, so that by 1865, where three or even four trips to the fishing grounds had been possible in the early 19th century, only two were made.<sup>10</sup> A second factor contributing towards declining catches was the contraction of the cod fishing seasons during the 1850's and 1860's; the success of both the Lammas and winter draves meant that by the 1850's cod fishing was confined to a two month period from the end of September to early December, and to a six week period from mid-April to early June. The herring had replaced the cod as the principal source of prosperity for the East Neuk ports, and few fishermen were so foolhardy as to fish for cod when shoals of

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1. George Gourlay: Fisher Life (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.62
  2. Herring Curing and Branding Book 1838; AF19/15/2
  3. Private Herring Book 1857; AF19/15/3
  4. Letters and Reports June 1st 1857; AF19/3/4
  5. Ibid Dec 21st 1854; AF19/3/4
  6. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1843-1865. Calculations based upon a figure of 20 cod equalling 2½cwt.
  7. East of Fife Record Nov 24th 1865
  8. Fife Herald May 28th 1857
  9. East of Fife Record Dec 6th 1862; Oct 4th 1867.
  10. By the end of the season, boats could be absent for almost a week, stretching as far away as the sea fifty miles north west of Aberdeen. East of Fife Record March 26th 1869.

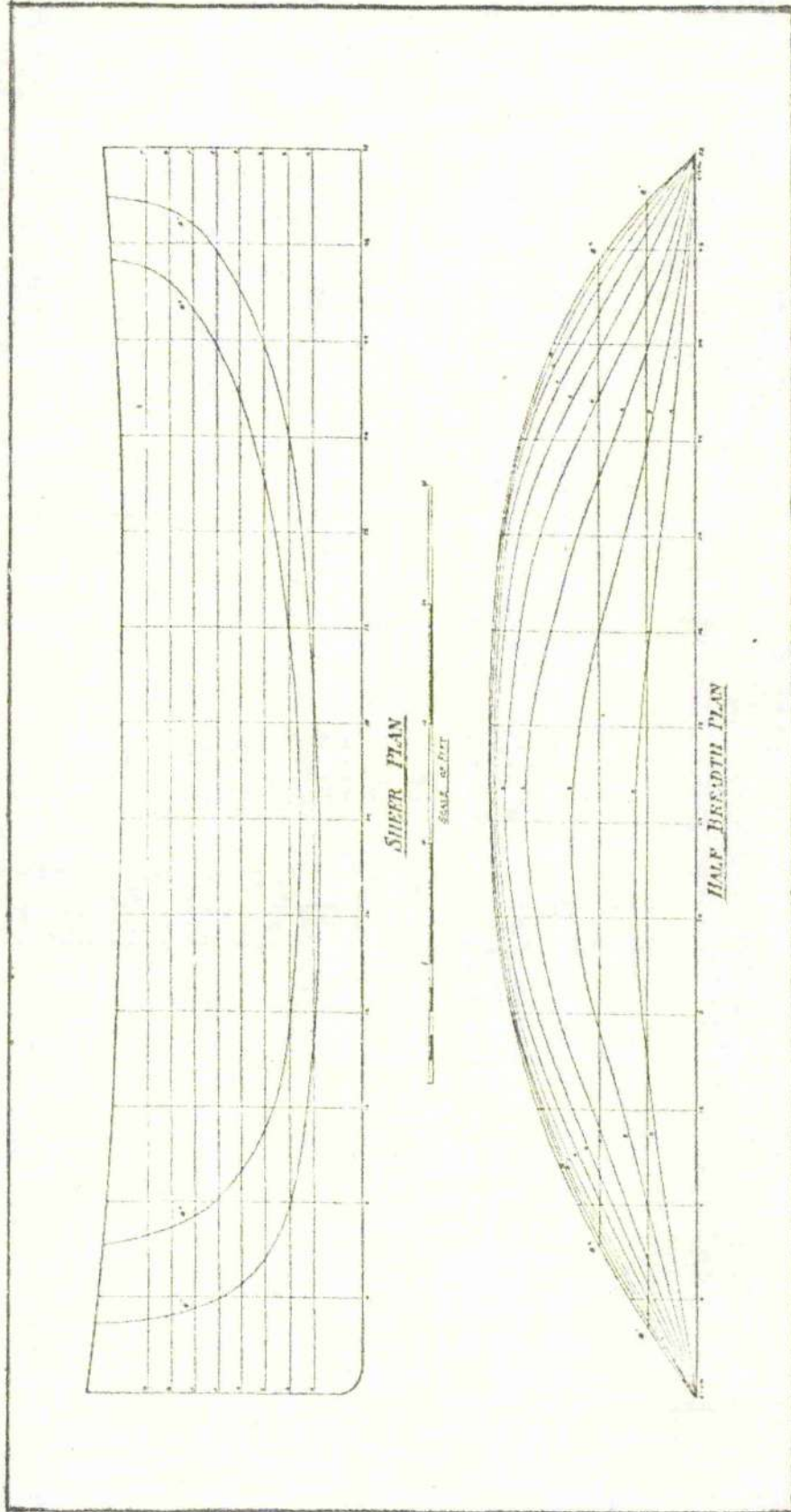


Fig. III.3:  
ST. MONANCE 'FIFIE' c1860  
(built by J. N. Miller & Sons, St. Monance, representing the open Fifie at the peak of its development)

herrings were present in the Firth.

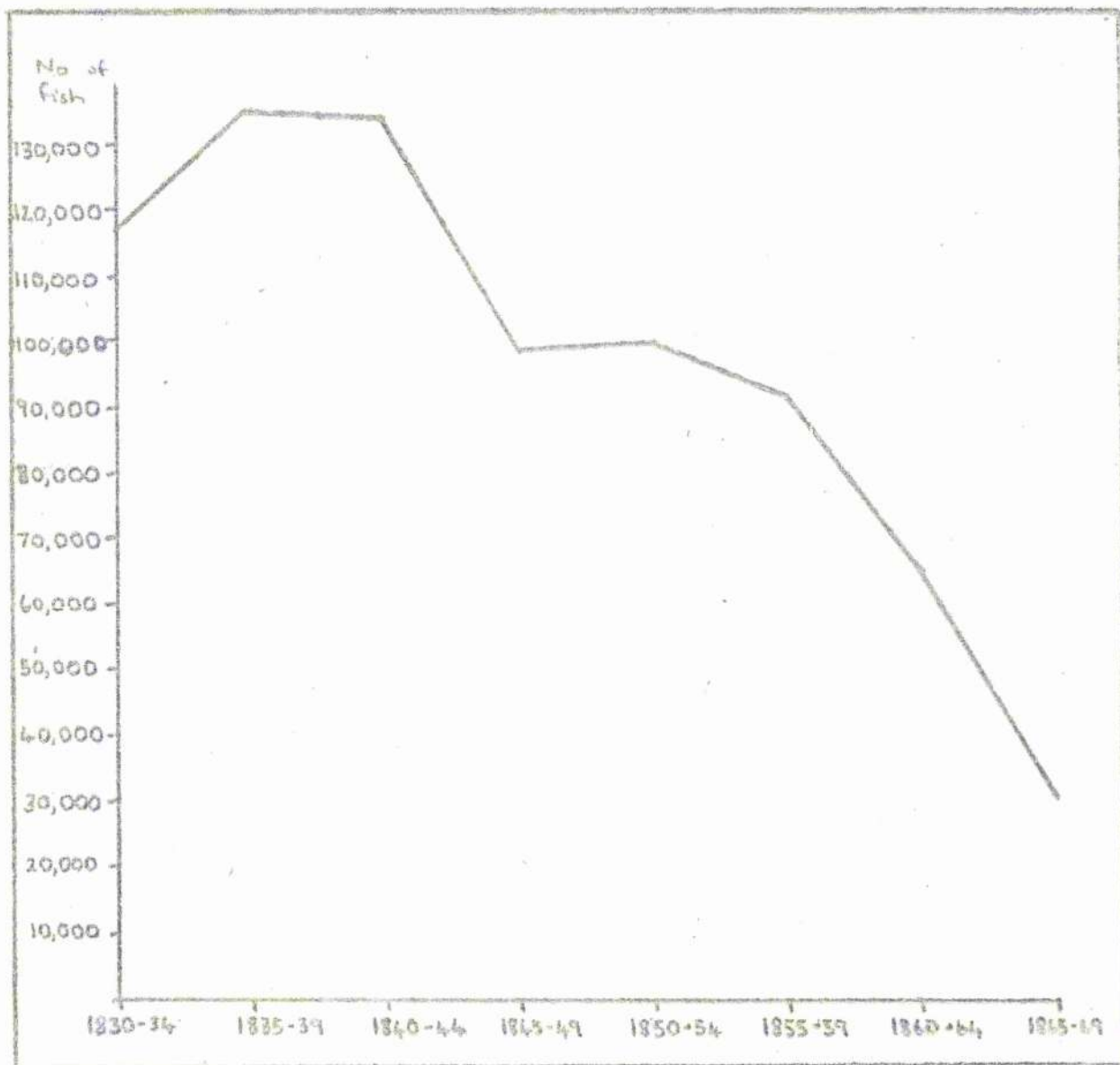
Thus with overall catches declining throughout the 1850's and 1860's, but with the demand for fresh cod increasing with the appearance of English buyers, it was the cod curing industry which suffered a severe depression, declining by 79% between periods 1835-39 and 1865-69.<sup>1</sup> Throughout this same period, the amount of cod sold fresh remained relatively stable, averaging from 8,500 to 10,000 cwts annually;<sup>2</sup> but between 1855-59 and 1865-69, exports to England rose from an average of 690 cwts annually - or 9% of the total of cod sold fresh<sup>3</sup> - to 3096 cwts - 36% of the total.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, fishermen seemed to pursue the great-line fishing more vigorously when the herring fishing was a failure; conversely during the peak draves of the 1850's, even sales of fresh cod dropped as low as 6,000 cwts per annum.<sup>5</sup>

In other parts of Scotland, however, the cod curing industry expanded during this period from an average production of 330,711 cwts annually in the period 1835-39, to 453,833 cwts annually by the period 1865-69,<sup>6</sup> which proves that a successful herring fishing did not necessarily involve a decline in catches of cod. However, the curing of cod was by the 1850's centred upon the more northerly ports, remote from the fresh fish markets, so that cod prices were lower. Accordingly by 1855, Buckie and Peterhead had replaced Anstruther as the most important cod pickling centres in Scotland.<sup>7</sup>

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The decline in the popularity of the great-line fishing during the 1850's and 1860's was partly balanced by the increasing popularity of other forms of line fishing. Haddock fishing in particular enjoyed increasing attention after 1835, both to supply the fresh fish market, and to be cured as 'Findon Haddocks'. The greater attraction of haddock fishing was that it did not entail the long absences at sea which the deep-sea fishing increasingly demanded. Moreover, supplies of bait were more readily obtainable. Cod fishing was pursued with

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1. Anstruther District Cod and Ling Fishery Account Book 1835-69;  
AF19/3/1-3.
  2. Letters and Reports 1840-70; AF19/3/3-6
  3. Anstruther District Abstract Books 1857-59; AF19/33/1
  4. Anstruther District Account Books 1865-69; AF19/10/2,3
  5. Letters and Reports Annual Reports 1840-1870; AF19/3/3-6
  6. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1835-70
  7. Ibid



Graph III.1: Anstruther District Cod Catches, annual average for quinquennial periods 1830-1869.

Note. Twenty cod can be equated with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  owt.



the use of herring bait, which was often expensive and difficult to obtain after the close of the draves, so that crews fishing for cod were often forced to take small-lines to sea with them to fish for bait for the great-lines.<sup>1</sup> For haddock fishing, on the other hand, supplies of mussel bait could be easily obtained from either the Rivers Eden or Tay.

Some older men engaged in the haddock fishing throughout the year, but most fishermen only took part between the herring draves. Boats proceeded to sea daily when the weather was fine, normally landing four or sometimes five catches in a week. Before 1868, fish were sold by the hundred,<sup>2</sup> but after that date catches were sold by the hundredweight.<sup>3</sup> Fish were divided into categories on the basis of size, with better prices for the larger fish.<sup>4</sup> Catches ranged from 300 to 1200 fish daily,<sup>5</sup> and from 1000 to 4000 during a week.<sup>6</sup> Prices, unlike those of cod, remained relatively stable throughout the 1850's and 1860's, but within a season they could range from 12s. per hundred,<sup>7</sup> to as low as 4s. when takes were large.<sup>8</sup> Earnings and catches were never spectacular, but were reliable, and fishermen could normally expect to earn about £2 a week;<sup>9</sup> cod-fishermen by comparison, normally averaged only 30s. to 35s. a week,<sup>10</sup> though spectacular catches were possible bringing earnings of as much as £5 a week.<sup>11</sup> By 1858, haddock fishing had surpassed cod fishing in importance, with 10,000 barrels of Findon haddocks being produced, and 15,000 cwts sold fresh,<sup>12</sup> compared with a total cod catch of 16,100 cwts for that year.<sup>13</sup>

However catches of white fish were not merely confined to cod, ling and haddock. During the 1850's, an expanding market was to be found for flat-fish - plaice, flounders, skate and turbot.<sup>14</sup> St. Andrews fishermen were particularly active in this branch of the fishing, with their entire fleet of line-fishing boats engaged

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1. East of Fife Record March 26th 1869
  2. A hundred was considered to be 11 dozen fish.
  3. Letters and Reports Oct 12th 1868; AF19/3/6
  4. Ibid May 21st 1855; AF19/3/4
  5. Ibid May 21st 1862; AF19/3/5
  6. Ibid May 21st 1855; AF19/3/4
  7. Ibid
  8. Ibid June 21st 1865; AF19/3/5
  9. Ibid Dec 1st 1857; AF19/3/4
  10. Ibid July 11th 1857; AF19/3/4
  11. Fife Herald May 28th 1857; the average price that season was 25s. per score.
  12. Letters and Reports March 4th 1859; AF19/3/4
  13. Report of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1858; equating twenty cod with 2½cwt
  14. East of Fife Record March 26th 1869

throughout the early summer in flounder fishing in St. Andrews Bay, the fish selling at 2s. to 2s. 3d per hundred.<sup>1</sup> But St. Monance crews were the greatest exponents of this branch of the fishing which they pursued by that method known as beam trawling, which was introduced into the East Neuk after 1847.<sup>2</sup> The beam trawl comprised a wooden beam 20 to 30 feet long and five inches thick, to which was attached a net kept open by this beam. The beam was kept off the ground at each end of the net by means of a circular iron support about three feet high, and therefore did not touch the ground. However the rope to which the beam was attached in order for the boat to drag it along - the 'sole rope' - dragged along the ground behind the beam, and fishermen hostile to this new method of fishing were quick to claim that this rope disturbed and injured herring spawn as it was dragged along.<sup>3</sup>

From its very introduction trawling was unpopular, and campaigns were launched to procure legislation to forbid the use of the beam trawler. Line-fishermen were perhaps justifiably opposed to the trawl, since when being drawn through the water, it often interfered with their lines;<sup>4</sup> but their hostility was as nothing compared to that of the herring fishermen. Trawling was castigated as a 'destructive and ruinous practice',<sup>5</sup> and the trawl net as 'that infernal engine of wholesale destruction to fishing prosperity'.<sup>6</sup> Local fishermen were convinced that the trawl dragged up vast quantities of herring spawn which, though thrown back into the sea, had been loosened and could thus get into a tidal way and be destroyed for future breeding.<sup>7</sup> A favourite trawling spot was the Traith or Fluke Hole,<sup>8</sup> which was also a productive herring fishing ground and spawning place, and trawling at this spot was particularly unpopular with local fishermen. Indeed the failure of the drave in the summer of 1852 was widely attributed to the practice of trawling, which was likened to a farmer continuously harrowing his field after he had planted the seed.<sup>9</sup> By trawling at the Traith, a local fisherman

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1. St. Andrews Gazette July 18th 1862
  2. Letters and Reports Jan 31st 1862; AF19/3/5
  3. East of Fife Record March 21st 1863
  4. St. Andrews Gazette Oct 10th 1862
  5. Fife Herald April 22nd 1852
  6. Ibid Oct 6th 1859
  7. East of Fife Record March 21st 1863
  8. 'Flukes' were local terminology for flounders.
  9. Fife Herald Sept 16th 1852

opined that as much spawn was destroyed 'as would produce ten times more herrings than were caught in the Firth last season',<sup>1</sup> after the poor drave of 1857.

But beam trawling was understandingly popular since it involved little expense due to the fact that no bait was required. Moreover catches could reach as much as £16 to £23 in one haul.<sup>2</sup> Therefore it steadily increased in popularity, particularly in St. Monance, which by 1862 had as many as 26 boats engaged in the trawling, each with a crew of six men.<sup>3</sup> Despite the mounting pressure of local opinion against the practice, Government Commissions of Inquiry in 1856, 1860 and 1863 all refused to prohibit the use of the beam trawl, although in 1862 its use was prohibited in the Traith.<sup>4</sup> As the Commission of 1860 pointed out, local fishermen were responsible for the destruction of far more spawn than the beam trawl by fishing for herrings full of spawn, which were particularly prized, when cured, on the Continental market.<sup>5</sup> The Commission of 1863 further pointed out that though trawling had been practised since 1850, the herring fishery still prospered, and had enjoyed its most successful seasons since the introduction of trawling.<sup>6</sup> The dispute was to continue locally until the 1880's,<sup>7</sup> with particularly vehement animosity felt between Pittenweem line fishermen and their trawling neighbours from St. Monance.<sup>8</sup> The inexpensiveness of trawling guaranteed its continuance, however. By 1867 a steam trawler was fishing in the Firth,<sup>9</sup> and by 1870 even St. Andrews fishermen, formerly among the most hostile opponents of the pursuit, were adopting the beam trawl for use in St. Andrews Bay.<sup>10</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Although the line-fishing did not expand as rapidly as the herring fisheries, the success of the latter alone ensured that this was a period of great prosperity in the East Neuk fishing ports. Among the fishermen this prosperity was most clearly to be seen by the continued investment of their earnings in further additions to their stocks of

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1. East of Fife Record March 13th 1858
  2. Fife Herald Oct 6th 1859; average wages were 30s. per week by 1869, East of Fife Record Sept 17th 1869
  3. Letters and Reports Jan 31st 1862; AF19/3/5
  4. East of Fife Record Feb 22nd 1862
  5. Ibid April 28th 1860
  6. East of Fife Record March 21st 1863
  7. Ibid Jan 12th 1883
  8. Ibid March 22nd 1862
  9. Ibid Dec 27th 1867
  10. St. Andrews Gazette April 30th 1870

TABLE III.7: Value and Extent of Anstruther District Fishing Fleet and Equipment.

	No of boats	Tonnage	Value	Sq. yards of netting	Value	Yards of Lines	Value
1845	395	4,740	£23,600	4,312,000	£20,460	588,000	£840
1850	530	5,300	£24,670	6,180,000	£24,120	967,680	£2,419
1855	519	5,873	£21,599	6,894,384	£31,893	6,022,528	£8,943
1860	717	7,834	£26,017	9,878,860	£43,308	6,472,410	£11,070
1865	734	8,802	£29,315	15,673,000	£61,673	6,765,400	£10,615
1870	731	7,086	£27,075	14,294,000	£50,938	7,600,160	£12,637

TABLE III.8: Inadequacy of East Neuk Harbours 1856

	Springs		Neaps	
	High-water	Half-Tide	High-water	Half-Tide
St. Andrews	13	4	8	3
Crail	14	4	8	3½
Cellardyke	17	7	12	6½
Anstruther	14½	4½	9	3½
Pittenweem	15	5	9	3½
St. Monance	16	6	10	5
Elie	17	7	12	6½

From Letters and Reports Oct 27th 1856; AF19/3/4

capital equipment -- boats, nets and lines. This investment was closely related to the success or failure of the drave, and since the Lamma drave was generally speaking successful between 1845 and 1865, there was a marked rise in the value and extent of the fleet and its fishing equipment. The number of boats increased in number by 86%, and in value by 24%;<sup>1</sup> the lines employed increased in extent by 1033% and in value by 1163%; and the netting used increased by 263% in extent, and by 200% in value.

The true significance of these figures, however, lies in more than merely the size of the various increases; on this basis the line-fishing would have been expanding at almost five times the rate of the herring fishery in the period 1845 to 1865, at a time when the herring fishing was booming, and the cod and ling fishery was in decline.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the cod and ling fishing fleet remained relatively static throughout this period; In Callardyke, the largest of the East Neuk ports, the deep-sea fleet of 1857 was no larger than that of 1829.<sup>3</sup> The value of lines expanded rapidly between 1845 and 1855, however, and this can be attributed to a number of reasons. Firstly was the growing trend of carrying more and longer lines to sea as fewer trips to the fishing ground became possible due to the increasing distance of the latter from the shore; secondly, the increasing popularity of haddock fishing led to an increase in the content and value of the smaller hand-lines; and thirdly, the very poor Lamma fishings of 1851 and 1852 encouraged fishermen, temporarily, to place less reliance on the draves and invest in lines for cod and haddock fishing.

The area of netting, indeed, dropped to only 4,898,620 square yards in 1854, from 6,180,000 in 1850. But conversely, the successful drave of 1860 led to an increase in the value of nets owned by East Neuk fishermen of 25%, from £43,308 to £54,337 in 1861, as fishermen invested their rewards in additional equipment; significantly the value of lines dropped by 9% during the course of the same year.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Boats tended to devalue very quickly, and though new boats were acquired, old boats as much as 30 years old were kept, and launched during the Lamma drave. East of Fife Record Sept 29th 1871, records a 30 years old boat 30 foot in length being offered for sale at 5s.
  2. See above p. 65, 71-73
  3. See above p. 72
  4. Anstruther District Abstract Book 1861; AF19/33/1

During the decade 1855 to 1865, with the Lammas drave still flourishing, and the winter drave yearly growing in importance and value, the value of netting almost doubled, whilst in area it more than doubled; by comparison the value of lines increased by only 20%, and their extent by only 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. It was the herring fishery which was the source of the fisherman's prosperity, and it was in this branch of the fishing that his savings were invested. It was after a successful drave that new boats were commissioned too; twenty-five were built locally in the nine months after the heavy summer fishing of 1861,<sup>1</sup> and it was only after the decline of the Lammas drave that the district fleet began to slowly decrease in numbers.<sup>2</sup>

A measure of the expansion of the fisheries was the total inadequacy of the East Neuk harbours by 1850. Cellardyke harbour had been a source of complaint since 1828;<sup>3</sup> by 1856 it could conveniently accommodate only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Cellardyke fishing fleet.<sup>4</sup> A similar state of affairs existed at St. Monance where many boats were forced to have recourse to Elie due to the lack of accommodation in their own harbour.<sup>5</sup> An additional problem was the shortage of deep-water harbours in the area; although the large first class herring boats drew 4 feet of water,<sup>6</sup> Pattenweem, Crail, St. Andrews and Anstruther harbours all had under that depth of water at certain states of the tide. (See Table III.8). Throughout the 1840's movements had been started to improve the local harbour accommodation,<sup>7</sup> and by 1856, Cellardyke fishermen had started a fund, to which all contributed on a regular basis, in order to construct a deep-water harbour at Craignoon.<sup>8</sup>

However, the scheme was forestalled by the Government's realization of the necessity to build a harbour of asylum on the north shore of the Firth - a recognition of the importance of the East Neuk fisheries. The site chosen was Anstruther Easter, and a Parliamentary Bill to empower the construction of the Union Harbour at Anstruther was passed on July 23rd 1860.<sup>9</sup> An original grant of £35,000 was given, £23,000 of which

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1. Fife Herald July 25th 1861
  2. Anstruther District Account Books 1870-1880; AF19/10/3-4
  3. Letters and Reports Feb 9th 1828; AF19/3/2
  4. Ibid Dec 31st 1856; AF19/3/4
  5. East of Fife Record Feb 28th 1879
  6. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1892 p.84
  7. Fife Journal Jan 9th 1840; Feb 27th 1842
  8. East of Fife Record Oct 18th 1856
  9. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Anstruther and Cupar 1888) p.118

was in the form of a loan to be repaid out of dues chargeable on all fish landed at the harbour. The entire scheme was never a fortunate one; the dues were a constant source of dispute between fishermen and curers throughout the century,<sup>1</sup> whilst the design of the new harbour itself was ill-conceived and widely criticised at the time.<sup>2</sup> The work commenced in 1866, and by 1871 had cost £51,000, and been the subject of a Parliamentary debate.<sup>3</sup> The works were not completed until 1877,<sup>4</sup> and though giving a depth of water of 9 feet at half tide during springs,<sup>5</sup> criticisms of the expensive harbour continued to mount in the ensuing decades.<sup>6</sup> More fortunate were the extensions undertaken at St. Monance, where the enterprising local fishermen raised a loan of £11,000 from the National Bank in 1863 to finance improvements,<sup>7</sup> each fisherman contributing 6d per week from his earnings. The bond was finally discharged in 1879, by which date an additional £8,577 in interest had been paid.<sup>8</sup>

Such thrifty schemes, and the total capital value represented by the fishing boats and fishing equipment, refute the idea that fishermen were largely dissolute drunkards.<sup>9</sup> Nor was prosperity confined to fishermen; the more successful local curers rose to positions of wealth and importance. In Anstruther, the Todd family rose in three generations, from being coopers, to the control of a large curing firm with representatives throughout Fife, and the major east coast fishing stations as far south as Yarmouth.<sup>10</sup> John Todd was Provost of Anstruther from 1864 until his death in 1875,<sup>11</sup> and was wealthy enough to spend £1,200 on a new villa in 1863.<sup>12</sup> Other curers, too, were prominent in local politics; George Darsie was a bailie of Anstruther,<sup>13</sup> and J. T. Darsie was Provost of the same burgh.<sup>14</sup> In 1851, indeed, nine curers were members of Anstruther Town Council.<sup>15</sup> In Pittenweem,

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1. East of Fife Record April 6th-July 20th 1861; March 29th 1901.
  2. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Anstruther and Cupar 1888) p.118
  3. East of Fife Record Oct 18th 1906
  4. Angus Graham: Harbours p.214
  5. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Anstruther and Cupar 1888) p.118
  6. East of Fife Record Dec 4th 1874; July 25th 1890
  7. Ibid Feb 28th 1879
  8. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1885 p.xxvi
  9. See below p. 210-212
  10. East of Fife Record Feb 19th 1875
  11. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Anstruther and Cupar 1888) p.95
  12. East of Fife Record April 25th 1863
  13. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Anstruther and Cupar 1888) p.88
  14. Ibid p.89
  15. Pittenweem Register March 8th 1851

TABLE III.9: Expansion of the Fishing Burghs in the East Neuk  
1841-1871.

	1841		1871		% increase	
	pop.	inhabited houses	pop.	inhabited houses	pop.	inhabited houses
Cellardyke	1,582	196	2,568	318	62.3	62
St. Monance	1,150	163	1,761	221	53.1	35.6
Pittenweem	1,329	236	1,776	282	33.6	11
Anstruther	1,434	264	1,653	272	15.3	3
Crail	1,091	261	1,126	254	2.6	-2.6
St. Andrews	4,441	565	6,320	925	42.3	63.7
Elie	1,453	327	1,070	263	-26.3	-19.5
Earlsferry)						
Scotland	2,620,184		3,360,018		28.2	

Figures from Official Census Reports 1841 and 1871. Those for St. Andrews and Crail represent the population of the burgh, and not the parish.

TABLE III.10: The Importance of the Fishing Industry in the Various  
East Neuk Burghs 1864.

	Boats	Fishermen and boys	Coopers	Gutters	Labourers	Curers
Anstruther)	197	1,013	69	880	308	45
Cellardyke)						
St. Monance						
Pittenweem						
St. Andrews						
Crail						
Elie						



the Welch family played a similar role throughout the 19th century with scarcely a year passing after 1840 without at least one member of the family serving on the Town Council.

Under the influence of the fishing industry, prosperity and growth came to each of the major fishing ports between 1841 and 1871. Cellardyke, St. Monance and Pittenweem all increased in population at a higher rate than the national average. Crail, whose optimistic hopes of the late 1830's were never fulfilled, and without the advantage of a railway connection, remained relatively static. Elie, where the harbour was filled with pleasure craft rather than fishing boats in the summer, declined by over 26%. Nor was the expansion solely confined to population; housing, too, expanded - though by no means rapidly enough to conveniently accommodate the growing population. In Anstruther feu rates had reached £16 an acre by 1860, but working men's houses were still being built.<sup>1</sup> In Cellardyke by the late 1860's, 'the number of new houses built within the last few years would accommodate at least 50 families and still there is a great scarcity and cry for more'.<sup>2</sup> In St. Monance, 'many of its hovels have been transformed into handsome houses, the thatched roofs have disappeared amidst the substantial substitutes of slate or tile, and the one-storeyed cot has been exalted into the two or three storeyed dwelling'.<sup>3</sup> In Pittenweem, the prosperity was such that a civic debt of £1,500 was liquidated between 1835 and 1855, as shore dues and petty customs rose in value from £38 to £237 annually;<sup>4</sup> in Anstruther during the same period, dues and customs increased from £50 to £356.<sup>5</sup>

It was Anstruther which was the acknowledged centre for the fishing. Though its population increased by only 15%, this was a reflection of the fact that almost the entire fishing population who manned the fleet which sailed from Anstruther harbour, lived in the neighbouring village of Cellardyke.<sup>6</sup> But it was at Anstruther that the Union Harbour was constructed, it was from Anstruther that the

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1. Fife Herald Dec 20th 1860
  2. East of Fife Record June 4th 1869
  3. St. Andrews Gazette Feb 14th 1863
  4. Fife Herald Oct 25th 1855
  5. Ibid Nov 1st 1855
  6. There were only 10 fishermen in Anstruther in 1871. Enumerator's Schedule, Official Census 1871; CEN1871/402,403.

largest fleet sailed, and it was to Anstruther that the majority of stranger crews and curers went for the fishing. It was the centre for the Fishery District, and had a customs house; with the contiguous village of Cellardyke it shared by 1861, twenty resident curers, four oilcloth manufacturers, two cod-liver oil manufacturers, three sail-makers, four boatbuilders, three Banks, two Savings Banks and nine agencies for insurance companies.<sup>1</sup> It also possessed connections by steamer, rail and coach with Edinburgh and all parts of Fife. The figures in Table.III.10 clearly show its dominance as a fishing centre over its neighbours. But Anstruther owed its development to the Lamma drave, and its failure after 1865 created a crisis for both the fishermen and the whole economy of Anstruther and the East Neuk.

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1. Westwood's Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross (Cupar 1862)

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CHAPTER IV.

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IV

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE EAST NEUK COASTAL  
BURGHs: ST. ANDREWS AND ELIE 1785-1870.

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Though the booming fishing industry brought renewed prosperity to the East Neuk in the first half of the 19th century, the bustling curing stances and boat-filled harbours were largely scenes confined to Anstruther-Cellardyke, Pittenweem and St. Monance.<sup>1</sup> Though Crail might occasionally enjoy a busy week or two when herrings set in at the Auld Haiks, the other burghs played only a peripheral role in the fishing industry. Elie, Earlsferry and St. Andrews, indeed, had never been accustomed to depend upon the fisheries for prosperity and the fishing communities in these burghs comprised only a small proportion of the total population. (See Table IV.1). The fishing communities in both Elie and St. Andrews had been artificially created by local worthies merely to ensure a regular supply of fresh fish in the two burghs;<sup>2</sup> but no attempt was made either by individuals or civic bodies to stimulate the fishing industry in Elie, Earlsferry, St. Andrews, or even Crail with all its traditional importance in the Forth fishing industry. Minor improvements were continually made to the harbours of St. Andrews and Crail, often in response to the petitions of local fishermen, but such expenditure was too insignificant to do any more than cover the most essential repairs without improving the safety or increasing the accommodation of the harbours.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, while the fisheries came to dominate the economies of Anstruther-Cellardyke, Pittenweem and St. Monance in the other burghs, their significance was to remain considerably less. Thus Elie, whose fishing population had been eight in 1790,<sup>4</sup> had only 14 fishermen in 1838, 15 in 1848<sup>5</sup> and 24 in 1858.<sup>6</sup> St. Andrews, with only 4 yawls

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1. See above p. 37

2. Cathcart Dempster in St. Andrews and Sir John Anstruther in Elie, see George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1888) p.57; Rev. William Pairman: O.S.A. vol. XVII p.539

3. Crail Town Council Minutes Oct 1835-July 1836; March 26th 1840; July 13th 1840; April 13th 1841; and St. Andrews Town Council Minutes April 4th 1838; May 4th 1839; Dec 9th 1845; Aug 8th 1853; Sept 13th 1856; July 24th 1862.

4. Rev. William Pairman: O.S.A. vol. XVII p.539

5. Curing and Branding Books 1838 and 1848; AF19/21/1,5

6. Private Herring Book 1858; AF19/15/2

and about a dozen fishermen in 1803,<sup>1</sup> had a fishing population of 30 in 1838, 65 in 1848<sup>2</sup> and 90 in 1858.<sup>3</sup> The fishing population of Crail which was between 45 and 50 in 1791,<sup>4</sup> had declined to only 25 in 1838,<sup>5</sup> and only revived modestly during the record catches of the 1840's and 1850's to a total of 40 in 1848,<sup>6</sup> and 68 in 1858.<sup>7</sup> However the true significance of these figures can best be seen when taken in terms of a proportion of the male population of the various burghs, which can be calculated from the census returns for the years 1841 to 1871, and the returns made by the District Fishery Officer giving the number of fishermen in each burgh in those years.<sup>8</sup> Apart from any trends towards an increase or a decrease, the most obvious fact which these figures reveal, is the comparative importance of fishing in the various burghs. (See Table IV.1). Even in peak years, fishing as an occupation, whether full-time or part-time,<sup>9</sup> never approached the significance in Elie, Crail or St. Andrews, that it did in St. Monance, Pittenweem, Cellardyke and Anstruther; rather it remained on a level more comparable to that of the agricultural parish of Kingsbarns.

Crail, indeed, already had a pronounced agricultural character when James Hall visited it in 1807. Though the old fishing tradition still lingered on - as it was to throughout the 19th century - he wrote that,

'the great support of the town now is, not the sea but the land, which is extended on every side where there is land, a great way in level and arable plains, all in a tolerable state of cultivation, still improving. Besides the parts occupied

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1. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1888) p.63
  2. Curing and Branding Books 1838 and 1848; AF19/21/1,5
  3. Private Herring Book 1858; AF19/15/2
  4. Rev. Andrew Bell: O.S.A. vol. IX p.448
  5. Curing and Branding Book 1838; AF19/21/1
  6. Ibid 1848; AF19/15/5
  7. Private Herring Book 1858; AF19/21/2
  8. Curing and Branding Books 1841; AF19/22/2; and Private Herring Book 1851, 1861 and 1871; AF19/15/1,3,5
  9. The Fishery Officer's returns were calculated on the basis of the maximum number of fishermen in each burgh at any one time and therefore included a significant number of seasonal fishermen - tradesmen, agricultural workers, young boys and old men - who made up crews during exceptionally busy or successful fishings. In the major herring fishing ports of Pittenweem, St. Monance and Cellardyke-Anstruther, the actual number of full-time fishermen was as little as 50% of this figure.

TABLE IV.1: Percentage of Male Population of the East Nook Burghs engaged in the Fishing Industry, 1841 - 1871.

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
St. Monance	65.5%	80%	70%	66.4%
Cellardyke/Anstruther	29.5%	49.8%	57.9%	46%
Pittenweem	31%	43.7%	46%	29.6%
Crail	8%	7.7%	7.9%	13.25%
Elie/Earlsferry	3.3%	4.6%	12.25%	8.8%
St. Andrews	2.6%	3%	4.15%	3.57%
*Kingsbarns	3.9%	3.8%	3.45%	6.9%

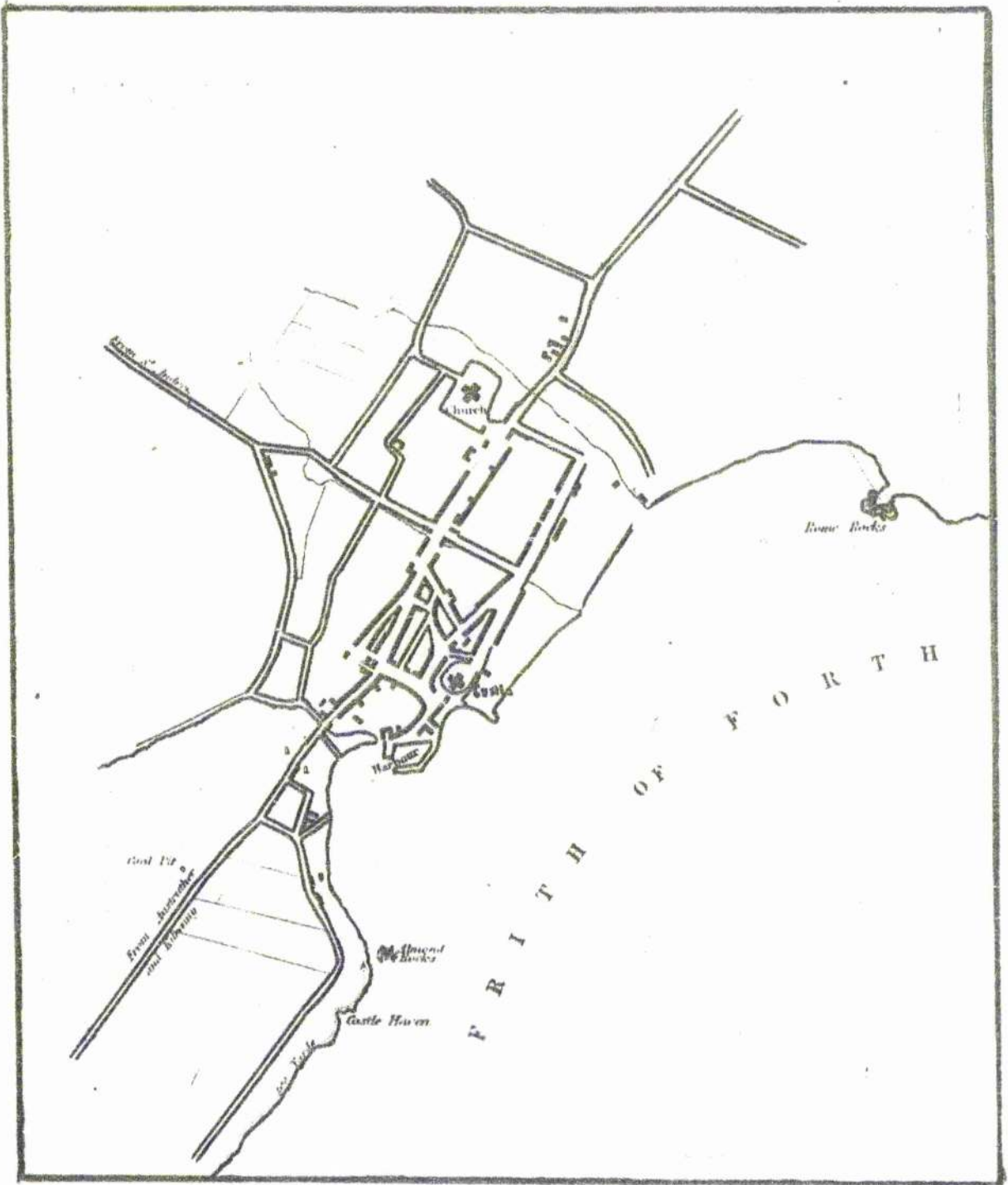
\*Kingsbarns, though not a burgh, but a predominantly agricultural parish between St. Andrews and Crail, is included to highlight the essentially low percentages for Elie and St. Andrews.

by farmers residing on the spot, there are many other lots in the hands of the townspeople. And it is a sight somewhat singular to see loads of corn and hay, and cattle and horses, passing through the streets to the barns, stables and yards behind or otherwise adjoining to their dwelling house.<sup>1</sup>

By 1844, no manufactures were being carried on in the burgh,<sup>2</sup> nor any trade of importance, apart from the import of coal for the district, and a limited export of potatoes.<sup>3</sup> Nor did the revival of the Lammis drave regenerate the fishing industry,<sup>4</sup> despite the effort of the town to advertise its advantages both for curers and fishermen. By 1860, the once flourishing town earned the description that 'a more utterly deserted place than Crail..... is not to be met with in broad Scotland. It is out of the track of progress, and slumbers on quietly as if it were a world deserted ruin.'<sup>5</sup>

But the same fate was not being shared by Elie and St. Andrews during this period. Both had enjoyed a modest prosperity from manufacture and commerce towards the close of the 18th century. Elie in the first decade of the 19th century had enjoyed a substantial foreign trade, principally with the Baltic, had a flourishing ship-building industry and a number of manufactures.<sup>6</sup> However, both trade and manufactures declined along with the harbour as the century progressed. Though a rope works and ship-building yard were still in existence in 1822, and a small grain trade was carried out,<sup>7</sup> the harbour was dilapidated and dangerous in 1844,<sup>8</sup> and by the 1870's, the ship-building yard, the rope works, the lint mill and the soap factory existed only in the memories of the older inhabitants, and the empty granary on the quay stood as a reminder of the town's commercial past.<sup>9</sup> In St. Andrews, too,

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1. Rev. James Hall: Travels in Scotland by an Unusual Route  
(London 1807, 2 vols.) vol.1, p.85
  2. Rev. William Merson: N.S.A. vol.IX, p.963
  3. Ibid p.963; 1800 tons of potatoes were exported in 1844.
  4. Ibid p.962
  5. Henry Farnie: Handybook of the Fife Coast from Queensferry to Fifeness (Cupar 1860) p.188
  6. Rev. James Hall: Travels in Scotland by an Unusual Route  
(London 1807, 2 vols.) vol.1, p.69
  7. Rev. W. M. Wade: Delineation of the Watering and Sea-Bathing Places of Scotland (Faisley 1822) p.222
  8. Rev. George Milligan: N.S.A. vol.IX, p.281
  9. St. Andrews Gazette June 27th 1874



Map IV.1: CRAIL 1832 (from Report on the Boundaries of Several Cities, Burghs and Towns in Scotland in Respect to the Election of Members to serve in Parliament. Scale 6 inches : 1 mile.)



commercial and manufacturing aspirations declined as the century progressed. Dempster's canvas manufactory at the foot of Abbey Street had been short-lived,<sup>1</sup> and the final attempt to foster any form of manufacturing industry in the town,<sup>2</sup> was the equally short-lived spinning mill employing 50 people, established in 1822.<sup>3</sup> Nor was there any prospect of a significant development in the trade of the port, given the notorious inadequacies of the harbour.<sup>4</sup> Rather, both Elie and St. Andrews, strove from the early decades of the 19th century to enhance their desirability as residential centres and promote their reputations as watering places.

\* \* \* \* \*

The basis for this policy had already been established in the late 18th century. The Council Minutes for St. Andrews reported in 1785 that the town had been much resorted to for some years by people wishing to enjoy the benefits of sea-bathing, and a report was presented advocating the desirability of erecting a bathing house near the harbour.<sup>5</sup> Elie, too, with its convenient sandy beach was being patronised by sea-bathers at that time,<sup>6</sup> and neighbouring Earlsferry was feuing stretches of its sea-shore to local gentry for the purpose of building bathing quarters.<sup>7</sup> Nor was this surprising when one considers that in England, decaying ports and small fishing villages had been popular for sea-bathing since the early 18th century, a custom which traced its origins back to the role which the spas had played in upper class English life since the reign of Charles II.<sup>8</sup> Already by the 1730's, Scarborough was flourishing as a spa famous for its mineral spring and for the novelty of sea-bathing. But it was not until the publication of Dr. Richard Russell's 'Dissertation on the Use of Seawater in Diseases of the Glands' in 1750 that sea-bathing achieved a wider popularity. The

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1. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.152
  2. The manufacture of golf clubs and balls developed naturally as golf grew in popularity.
  3. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (3rd Edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.79
  4. Rev George Buist and Rev. R Haldane: N.S.A. vol IX p.477. In 1837 vessels drawing more than 14ft. of water had to discharge part of their cargo before entering; even this could only be done in safety at stream tides.
  5. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes March 12th 1785
  6. Rev. William Pairman O.S.A. vol. XVII p.537
  7. Earlsferry Town Council Minutes
  8. For the early development of sea-side resorts in England see Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p. 7-54

Latin first edition was followed by six English editions in rapid succession. As a result, sea-bathing - and the drinking of sea water - were looked upon as a serious, therapeutic exercise only to be undertaken after due preparation and advice, until well after the end of the 18th century; and by 1789, seabathing had received its highest sanction when George III entered the sea at Weymouth.<sup>1</sup>

Most important in the early development of resorts was the proximity to large urban centres; here both St. Andrews and Elie enjoyed the advantage of being close to both Dundee and Edinburgh, though the uncomfortable ferry-crossing was at first a discouragement, so that Edinburgh sea-bathers visited the more convenient resorts of Portobello, Musselburgh and North Berwick. However, Stirling, Perth, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Fife in general, provided a sufficient hinterland to ensure the early growth of both St. Andrews and Elie as sea-bathing resorts. In 1822, Wade included Elie in his list of Scottish watering places as being a resort 'of increasing note'.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the burgh was rapidly acquiring all the amenities considered indispensable for a first class watering place - a circulating library,<sup>3</sup> fashionable walks<sup>4</sup> and, in 1824, a bathing machine<sup>5</sup> (whose presence was an essential status symbol for any aspiring resort). Lodgings were necessarily makeshift, though the local residents, quick to spot the potential value of the visitors, whitewashed their houses and cottages with lime, and repainted the woodwork in order to make them more attractive to bathers.<sup>6</sup> Already in the 1820's, small cottages were being demolished to make way for more grandiose houses.<sup>7</sup>

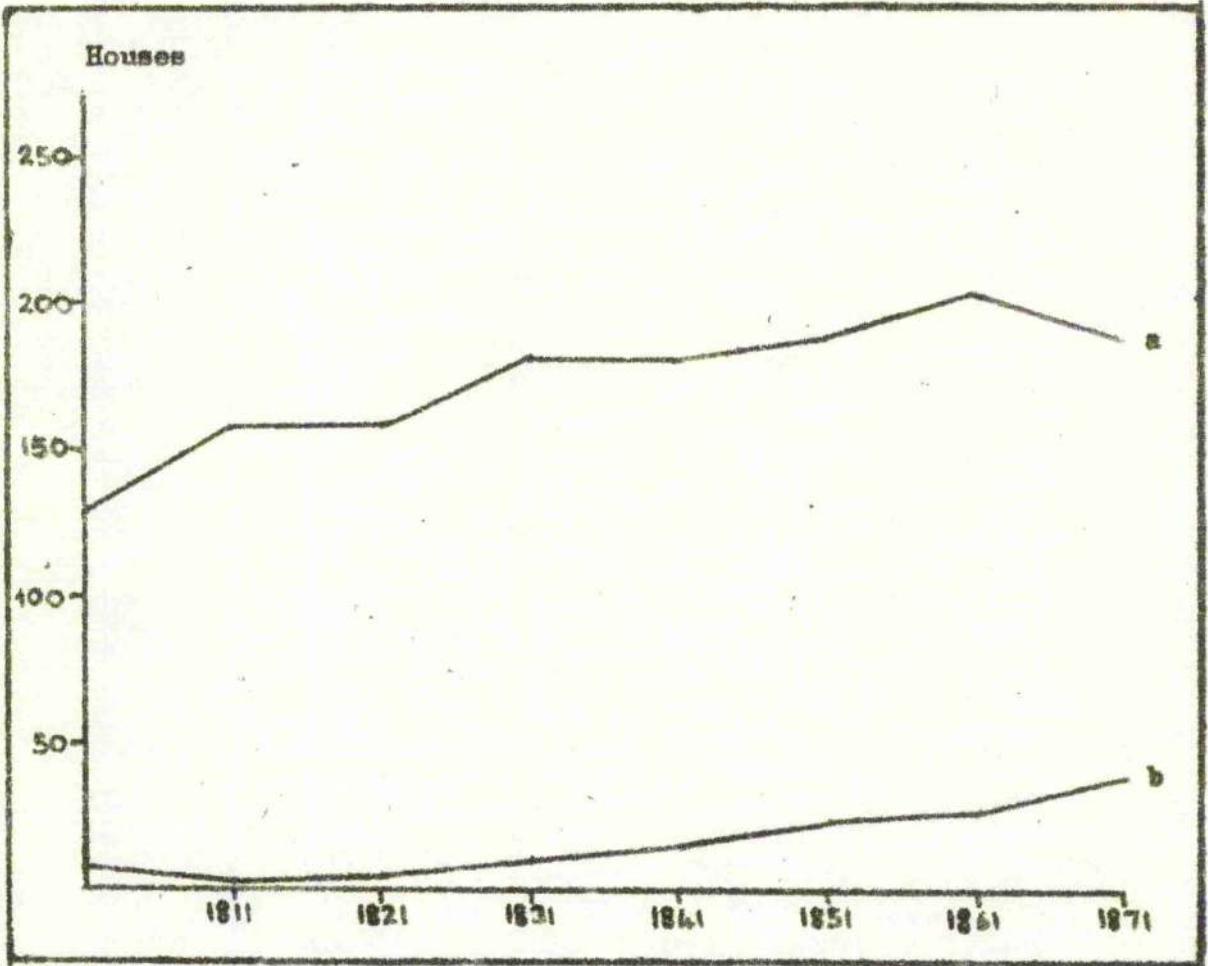
The process was accelerated by the fact that by the early 19th century, British doctors began to claim that the sea-air and the climate of the coast were even more beneficial to invalids than sea-bathing and sea-water drinking.<sup>8</sup> People had begun to visit the seaside in autumn and winter, and many were choosing to move

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1. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.7-18
  2. Rev. W. M. Wade: Delineations of the Watering and Sea-bathing Places of Scotland (Paisley 1822) p.70, 220, 327
  3. Fife Herald July 17th 1823
  4. Ibid July 17th 1823
  5. Ibid Aug 5th 1824
  6. Ibid Aug 14th 1828
  7. Ibid July 17th 1823
  8. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.47

their place of residence there. Resorts such as Worthing and Cromer in England had already begun to pursue a policy of not providing any facilities which might attract the rowdy or rakish, in order to facilitate their growth as genteel resorts and retirement centres.<sup>1</sup> It was this sort of image that Elie was anxious to promote. By 1830, the popularity of Elie as both a resort and residential centre was attributed to its 'being remarkably healthy and retired'. There was no place for any sizeable fishing industry, since one of the major attractions of the burgh was that it was 'entirely freed from those offensive smells which prevail in most of the coast towns in consequence of fish curing'.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this Elie had become 'the residence and resort of many gentry and persons of distinction, as well as a most excellent bathing place'.<sup>3</sup> Certainly a significant colony of residenters<sup>4</sup> had begun to develop by 1830 consisting of widows, retired professional people and half-pay army and navy officers.<sup>5</sup> Population soared from 730 in 1801 to 1029 in 1831, and the number of houses from 128 to 180 during the same period;<sup>6</sup> but already a significant pointer to the future of the burgh existed in the gradual increase in the number of uninhabited houses in the village, from two in 1811 to ten in 1831. This figure represented the number of 'second homes' owned by inhabitants of Edinburgh, Glasgow etc., and was to go on increasing until by 1911, 100 of the 231 houses in Elie were uninhabited.<sup>7</sup>

In St. Andrews, too, similar trends were discernible. The Baths, proposed as early as 1785,<sup>8</sup> had not been erected until 1810 by a Colonel Dewar;<sup>9</sup> but a measure of the insignificance of St. Andrews as a resort at that time was the fact that Dewar was forced to admit in 1812 that the speculation had proved unsuccessful, and tried to sell the building to the Town Council.<sup>10</sup> But by the 1820's

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1. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.54
  2. Fife Herald May 27th 1830
  3. Pigot and Co.: New Commercial Directory of Scotland  
(London and Manchester 1826) p.354
  4. The term used in directories, gazeteers, newspapers etc. to denote people of independent means.
  5. Pigot and Co.: New Commercial Directory of Scotland  
(London and Manchester 1826) p.354
  6. Official Census Returns 1801-1831      7. Ibid 1811-1911
  8. See above p.91
  9. St. Andrews Gazette April 15th 1882
  10. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes Sept 8th 1812



Graph IV.1: Expansion of housing in Elie in 1801 - 1871, showing the increase in the number of uninhabited houses.  
a) Inhabited houses.  
b) Uninhabited houses.

the combination of sea-bathing and the antiquarian sites of the city had combined to give the burgh a certain fashionable popularity. Visitors came from as far away as London, and included the celebrated author Sir Walter Scott.<sup>1</sup> The Town Council was eager to encourage such visitors; the Scores was converted into a fashionable promenade, and benches were placed there for the old and infirm.<sup>2</sup> Bathing was strictly regulated with the Step Rock the resort of male bathers, and the Castle that of the female bathers.<sup>3</sup> For those more interested in seeing the historical sites of the burgh, guides were employed to conduct tours through the city,<sup>4</sup> and historical and descriptive accounts of the city were published with an eye to the market presented by such visitors.<sup>5</sup>

More important than its growth as a resort in the early 19th century was the development of St. Andrews as a retirement and residential centre. It is usual to attribute this development to the Provostship of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair, from 1842 to 1861, as indeed do both the former's biographers.<sup>6</sup> But its origins lie in the early years of the 19th century, and Playfair did no more than continue to encourage the trend with an often mis-placed enthusiasm.<sup>7</sup> Certainly to describe St. Andrews as 'fast dwindling into a state of ruinous decay'<sup>8</sup> in the years before 1842 is totally inaccurate. The population of the burgh increased from 2739 in 1791<sup>9</sup> to 4441 in 1841<sup>10</sup> - an increase of 62%, which could not be attributed to industrial or commercial growth, or an expansion of

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1. Fife Herald June 26th 1823
  2. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews  
(3rd Edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.76
  3. Rev. C. J. Lyon: History of St. Andrews Ancient and Modern  
(Edinburgh 1838) p.223
  4. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews  
(3rd Edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.227-231
  5. Rev. C. J. Lyon: History of St. Andrews Ancient and Modern  
(Edinburgh 1838) contains a list of 'objects of interest to strangers' together with lists of walks in the burgh and its vicinity. p.222-229
  6. David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the late Lt. Colonel Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874); and M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861)
  7. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.180 and George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.107-110, for criticisms of Playfair's 'improvements'.
  8. David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the late Lt. Colonel Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874) p.14

the fishing industry.<sup>1</sup> Rather there was a growing influx of retired people or people of independent means, similar to that in Elie, but on a larger scale. By 1827, St. Andrews was 'more than any other town in Fife, a favourite retreat for persons with small fortunes and nothing to do. Such a class of people can enjoy enlightened society at the smallest possible expense. In another respect it may be considered as a large jointure - house - a vast nunnery - being resorted to by all the dotorial and old maidenly part of the Fife gentry'.<sup>2</sup>

A number of factors were responsible for this development. Foremost amongst these was the increasing reputation of St. Andrews as an educational centre. Johnson had thought the burgh 'to be a place eminently adapted to study and education, being situated in a populous, yet a cheap country and exposing the minds and manners of young men neither to the levity and dissoluteness of a capital city, nor to the gross luxury of a town of commerce, places naturally unpropitious to learning'.<sup>3</sup> The University, whose declining fortunes Johnson had so regretted, entered a period of transition in the years after the visit of the Royal Commission on the Scottish Universities of 1826 to 1830.<sup>4</sup> Chemistry lectures were introduced in 1811<sup>5</sup> and natural history in 1825;<sup>6</sup> whilst the conferring of both Arts and Medical degrees was more strictly regulated in 1826-27.<sup>7</sup> But these were merely the prelude to more extensive constitutional, educational and architectural reforms in the years after the visit of the Commissioners.<sup>8</sup>

More significant was the growth in education at non-University level. In 1822 it was recorded that 'it is no uncommon thing for families of distinction who have sons to educate to come to reside at St. Andrews during the period of their education, both preliminary and at the University'.<sup>9</sup> In this context was mentioned the

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1. See above p.57

2. Robert Chambers: A Picture of Scotland (Edinburgh 1827) p.201

3. Samuel Johnson: A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland (London 1775) p.15

4. Ronald Cant: The University of St. Andrews, A Short History (London 1946) p.104-113

5. Ibid p.100

6. Ibid p.101

7. Ibid p.100-101

8. Ibid p.104-113, for concise account of the work of the Commissioners

9. Rev. W. M. Wade: Delineations of the Watering and Sea-Bathing Places of Scotland (Paisley 1822) p.18

Burgh Grammar School, the burgh school for English, Writing and Arithmetic, a school on the Belleau system at Gregory's Green, two seminaries for young ladies and French classes taught by an emigré,<sup>1</sup> as well as teachers of dancing and music.<sup>2</sup> But most important in this respect was the construction of the Madras College as a result of a bequest by the Rev. Andrew Bell in 1832, which quickly gained a considerable reputation and attracted pupils from Fife in particular, and eastern Scotland in general. The school, built at a cost of £15,000 to £16,000, replaced the old burgh schools, and by 1838 had 800 pupils in attendance.<sup>3</sup>

Besides these educational advantages, an increasingly important factor in the development of St. Andrews both as a resort and residential centre during the 19th century was the game of golf. Golf had always been an important facet of life in St. Andrews - the earliest reference to golf on St. Andrews Links being in a parchment dated January 25th 1552, bearing the seal of John Hamilton, Archbishop of St. Andrews.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the following two centuries the Council jealously guarded the golfing rights of the inhabitants on the Links, and even when it was necessary to sell the Links in 1798 because of debt, the rights of all inhabitants and others who should resort to the Links for the purpose of playing golf were specifically reserved.<sup>5</sup> This reservation was to prove the most fortuitous action ever made by a St. Andrews Town Council; but equally important for the future of St. Andrews was the decision in 1754 of 22 'Noblemen and Gentlemen, being admirers of the ancient and healthfull exercise of the Golf', to draft certain articles and laws for the playing of the game, and to subscribe five shillings each towards the purchase of a Silver Club to be competed for by all and sundry in Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

Though this 'Company of Golfers' was later to become the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, the early years of its development

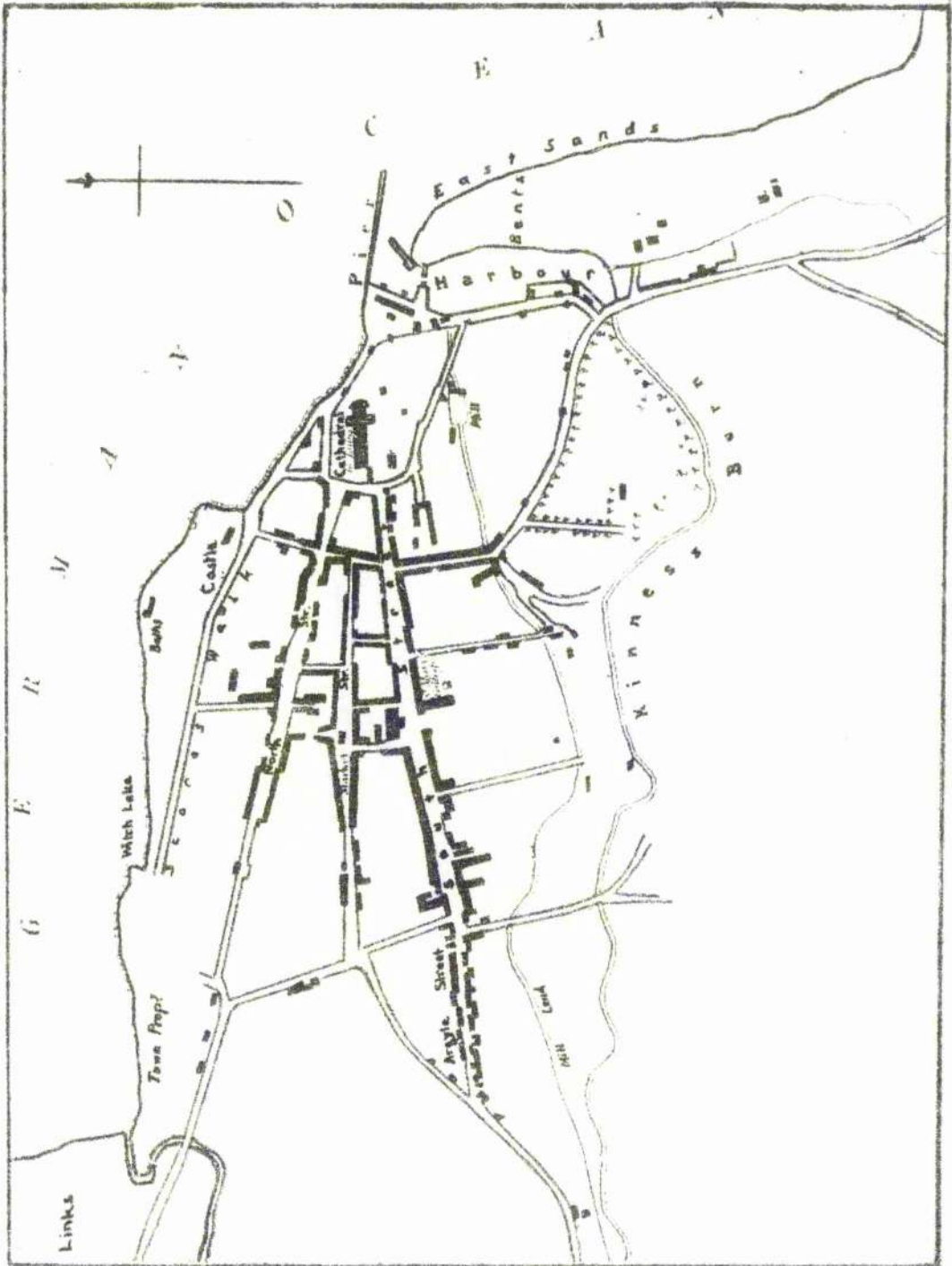
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1. Rev. W. M. Wade: Delineations of the Watering and Sea-Bathing Places of Scotland (Paisley 1822) p.19
  2. Ibid p.44
  3. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (3rd Edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.124
  4. H. S. C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.28
  5. Ibid p.41
  6. Ibid p.45-47

showed that membership was both limited and localized. Only four competitors appeared for the first competition for the Silver Club, and the winner was Bailie Landale, a St. Andrews merchant.<sup>1</sup> In 1757 and 1760, there were no competitions since no competitors appeared.<sup>2</sup> Membership remained distinctly local, consisting of Fifeshire gentry, St. Andrews worthies, and a few Edinburgh gentlemen. But both Club and Town were determined to maintain their golfing rights over the Links. In the early 19th century the two combined in a protracted lawsuit against Cathcart Dempster, the owner of the Links, to prevent him converting them into an enormous rabbit warren.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, too, the burgh of Earlsferry was engaged in litigation with Sir Michael Malcolm of Grange between 1824 and 1830 concerning their right to golf on the Links to the west of the burgh<sup>4</sup> - links which were later to become a major tourist attraction for Elie and Earlsferry.

However membership gradually grew in the 19th century. By 1807 the Club had about 200 members;<sup>5</sup> by 1838 there were over 250.<sup>6</sup> The Ball which followed the autumn meeting of the Club became one of the major events in the Fife social calendar,<sup>7</sup> and in 1834, the game received its highest possible sanction when William IV agreed to become the patron of the Club.<sup>8</sup> Particularly prominent in this early development of the game were the retired army officers such as Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair and Major Boothby, and there can be little doubt that participation in the game was instrumental in attracting such men to reside in St. Andrews.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the increasing popularity of the game led to a source of employment that was to become increasingly important in St. Andrews as the 19th century continued. The manufacture of golf balls already provided employment for a dozen men in 1807, who produced 12,000 balls annually.<sup>10</sup>

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1. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.58
  2. Ibid p.61
  3. Ibid p.101-104
  4. Minutes of the Town Council of Earlsferry 1824-1830
  5. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (1st edition, Edinburgh 1807) p.230
  6. Ibid (3rd edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.238
  7. Fife Herald Sept 23rd 1825
  8. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.133
  9. Rev. C.J. Lyon: History of St. Andrews, Ancient and Modern (Edinburgh 1838) p.223
  10. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (1st edition, Edinburgh 1807) p.238





Map IV.2. St. Andrews 1832 (from Report on the Boundaries of Several Cities, Burghs and Towns in Scotland in Respect to the Election of Members to serve in Parliament. Scale 6 inches : 1 mile.)

The first of a long line of St. Andrews golf club makers was Hugh Philp, who became official clubmaker to the Company of Golfers in 1819.<sup>1</sup> Caddying, too, was a source of employment for local men; regulations for caddies<sup>2</sup> had been laid down as early as 1771<sup>3</sup> and Grierson described them in 1807 as 'great judges of the game of golf, and expert in playing it, and are ready for a trifling consideration under the name of cadies (sic) to attend any gentleman who chuses to take the amusement'.<sup>4</sup> Care of the Links, too, became increasingly important, and a greenkeeper was employed by the Club to maintain them; indeed, in 1823 the greenkeeper was replaced for neglecting his duty.<sup>5</sup> It was from the ranks of these ball and clubmakers, caddies and greenkeepers that the first professional golfers were to evolve later in the century.

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By 1840, both Elie and St. Andrews had established for themselves a measure of prosperity and popularity by their development as resorts and residential centres. St. Andrews, in particular, had already become a favoured residential town by the time that Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair became its Provost in 1842, his own retirement to St. Andrews in 1834 being proof of this. Now streets with commodious houses had been erected - Pilmour Place in 1820, and Greyfriars Gardens between 1832 and 1834.<sup>6</sup> The streets were repaired,<sup>7</sup> and a new water supply introduced in 1834.<sup>8</sup> These improvements were all undertaken during the Provostship of Kirby Dalrymple, who was also responsible for the introduction of gas-lighting to the streets of St. Andrews in 1835.<sup>9</sup>

However, after 1840 an important new factor was to influence

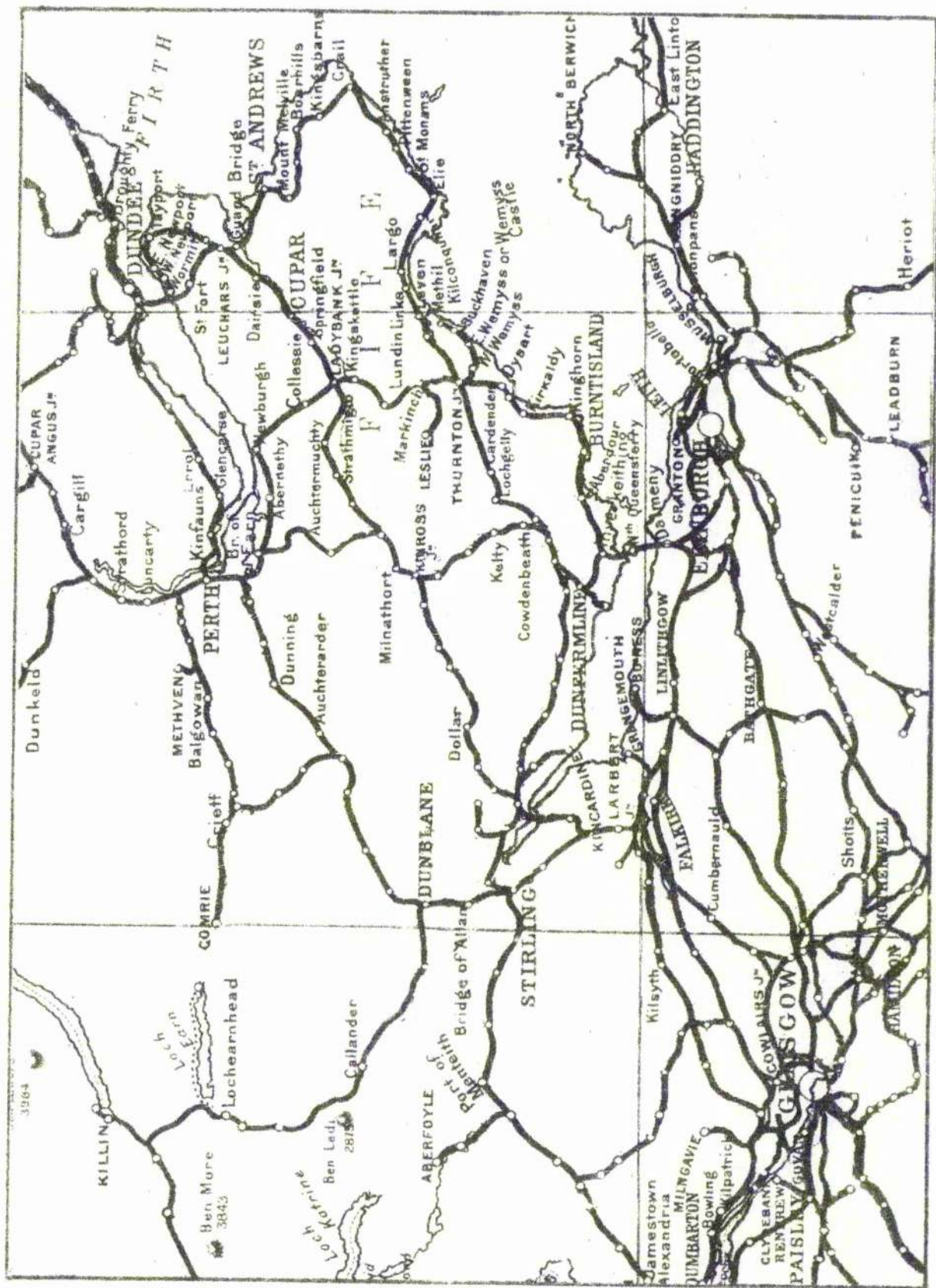
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1. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.110
  2. The word 'caddie' derives from the French 'cadet', and was originally an ironic term for a loafer; see J. K. Robertson: St. Andrews, Home of Golf (Cupar 1967) p.123
  3. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.80
  4. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (1st edition, Edinburgh 1807) p.239
  5. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.123
  6. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.163
  7. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (3rd edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.77
  8. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes July 30th 1834
  9. James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (3rd edition, Edinburgh 1838) p.77

the development of the two burghs, which ultimately greatly facilitated their respective ambitions to establish reputations as resorts and residential centres - the introduction of steam transport into Fife. Its first appearance was in the form of steamships, which mode of transport was to transform the entire future of Elie. By 1845 two packets were sailing weekly between Leith and Anstruther throughout the year, whilst in summer Aberdeen and Dundee steam vessels daily visited the port twice and occasionally three times, both going and returning.<sup>1</sup> These steamers opened up the entire Fife coast to the inhabitants of Edinburgh, and no towns benefited more than Elie and its neighbour Earlsferry. By 1852, steamers were sailing between Leith and Elie three times a day, and in that year a new hotel was opened in the burgh.<sup>2</sup> Elie enjoyed a similar relationship with Edinburgh to that which Margate shared with London, with husbands from the upper middle-classes in the city renting houses or apartments at the seaside resort for a month, two months, or the entire summer season, in which they installed their families, joining them at weekends or whenever their work permitted.<sup>3</sup>

The construction of the East of Fife Railway in 1854<sup>4</sup> helped to further increase the popularity of Elie as a resort. Railways had an immense impact upon the British seaside in general.<sup>5</sup> They were essential to the spread of the middle-class family holiday, and in the long run they played a crucial part in making a visit to the seaside hugely popular with all classes. However, the coming of the railways did not lead to a sudden influx of the working-classes, but brought to the coast more of the prosperous middle-class people who had been visiting the seaside since the beginning of the 19th century.

St. Andrews had enjoyed the advantages of railway communication, to a limited degree, since 1849, through the medium of a station at nearby Leuchars;<sup>6</sup> ten coaches operated daily between St. Andrews and the station.<sup>7</sup> However civic leaders recognized the importance of a direct rail link to St. Andrews future as a resort and residential

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1. Rev. George Milligan: N.S.A. vol.IX p.289
  2. Fife Herald Aug 5th 1852
  3. Ibid
  4. A. A. Maclean: North British Album (London 1975) p.7
  5. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.80-87 for the influence of railways on seaside resorts.
  6. A. A. Maclean: North British Album (London 1975) p.7
  7. Fife Herald June 14th 1849



Map IV.3. The Railway System of the Central Lowlands of Scotland c.1900

centre, and as early as 1846<sup>1</sup> an abortive attempt had been made to promote the construction of a line. A later and successful venture led to the construction of a line which opened in May 1852, at a total cost of over £25,000.<sup>2</sup> The prime mover in the venture was W. D. Smith, a druggist and ex-bailie of St. Andrews, who was chairman of the St. Andrews Railway Company until 1872; the other directors consisted of two local landowners, two St. Andrews merchants and inevitably, Provost Playfair.<sup>3</sup> Nor was the optimism of the promoters of the line misplaced, since the expected benefits brought by the railway were not slow to accrue, though some were greeted with less enthusiasm than others.

The two major aims in promoting the railway had been to increase the desirability of St. Andrews as a residential centre, and to improve its accessibility as a resort. However with the increasing number of middle-class visitors arriving to rent houses or apartments in the summer, there also arrived a new phenomenon - the excursion tripper. The invention of the excursion train, a typically Victorian combination of philanthropy and profit, marked the real beginning of the role of the railways in the recreation of the people as a whole. Excursion trains allowed shop and factory workers to spend a day by the sea, and had been in existence in England since the 1840's.<sup>4</sup> A whole train could be hired by a private firm, or earmarked by the railway companies themselves and tickets sold at drastically reduced prices. By the 1850's, Friendly Societies, Sunday Schools and Temperance Societies were organizing rail excursions for their members. Employers, too, thought that a visit to the seaside was less dangerous to their workers than the rough fairs or sports which had been their traditional holiday entertainments.

The first to arrive in St. Andrews appeared two days after the line opened, consisting of 84 masters and boys from George Watson's College, Edinburgh<sup>5</sup> - the first of a heavy and regular traffic to the city from Dundee, Perth and Edinburgh. These excursions could be

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1. C.J.A. Robertson: 'The Cheap Railway Movement in Scotland: the St. Andrews Railway Company' (in Transport History 1974, vol.7) p.15
  2. Ibid p.19
  3. Ibid p.15
  4. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.85-7
  5. C.J.A. Robertson: 'The Cheap Railway Movement in Scotland: The St. Andrews Railway Company' (in Transport History 1974, vol.7) p.23

enormous; one from Dunfermline in 1856 consisted of 1100 people,<sup>1</sup> and this was by no means exceptional. Certainly such influxes injected a mood of gaiety into the normally tranquil burgh, accompanied as they were by flags, banners and even bands.<sup>2</sup> Most excursions would be conducted in military fashion around the city by a guide,<sup>3</sup> before adjourning to the Town Hall or the Bow Butts,<sup>4</sup> or some equally appropriate site for dancing, sports and games.<sup>5</sup> Local opinion, indeed, resented the fact that many excursionists showed a distinct preference for the latter. A party from the Belmont Factory in Dundee was criticised for showing more enthusiasm for dancing than sight-seeing in 1864;<sup>6</sup> but what was really disapproved of was the drinking and fighting which often accompanied the dancing. During one such excursion in 1866, 'John Barleycorn was in heavy requisition, and his powerful influence soon became evident. Shameful scenes of drunkenness and fighting took place'.<sup>7</sup> Responsibility for such behaviour, however, was normally attributed to poor organization rather than any natural inclinations of the participants.<sup>8</sup>

This was hardly the type of excursion the members of the St. Andrews Civic Association had wanted to encourage when they joined together at a public breakfast in the Cross Keys Hotel in March 1852 for the 'promotion of the prosperity and welfare of the city' and to arrange that 'large excursion trains shall with ease and at little expense see the sights of the place, so that by this means others may be encouraged to visit the city'.<sup>9</sup> Though members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science might be content to undertake tours of the geological formations of the neighbourhood, or of the antiquities of the city, under the guidance

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1. Fife Herald Aug 14th 1856
  2. Fife Herald July 8th 1858; June 9th 1859; St. Andrews Gazette July 4th 1863; July 9th 1864
  3. Principally local guide book author and newspaper editor James Howie; St. Andrews Gazette June 18th 1864.
  4. The former site for archery practice and competitions near the West Sands.
  5. St. Andrews Gazette July 4th 1863
  6. Ibid July 9th 1864
  7. Ibid August 11th 1866
  8. Ibid July 9th 1864; July 16th 1864; Fife Herald Sept 1st 1853
  9. Fife Herald April 1st 1852

of members of the University staff,<sup>1</sup> foundry workers from Dundee not surprisingly derived greater enjoyment from more elementary and energetic activities; and though St. Andrews, like most British resorts, showed a thinly disguised contempt for the working-class tripper, he continued to come by train, by cart<sup>2</sup> and by steamer,<sup>3</sup> in large numbers.

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Certainly, the working-class tripper was somewhat incongruous in the St. Andrews which developed during the Provostship of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair. The third son of a former Principal of United Colleges,<sup>4</sup> Playfair had retired to St. Andrews in 1834 after nearly 30 years in the service of the East India Company.<sup>5</sup> Though only one of a small colony of retired Anglo-Indian officers resident in St. Andrews, his energetic participation in civic affairs was exceptional. In 1842, he became Provost,<sup>6</sup> a position he was to occupy until his death in 1861, and as undisputed leader of the 'improving' party in St. Andrews, he earned the praise of most of his contemporaries<sup>7</sup> for his relentless efforts to try to establish St. Andrews as the 'Scarborough of Scotland'.<sup>8</sup>

Posterity has looked less indulgently upon his achievements.<sup>9</sup> In his efforts to improve the appearance of the town, much that was unique - such as the curious forestairs and porches that gave a Gothic variety to South Street<sup>10</sup> - was destroyed. Other improvements were less ill-conceived. Streets were macadamized, and pavements laid by public subscriptions raised by the Provost. Old and dilapidated houses were removed, and street names Victorianized. Throughout the city, buildings such as the University Library and the West Port were repaired and decorated, often at the expense of Playfair himself.<sup>11</sup> In the Cathedral graveyard he laid out walks and levelled

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1. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 14th 1867
  2. Ibid July 4th 1863
  3. Ibid June 30th 1866
  4. Dr. James Playfair, Principal from 1801 to 1819. see James Grierson: Delineations of St. Andrews (Cupar 1823) p.204
  5. For early career, see David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the late Lt. Col. Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874) p.2-13
  6. Ibid p.17
  7. e.g. Rev Charles Roger: History of St. Andrews (Edinburgh 1849)p.163
  8. Henry Farnie: Handybook of St. Andrews (1st edition Cupar 1859)p.92
  9. e.g. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.180-181
  10. Ibid p.180
  11. M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861)p.6

the graves so that 'in fine weather numbers of persons may be seen meditating among the ruins'.<sup>1</sup> The old Town Hall was demolished to widen the market place, and a new one built to replace it.<sup>2</sup>

Playfair's contemporary, George Bruce, attacked him for trying to make St. Andrews 'an exclusive curiosity' to be roofed in and exhibited for the attraction of strangers.<sup>3</sup> Certainly Playfair was ruthless in removing anything which he considered incompatible with the St. Andrews he envisaged. In this respect, the fishing community were particular sufferers. Though Playfair did initiate extensive repairs and improvements at the harbour,<sup>4</sup> an expansion of the fishing industry in St. Andrews was out of the question for the 'improving' party. Playfair, while announcing his desire to rescue the fishermen 'from their state of filth, misery and degradation',<sup>5</sup> seemed more concerned with restricting their numbers and their livelihood. Though sanitary conditions in the fishing quarter were conducive to frequent outbreaks of cholera epidemics,<sup>6</sup> Playfair himself was among the principal landlords in the fishing district and therefore shared a proportion of the responsibility for these conditions;<sup>7</sup> that sanitary conditions were largely of secondary importance in Playfair's hostility to the fishing community is clearly shown in a pamphlet of 1862 which exposed the lamentable sanitation in large areas of St. Andrews and the fact that even the best streets were not free from those causes which invited the presence of typhus or typhoid.<sup>8</sup> Rather the hostility seems to have stemmed from a belief that industry of any description was incongruous in a residential seaside resort.

Relations between the fishing community and the more affluent residents of the burgh deteriorated rapidly after 1840 as a result of Playfair's policies. The key issue was the cynical attempt to deprive the fishermen of their traditional right to collect bait,

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1. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.180
  2. David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the late Lt. Col. Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874) p.23-32
  3. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.107
  4. M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861) p.10-16
  5. Ibid p.16-18
  6. 41 people died during a cholera epidemic in 1849; Fife Herald Aug-Sept 1849
  7. Burgh of St. Andrews Valuation Rolls 1859-60
  8. J. Adamson: The Sanitary Conditions of St. Andrews (Cupar 1862)



without charge, at the burgh's mussel scalps in the River Eden. The so-called 'Mussel Scalps' dispute was to last for over a quarter of a century after 1843, and was to involve the town in a lengthy lawsuit with the fishing population.<sup>1</sup> The agreement reluctantly accepted by the fishermen in 1843 whereby fishermen agreed to accept delivery of bait mussels by cart by the Town Council in return for a small payment to defray expenses of collection and delivery, replaced the traditional collection of the mussels by the fishermen themselves from the River Eden.<sup>2</sup> But even whilst ostensibly promising to ensure the fishermen's supply of bait, Playfair was seeking legal opinion in Edinburgh for grounds upon which to oppose the fishermen's right of free access to the scalps.<sup>3</sup> The scalps rapidly became a profitable source of revenue for the burgh, with receipts rising from £25 in 1842 to £421 by 1860 - for which service Sir High was presented with a silver-marked mussel shell.<sup>4</sup> But these profits were only realised by raising the price of mussels, by steps, from 4d. to 2s. per basket,<sup>5</sup> and by supplying inferior mussels to local fishermen whilst reserving the best for other buyers willing to pay a higher price.<sup>6</sup> The dispute, which continued after Playfair's death centred on the fishermen's attempt to re-assert their old right of free access, and the determination of the Town Council to maximise the profitability of the scalps.<sup>7</sup> The opinion of the Councillors was that a small fishing industry providing for the needs of the burgh was desirable;<sup>8</sup> the fishing community lacking in the main any electoral voice were forced to seek redress through the Courts, but after protracted and expensive litigation the dispute was terminated in the Town Council's favour in the Court of Session in 1869.<sup>9</sup>

George Bruce complained that St. Andrews claimed to be the 'Scarborough of Scotland' yet Scarborough could still reconcile an

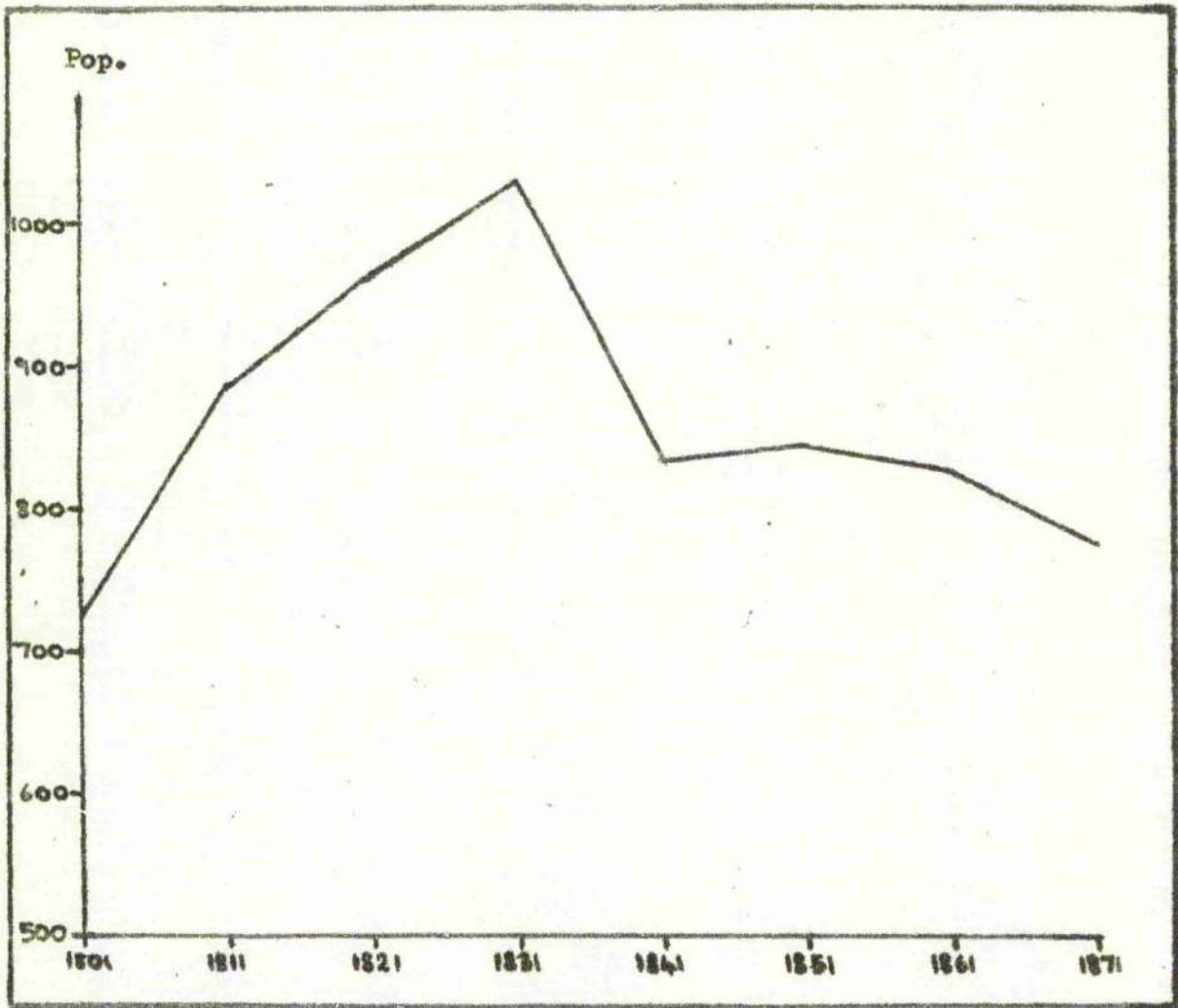
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1. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.72-100, for detailed, but anti-Playfair account.
  2. Ibid p.84-85
  3. Ibid p.74
  4. M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861) p.19
  5. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.79
  6. Ibid p.79; St. Andrews Gazette Feb 17th 1866; Feb 24th 1866
  7. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 12th 1862; May 7th 1864; Sept 15th 1866
  - 8.
  9. St. Andrews Gazette July 31st 1869

extensive fishing fleet with its 300 bed-roomed hotel.<sup>1</sup> But in his policy towards the fishing community as in his other 'improvements' the mood of the most influential inhabitants of the town was strongly in favour of Playfair who 'had left no stone unturned to render ornamental the ancient City of St. Andrews';<sup>2</sup> and equally important, he had done this without burdening the ratepayers with the cost of the improvements which were financed partly through public subscriptions,<sup>3</sup> partly through private enterprise,<sup>4</sup> partly at his own expense<sup>5</sup> and partly by expanding the burgh revenues.<sup>6</sup> Letters and poems to the local press praised him;<sup>7</sup> breakfasts were held in his honour;<sup>8</sup> presentations were made by the grateful burgh,<sup>9</sup> and the University.<sup>10</sup> His fame spread as a result of his 'indomitable zeal, energy and enthusiasm',<sup>11</sup> and in 1856 he received official recognition in the form of a knighthood.

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Playfair's work was to have a lasting effect upon St. Andrews. While Elie became increasingly dependent upon its summer visitors for its prosperity, St. Andrews reputation as a residential centre matched its reputation as a resort. Though the number of visitors arriving in Elie by rail and steamer increased rapidly between 1840 and 1870, the population of the burgh steadily declined. By 1860 there was very little work of any kind in the village apart from the business of letting houses in summer.<sup>12</sup> Young people having no occupation to detain them left for larger towns,<sup>13</sup> and those who stayed had difficulty in obtaining houses, since old

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1. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1884) p.78
  2. David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the late Lt. Col. Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874) p.18-19, 47-50, 65-66
  3. Pavements, road macadamizing and the new Town Hall were financed in this way.
  4. The St. Andrews Railway Company; and improvements at the Links through the R. and A.
  5. See above p.105
  6. Most notably in the case of the mussel scalps.
  7. David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the Late Lt. Col. Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874) p.18-19, 47-50, 65-66
  8. Ibid p.22 and 41, in 1844 and 1847
  9. Ibid p.50; a pair of stained-glass lamps were erected at the gates of his home.
  10. Ibid p.71; the degree LL.D. was conferred on him in 1856
  11. Peebleshire Advertiser Feb 1st 1855
  12. Henry Farnie: Handybook of the Fife Coast from Queensferry to Fifeness (Cupar 1860) p.141
  13. St. Andrews Gazette June 27th 1874



Graph IV.2:

POPULATION OF ERIE, 1801 - 1871.

houses were continually being demolished to make way for larger, new ones, the rents of which were beyond the means of working people.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the number of houses unoccupied except during the visitors' season continued to increase from 10 in 1831, to 37 in 1871, (see Graph IV.1), so that by the latter date 16.5% of all the houses in the parish were uninhabited. During this same period the population of Elie fell from a peak of 1029 in 1831, to 775 in 1871. (see Graph IV.2).

But for those who remained, the visitors brought prosperity in the short season from June to the end of September. The harbour was again busy, but with punts, canoes, yachts and cutters for pleasure sailing.<sup>2</sup> The adoption of the Lindsay Act in 1844 enabled the village to form itself into a Police Burgh to enforce standards of sanitation which would preserve the image of cleanliness and gentility which attracted tourists.<sup>3</sup> Earlsferry, too, shared in the increasing popularity of Elie, and as houses became less readily available in Elie due to the growing demand, accommodation was sought in neighbouring Earlsferry and Williamsburgh.<sup>4</sup> Visitors were predominantly from Edinburgh, and a feature of the visitors' lists, printed in the East of Fife Record, is that over 33% of all visitors were families in which the father was absent, indicating the popularity of Elie as a place to send one's family in the summer, near enough to be able to join them when circumstances permitted. The Visitors' Lists also indicate that most visitors were relatively local; over 50% came from Edinburgh with the bulk of the remainder from Fife, Stirling, Perth or Dundee. Increasingly, however, visitors arrived from Glasgow, Liverpool, England in general, and London in particular. By 1870, there were 700 visitors in Elie and Earlsferry in September,<sup>5</sup> so that it is safe to assume that well over 1,000 would have been present in the peak month of August. Residents were said to be able to exist for the whole of the year on the income derived from renting houses for three months during the summer.<sup>6</sup> Sea-bathing, pleasure sailing, walks in the

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1. St. Andrews Gazette June 2nd 1864

2. East of Fife Record June 28th 1867

3. Police Commissioners Minute Book for Elie 1864-1900

4. Visitors' Lists, East of Fife Record 1857-1870; also East of Fife Record April 8th 1870

5. Ibid

6. Ibid

country and, increasingly, golf on the Earlsferry Links, were the major attractions of the resort. Excursion traffic was small and infrequent; visitors were predominantly professional people from Edinburgh, Fife gentry, clerics from the entire British Isles colonial administrators on leave in Britain and a sprinkling of aristocrats.<sup>1</sup> By 1870 Elie - with Earlsferry - had established for itself a position as a select, genteel and popular resort, patronised by the visitor who 'seeks escape from the endless, harassing cares of his position'.<sup>2</sup>

St. Andrews, too, enjoyed a similar increase in its popularity as a resort in the decades after the opening of the railway. One indication of this can be found in the passenger revenue of the St. Andrews Railway Company which rose from £1,654 in 1853 to £3,252 in 1876.<sup>3</sup> Visitors were drawn by the combined attractions of golf and sea-bathing. The Victorians had discovered what a paradise the beach was for children; miniature spades, buckets and wheelbarrows became essential seaside equipment. Both Elie and St. Andrews benefited from the middle-class Victorian custom of renting houses in secluded resorts and spending the entire summer there midst the cosy domesticity popularised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.<sup>4</sup> Shells, seaweeds, pebbles and fossils fascinated the Victorians, and collecting them, classifying them and turning them into decorative objects, was an essential part of the middle-class family holiday. Books like Mrs. Gatty's 'British Seaweeds' published in 1862 were instant best-sellers and encouraged Victorian girls to scramble over rocks wearing boys' shoes.<sup>5</sup>

St. Andrews was in a good position to benefit from the growing popularity for the family holiday. In 1864 the St. Andrews Gazette was able to write,

'Do you want a bathe? - here you are; for gentlemen the Swimming Club have provided apparatus for comfort and safety; and for ladies, apart from our fine rocks with all their facilities, bathing coaches will soon be ready for those who wish more retirement than what is afforded by the clean, bare rock, or even by the Baths, for dressing purposes. Is it a promenade that is in request? - here are the Cathedral Burying Grounds, the Scores

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1. Visitors Lists East of Fife Record 1857-1870
  2. St. Andrews Gazette June 27th 1874
  3. C.J.A. Robertson: 'The Cheap Railway Movement in Scotland: the St. Andrews Railway Company' (in Transport History 1974) p.22
  4. Sarah Howells: The Seaside (London 1974) p.67-70
  5. Ibid p.88-99

Walk on the north of the city, the Lade Braes on the south of it, and Kinkell Braes on the east, and the whole range of the links and sands on the west and north. Is it healthy out-of-door exercise that is in demand? Then ladies may have croquet in the Castle Yard, or shell and marine collecting on the beach and amongst the rocks. For gentlemen there is the never failing golf and cricket, if desired. Our ruins are ever a source of pleasing study; and an hour can be well and profitably spent in St. Leonard's Garden'.<sup>1</sup>

Something for everyone! The Baths were extended and renovated in 1852,<sup>2</sup> but already by that date the health-spa aspect of resorts was declining rapidly; enjoyment, albeit of a genteel nature, and relaxation were now required of a holiday, and the beaches became increasingly popular as swimming and bathing became popular in themselves and not as exercise to be scientifically undertaken in the pursuit of health. St. Andrews, with its extensive sandy beaches, was ideally placed to benefit from this trend; decorum decreed that the sexes should bathe at different stations<sup>3</sup> and St. Andrews was abundantly equipped with facilities at the West and East Sands, the Step Rock and the Castle. With the railways bringing increasing numbers of visitors,<sup>4</sup> the Town Council thought it advisable to spend money on the beaches in order to maintain their attractions. The lack of bathing coaches was keenly felt for a long time, as much because of the status it was thought they brought to a resort as because of their practicality, but it was not until 1864 that £90 was raised in £1 shares to provide some.<sup>5</sup> Certainly they proved a great success, and more were provided the ensuing season.<sup>6</sup>

By 1868, over 600 visitors still crowded the burgh in September.<sup>7</sup> But the Town Council was always slow to involve itself in the development of St. Andrews as a resort, and normally it was left to the enterprise of private individuals to improve the burgh's facilities. The development of the Links, and with it the game of golf in St. Andrews, for example, was largely the work of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club. The role of the Town Council in the promotion of golf was minimal to say the least.<sup>8</sup> Now was their role

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1. St. Andrews Gazette May 28th 1864

2. Fife Herald March 11th 1852

3. 'Boys above ten years are not to bathe with females, and the sexes are to be at least 100 yards apart'

4. Already in 1853, the railway carried an average of 1175 passengers weekly in June, 1394 in July, 2685 in August and 2366 in September; Fife Herald June-October 1853

5. St. Andrews Gazette May 21st 1864

6. Ibid Sept 3rd 1864

7. Ibid Sept 12th 1868

8. See below p. 113-115

appreciably more significant in the development of other aspects of the burgh as a resort. Though Playfair had been responsible for excavating a bathing pool of sorts at the Castle<sup>1</sup> - frequented by over one hundred people daily in 1864<sup>2</sup> - improvements at the Step Rock,<sup>3</sup> and initiating games and amusements at the Bow Butts,<sup>4</sup> the enthusiasm, and often the money, had been entirely his own. Certainly after his death in 1861, conditions deteriorated rapidly. The Council seemed surprised that visitors should complain about the burgh's sewage being pumped into the sea by the bathing station at the Step Rock;<sup>5</sup> and in 1867 the Gazette wrote that 'with the exception of the Links which are kept in such splendid order and at so much expense by the Golf Club, it seems to be considered extravagance of the most lamentable description to expend a penny on any object of interest in the town'.<sup>6</sup> Many of the historical sites were becoming yearly more ruinous, whilst the only properly maintained bathing station was the privately operated Baths and Castle Bathing pool.<sup>7</sup> Though the Council promised much, no significant advances were made, and for the ensuing ten or twenty years complaints continued to be voiced about the inadequacy of the Council's expenditure to accommodate visitors.

St. Andrews was therefore fortunate in being the home of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club. For important as its attractions as a seaside resort were to its growth, St. Andrews' popularity and fame were primarily attributable to its position as the 'home of golf', and this position was largely the result of the presence of the elitist R. and A. Playfair, in his capacity as a member of the Club, had been instrumental in the formation of the Club House, originally at the end of Golf Place, but eventually, in 1854, in its present position at the head of the Links.<sup>8</sup> The existence of a Club House certainly helped to foster the elitist nature of the Club. But the Club also provided an invaluable service by maintaining the Links; in 1845 St. Andrews boasted that its Links

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1. M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861)p.32
  2. St. Andrews Gazette June 18th 1864
  3. M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861)p.32
  4. David Loudon: Biographical Sketch of the late Lt. Col. Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (Cupar 1874) p.63-66
  5. St. Andrews Gazette August 19th 1865
  6. Ibid Oct 19th 1867
  7. Ibid
  8. M. Fletcher: Memoirs of Sir Hugh Lyon Playfair (St. Andrews 1861)

'if not the best, are among the first in the kingdom', and two greenkeepers were employed to maintain them.<sup>1</sup> By 1860, a writer opined that 'deprive St. Andrews of its golfing course, and the prospects of the town are directly blighted'.<sup>2</sup>

The game afforded increasing employment to the inhabitants of the town. In 1852 when Robert Forgan went to work for Hugh Philp, the latter was still the only clubmaker in St. Andrews. By 1856 there were two, Forgan and James Wilson, each with an apprentice; and by 1861 there were four firms each with a staff of assistants.<sup>3</sup> On the Links, the famous St. Andrews' caddies were making their appearance to carry the clubs of the gentlemen golfers who were appearing in increasing numbers - 'Daw' Anderson, Bob Kirk, 'Lang Willie' et al.<sup>4</sup> Regulation of this increasing band of caddies and their payment was attempted in 1860, 1863 and 1870.<sup>5</sup> It was from the ranks of these caddies and club-makers that the first professional golfers emerged, and the growing ranks of professionals and interest in professional games was indicative of the growing popularity of the game.

As early as 1849, gentlemen backers had put up £400 a-side for a match between the Dunns of Musselburgh and the legendary St. Andrews duo of Allan Robertson and Tom Morris senior.<sup>6</sup> The Professional Championship was first held at Prestwick in 1860; but the first decades of its existence were dominated by St. Andrews' golfers - the Morrises, the Straths, Jamie Anderson, Tom Kidd and Bob Martin.<sup>7</sup> A succession of golf clubs was founded in the burgh.<sup>8</sup> The Mechanics' Club, founded in 1843 - and changing its name to the St. Andrews Golf Club in 1851 - was the source of many of the early professionals; clubs were started at the University in 1853 and at the Madras College in 1857; the Thistle Golf Club, which had become defunct in 1838, reformed due to increasing interest in 1865; and the first Ladies Golf Club in the world, the St. Andrews Ladies

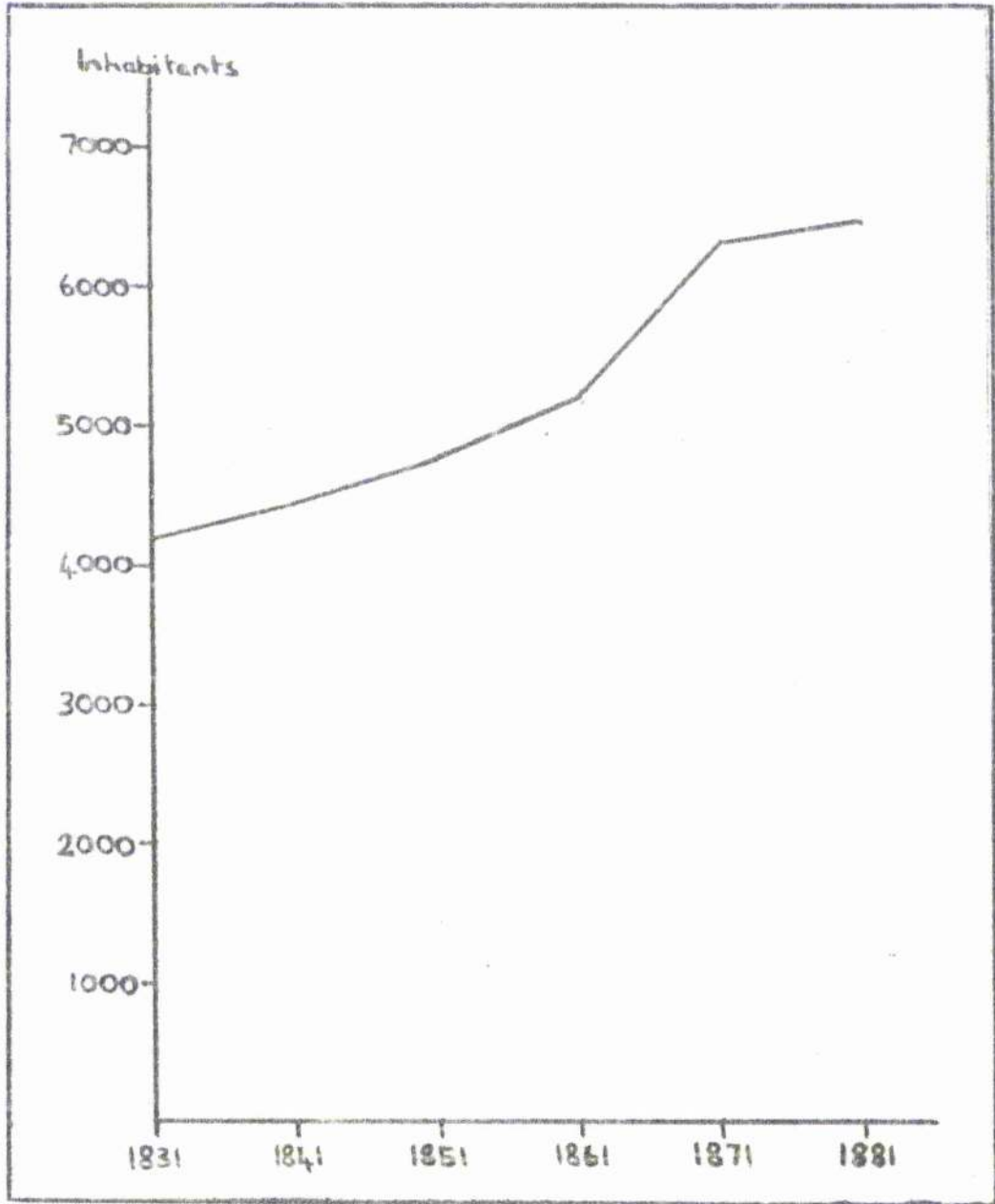
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1. M. Fletcher: Guide to St. Andrews (Edinburgh 1845) p.3
  2. Handy Book of St. Andrews (Cupar 1859, 1865) p.108-120
  3. St. Andrews Citizen Jan 9th 1897
  4. J.K. Roberston: St. Andrews, Home of Golf (Cupar 1967) p.123-126
  5. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.189
  6. J.K. Robertson: St. Andrews, Home of Golf (Cupar 1967) p.69
  7. Ibid p.69-79
  8. Ibid p.64-66



Club, was formed in 1867. When the Prince of Wales consented to become the Captain of the R. and A. in 1863, the future of the game and of St. Andrews as the centre for it, were guaranteed.<sup>1</sup> Such visitors as General Sir Hope Grant, Sir Francis Grant of the Royal Academy, the artist Millais and the author Trollope, were arriving in St. Andrews to play golf.<sup>2</sup> Interest was such that in 1865 the R. and A. considered it necessary to employ a professional, Tom Morris, at a salary of £50 per annum to oversee the upkeep of the Links.<sup>3</sup> Nor was interest merely local, or even Scottish; by the early 1870's, professional golf matches were reported even in the soberest of London dailies, the Daily News and the Times.<sup>4</sup>

Visitors, attracted either by the golf or the seaside amenities, or by both, came in increasing numbers. By 1865 two house-letting agencies had been established to provide visitors with accommodation.<sup>5</sup> Though houses to let were relatively scarce, there was no shortage of furnished apartments or lodgings, vacated by University and Madras College students at the beginning of the summer.<sup>6</sup> Two distinct seasons came to exist in St. Andrews - the visitors' season extending from July to October when the resident population migrated elsewhere in order to let their houses at remunerative rents; and the scholastic season extending through the University and Madras sessions, when society settled down into 'serene gravity' once more.<sup>7</sup> Westwood's Parochial Directory of 1861 lists six hotels, eight boarding houses and over 60 houses in which furnished lodgings were available.<sup>8</sup> Though complaints were sometimes made of visitors being mulcted by extortionate rents, most people were willing to pay the extra since St. Andrews was 'no upstart village like the Bridge of Allan.....fitted up for the honour and glory of bagmen as places of refuge'.<sup>9</sup> By 1870, the

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1. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.179
  2. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 4th 1869
  3. H.S.C. Everard: A History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews 1754-1900 (Edinburgh 1907) p.180
  4. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 6th 1873
  5. Ibid June 10th 1865
  6. Fife Herald June 14th 1849
  7. Henry Farnie: Handybook of St. Andrews (Cupar 1859) p.93
  8. Westwood's Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross (Cupar 1862) p.190-200
  9. St. Andrews Gazette July 4th 1866



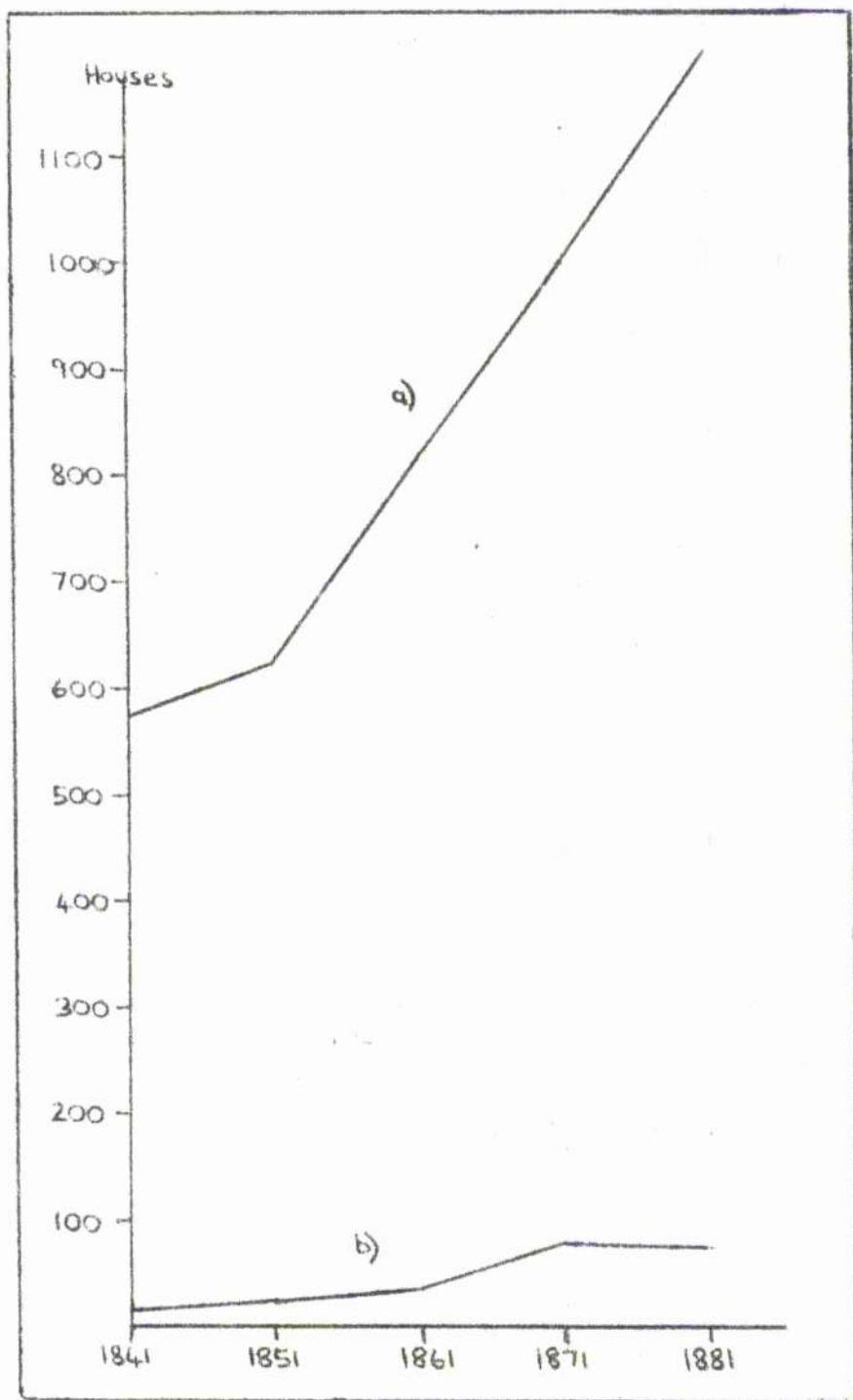
Graph IV.3. Population of St. Andrews 1831-1881.  
(from Official Census Returns).

Gazette could boast that 'the house agents' lists present to the eyes nothing but a number of black marks indicating that each house is let. Our public promenades are crowded every day in the Links, the sands, the Lead Braes and the Kinkell Braes - all have their quota of visitors. The bathing grounds and establishments are in full requisition - the streets present a scene of animation and gaiety. In short we are at the height of the season'.<sup>1</sup>

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Nor did the increasing popularity of the burgh as a resort diminish its attractions as a residential centre. The population increased rapidly from 4194 in 1831 to 6320 in 1871; and during the same period the number of houses increased from 559 in 1841 to 925 in 1871. (See Graph IV.3 and 4). To this period owe their origin Bell Street (1842-58),<sup>2</sup> Playfair Terrace (1846),<sup>3</sup> Hope Street and Abbotsford Crescent (1846),<sup>4</sup> Howard Place (1849),<sup>5</sup> Gladstone Crescent, Lockhart Place and Gillespie Terrace (1846-53),<sup>6</sup> Alfred Place (1863),<sup>7</sup> Alexandra Place (1863),<sup>8</sup> Queens Gardens<sup>9</sup> and Ellice Place.<sup>10</sup> Vacant plots throughout the city were bought to provide commodious houses for the ever-increasing residential population. The capital which financed this building programme was almost entirely of local origin with the notable exception of James Hope Scott, a descendant of Sir Walter Scott, who financed the ambitious imitation of Edinburgh's New Town which is Abbotsford Crescent, Hope Street and Howard Place.<sup>11</sup> Much of the remainder of the new building was constructed by speculative local builders such as John MacGregor, John Mackintosh and John and James Farquharson - Queen Street, Queen's Terrace, Dempster Terrace and Guthrie Place, for example;<sup>12</sup> others were built with capital provided by local businessmen such as John Fleming, a china merchant, Henry Gibson, wood merchant, George Bruce, joiner, Dr. John Adamson, James Loudon and local solicitors William Murray, John Buddo and James Balfour -

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1. St. Andrews Gazette Aug 13th 1870
  2. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.163
  3. Ibid p.163
  4. Ibid p.163
  5. Ibid p.163
  6. Fife Herald Sept 1st 1853
  7. St. Andrews Gazette April 4th 1863
  8. Ibid
  9. Russell Kirk: St. Andrews (London 1954) p.163
  10. St. Andrews Gazette April 4th 1863
  11. Burgh of St. Andrews Valuation Roll 1859-60
  12. Ibid 1859-1870



Graph IV.4. Housing in St. Andrews 1841-1881.

(from Official Census Returns)

a). Total of Houses.

b). Uninhabited Houses.

as with Gillespie Terrace, Fleming Place, Golf Place, Bell Street and John Street.<sup>1</sup> By 1860 it was confidently stated that 'to families of limited income, no other town in the kingdom offers the same advantages of a cheap and thorough education. To the health seeker also, St. Andrews present peculiar attractions'.<sup>2</sup> Certainly few towns of 6,000 inhabitants could boast a University, a large school like the Madras College, two ladies seminaries and a variety of boarding schools for boys, mostly specialising in training boys for a military career.<sup>3</sup> By 1871, the first year after the introduction of the 1st Education Act, there were 64 schoolmasters, teachers and governesses in St. Andrews or approximately 1% of the population.<sup>4</sup>

The popularity of the town as a residential centre disguised the disgusting overall standards of sanitation prevalent in the burgh. The drainage and water supply of the town had been an object of concern since 1831,<sup>5</sup> particularly in the fishing quarter and other working class districts. In 1842 the Council expressed concern for 'the health and comfort of the fishermen and of the lower classes, which are at present exposed to the most unwholesome effluvia from the putrefaction of animal and vegetable substances'.<sup>6</sup> Dung-hills and open sewers were particularly dangerous as sources of cholera and typhoid epidemics,<sup>7</sup> and the reality behind Playfair's improvements was clearly shown in Adamson's pamphlet of 1862<sup>8</sup> which revealed that 'a closer scrutiny of our best streets reveals the fact that many houses are not free from the ordinary causes' which invite the presence of typhus or typhoid.<sup>9</sup> Of 796 inhabited houses in the town, only 90 were connected with drains. Ash pits and dung-hills abounded, and there were a staggering 362 pig stys. Such dung-hills were proudly regarded as a source of manure, but the cholera epidemics of 1849 and 1861 had been clear proof of their dangers. The death rate between 1855 and 1861 averaged 20.5 per 1,000, which

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1. Burgh of St. Andrews Valuation Roll 1859-1870
  2. M. Fletcher: Guide to St. Andrews (Edinburgh and St. Andrews 1860)p.4
  3. Henry Farnie: Handybook of St. Andrews (Cupar 1859) p.93
  4. Enumerator's Schedule, Official Census Returns 1871; GEN 1871/453
  5. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes Aug 8th 1831
  6. Ibid Nov 30th 1842
  7. Ibid Jan 3rd 1848
  8. J.I. Adamson: The Sanitary Condition of St. Andrews (Cupar 1862)
  9. Ibid p.19

exceeded the figure of 18 for Fife - though compared favourably with that of 22 for Edinburgh, 29 for Dundee and 30 for Glasgow; that for Scotland as a whole was 21. These figures show that the image of 'healthy' St. Andrews was largely illusory. Indeed, of the 142 deaths in the burgh in 1861, almost  $\frac{1}{3}$  were directly attributed to typhus, typhoid or related diseases.<sup>1</sup>

Though this report prompted the Town Council into improving the drainage and general sanitation of the burgh,<sup>2</sup> its true significance was that it showed the Victorian tourist was able to accommodate himself to less than rigorous standards of hygiene. Though St. Andrews and Elie prided themselves on their healthy situation and climate,<sup>3</sup> the reality was that they were only marginally less insanitary than their neighbours in the East Neuk. In Elie, for example, the water supply was entirely dependent upon wells until 1883, when a gravitational supply was obtained in co-operation with St. Monance,<sup>4</sup> and an adequate drainage system was not acquired until still later. In St. Andrews, visitors were complaining in 1871 of 'the discreditable, dirty state of the place',<sup>5</sup> and that the 'odour is not that of sanctity, but of decaying matter'.<sup>6</sup> The absence of industry and commerce had done little to materially improve the cleanliness of either burgh; sanitation depended, rather, on the energy of the Town Council.

By the 1850's, the other burghs in the East Neuk had begun to realize that the presence of a thriving fishing industry was not in itself incompatible with the development of tourism. As early as 1852 Pittenweem had been attempting to project itself as a seaside resort.<sup>7</sup> By 1864 the ambitious burgh magistrates were considering

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1. J. Adamson: The Sanitary Conditions of St. Andrews (Cupar 1862) p.19 et seq. for information on death rates, cess pits, dunghills etc.
  2. St. Andrews' Town Council Minutes Jan 4th 1862; May 5th 1862
  3. See Rev. George Milligan: N.S.A. vol.IX p.280 who thought Elie 'one of the cleanest and most healthy (places) anywhere to be met with'; and East of Fife Record Oct 3rd 1857; April 8th 1870. The St. Andrews Gazette July 14th 1865 was more accurate than it realized when writing that St. Andrews was no place 'for hypochondriacs, the hysterical and the effeminate'.
  4. East of Fife Record April 6th 1883
  5. St. Andrews Gazette Aug 19th 1871
  6. Ibid July 22nd 1871
  7. Pittenweem Register May 8th 1852; June 13th 1852; Oct 16th 1852

providing bathing coaches,<sup>1</sup> and suitable accommodation for visitors became increasingly scarce in the late 1860's<sup>2</sup>. Beautiful beaches, picturesque harbours and golf links were not the monopoly of St. Andrews and Elie but could be found to a greater or lesser extent at each of the East Neuk burghs. If St. Monance was criticized for total lack of drains and impure water supply,<sup>3</sup> then the burgh was no more guilty than neighbouring Elie. By 1870 the monopoly which St. Andrews and Elie had enjoyed in the increasingly important tourist trade in the East Neuk was already over. Though both were to enjoy continued prosperity until 1914, St. Andrews dominant position was to be entirely due to its unique position as the home of golf; Elie, on the other hand, increasingly became regarded as only one of a number of seaside resorts in the East Neuk, differing from equally popular neighbours such as Crail only in the character, but not the volume, of its visitors.

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1. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 17th 1864
  2. East of Fife Record July 31st 1868
  3. Ibid April 1st 1870

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CHAPTER V.

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THE EXTENSION OF TOURISM IN THE EAST NEUK, 1870-1895.

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Though tourism in the East Neuk had primarily developed in those burghs - St. Andrews and Elie - where the fishing industry was of relatively little significance to the economy of the town, in England, resorts where fishing was still important such as Scarborough, Whitby, Yarmouth and Hastings, became increasingly popular in the mid-19th century; such resorts were particularly popular with artists, since fishermen seemed to have a special dignity - even when they were quietly making a profit out of visitors by charging them too much for taking them out for a sail.<sup>1</sup> Thus, though the railway between Kilconquhar and Anstruther, which opened in 1863,<sup>2</sup> had been largely promoted, and subscribed to, by the fishing interest in the East Neuk, it was welcomed and encouraged by those who sought to make St. Monance, Pittenweem and Anstruther more accessible to would be visitors. In 1864, Pittenweem was introduced to the public as a 'new marine watering place', putting in a modest claim for a share of the annual inundation of visitors who flocked to the north side of the Forth 'to appreciate the healthful breezes, fine shores, excellent bathing and placid scenery'. Its attraction included pure air, abundant water supply, clean well-paved streets, facilities for bathing, boating and fishing, sites of geological and historical interest, and the moderate cost of both food and accommodation.<sup>3</sup> By, 1868, Pittenweem was annually attracting a steady stream of visitors which, though not by any means comparable to the number visiting Elie or St. Andrews, was still large enough to create excess demand for the limited supply of accommodation.<sup>4</sup>

In Anstruther, too, there had been those who had advocated the development of the burgh as a resort and residential centre as early as 1857. In that year, a 'Public Character' had written to his local newspaper to point out that only the absence of a number of 'suitable villas or even genteel houses and shops erected, and these tastefully and

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1. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.121
2. East of Fife Record, Sept 5th 1863
3. St. Andrews Gazette, Sept 17th 1864
4. East of Fife Record, July 31st 1868

judiciously laid out' prevented families from coming to reside in Anstruther, and even suggested converting the harbour into a bathing pool.<sup>1</sup> Nor was this merely an isolated opinion. The East of Fife Record itself opined that only the construction of more houses of a suitable description would allow Anstruther to 'prosper as it should do, in one respect at least, as a sea-side residence for those who wish to spend their days where plenty of the purest and healthiest fresh air can be had'.<sup>2</sup>

Almost simultaneously, Crail too, was beginning to awaken to the possibility of promoting itself for summer visitors. The major obstacle to such progress was the almost legendary remoteness of the burgh,<sup>3</sup> positioned as it was on the extreme north-east corner of Fife. The extension of the Leven and East of Fife Railway in 1863 had not reached as far as Crail. Indeed, the line connecting Crail to both St. Andrews and Anstruther was not commenced until 1880, nor formally opened until June 1887.<sup>4</sup> Neither did Crail have the advantage of a harbour suitable for passenger landings from steamers. What the burgh did possess though, were beautiful sea-beaches, a picturesque harbour and streets, and, the increasingly important advantage in view of the popularity of the game of golf in the latter half of the 19th century, of golf links at Sauchope to the east of the town, and a Golfing Society that had been instituted in 1786.<sup>5</sup> In 1860, a guide book had stated that Crail 'is socially and physically a desolate place' whose inhabitants 'living like so many snails in their shells do not care to put themselves about for enticing visitors'.<sup>6</sup> Yet by 1870, things had so far advanced that the burgh authorities were being criticised for not investing part of the annual revenues of the town in order 'to make it one of the best and healthiest watering places or summer retreats in this part of Scotland'.<sup>7</sup>

Three factors were at work by the 1870's which facilitated the

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1. East of Fife Record, June 3rd 1857
  2. Ibid, June 26th 1858
  3. E. J. G. Mackay: History of Fife and Kinross (Edinburgh 1896) p.282 relates that one Fife man asked another whether he had been abroad, to which the latter replied 'Na; but I once kent a man who had been to Crail'.
  4. East of Fife Record, May 27th 1887
  5. Henry Farnie: Handybook of the Fife Coast from Queensferry to Fifeness (Cupar c.1860) p.188
  6. Ibid p.188
  7. East of Fife Record, March 11th 1870

	Coopers	Gutters & Packers	Labourers	Total Employed in Curing	Fishermen
1850-54	93	1433	1001	2527	2438
1855-59	207	3211	1418	4836	2273
1860-64	195	3113	1521	4829	2759
1865-69	113	2102	938	3153	2542
1870-74	85	568	130	783	2781
1875-79	80	335	106	521	3102
1880-84	76	345	84	505	3560
1885-89	67	228	75	370	3749

Table V.1. Employment in the East Neuk Fisheries 1850-1889.  
 (annual averages for quincennial periods; derived from  
Anstruther District Private Herring Books 1850-1889;  
 AF19/151-6.)

development of Crail, Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance as resorts. Of these, perhaps the most important - at least for the latter three burghs - was the decline of the Firth of Forth summer herring fishery during the 1860's. In 1860, 410 boats were engaged in the fishing from the various East Neuk ports, and over 83,000 crans were landed in the district.<sup>1</sup> But after 1860, the Lammis drave declined catastrophically in the Firth of Forth; and though at first both fishermen and curers confidently expected a revival, when it became obvious that declining catches were not merely short-term fluctuations, both the number of curers and of fishermen engaged in the East Neuk drave rapidly declined too. By the 1870's, the decline was so marked that all the Anstruther and Cellardyke boats were absent in the north east and only a handful of Pittenweem, St. Monance and Buckhaven boats fished in the Fife during the Lammis drave;<sup>2</sup> and it was on this much reduced scale that the Lammis fishing was to continue in the East Neuk.

The effect of this decline upon the economy of the fishing villages of the East Neuk was considerable, though the fishermen themselves suffered the least, financially, since most were willing and able to fish for herring wherever they might be found, be it the Aberdeenshire coast, East Anglia, the Shetlands or Ireland.<sup>3</sup> But other sectors of the community were more restricted and did not enjoy the same flexibility in pursuing their livelihoods. Most severely affected were those who had been directly engaged in the local curing industry - coopers, gutters, packers, carters and labourers. Though some curers managed to continue in business locally by supplementing the meagre local catch with herrings imported from other districts,<sup>4</sup> the numbers employed in the curing industry slumped dramatically between 1860 and 1890 (See Table V.1). Local tradesman, too, suffered the economic consequences of the decline in the drave;<sup>5</sup> nor could they welcome the absence of a large sector of the population for long periods during the year, as the

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1. Letters and Reports, Dec 1860; AF19/3/4
  2. East of Fife Record Aug 4th 1871
  3. Ibid, Sept 17th 1869
  4. Ibid, Nov 27th 1868; Oct 29th 1869; Dec 1st 1871; Nov 16th 1877; Dec 14th 1877.
  5. Ibid, Nov 27th 1863

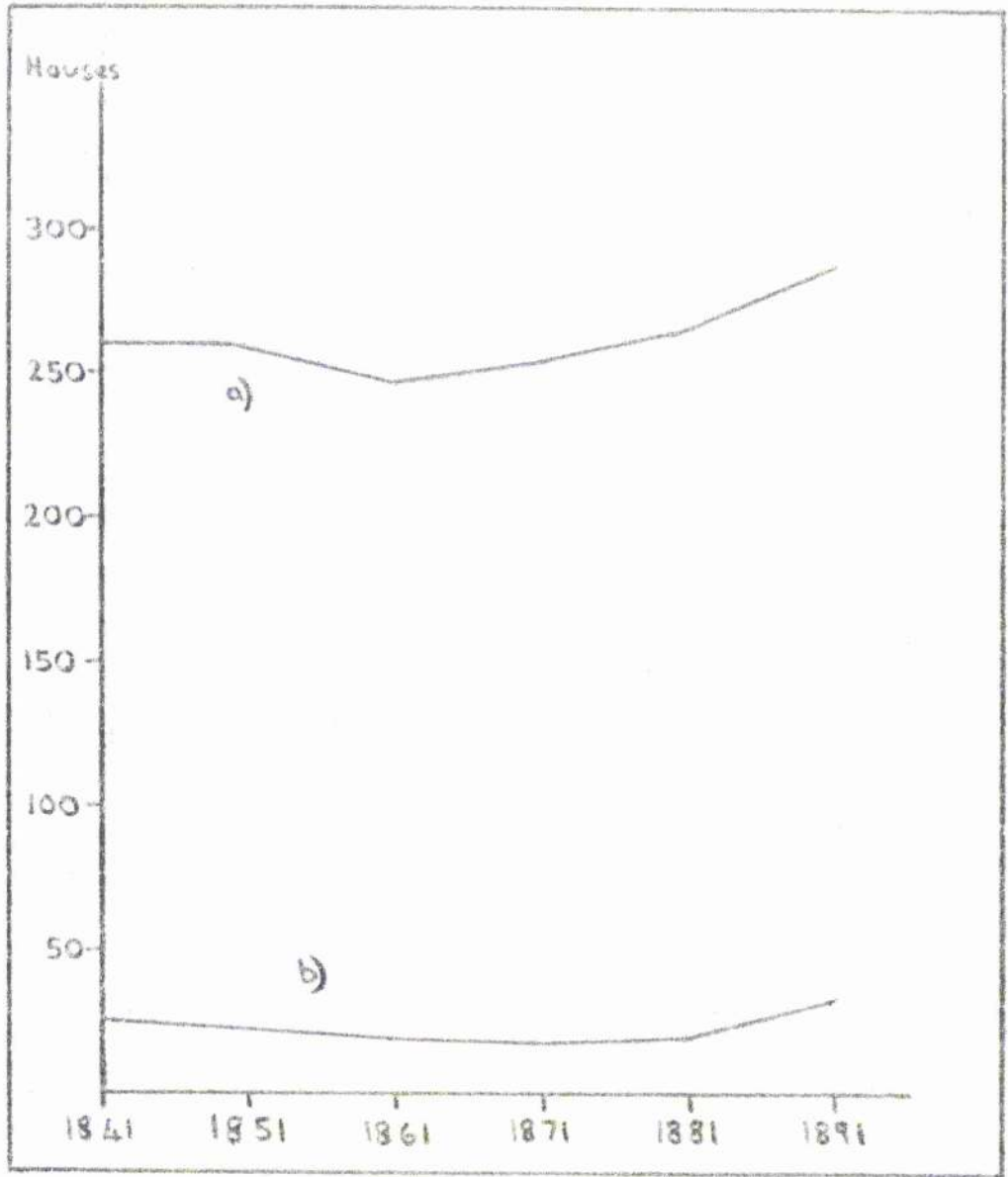
harbours of St. Monance, Pittenweem and Anstruther were deserted by local fishermen seeking the herring elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

In view of this economic background, it was therefore propitious for the East Neuk fishing ports that they were in a position to benefit from two distinct trends, which were to be a feature of tourism throughout Britain in the last decades of the 19th century. Firstly, an increasing number of people were in a position to be able to afford a day, or a week, at the seaside, so that the holiday by the sea was no longer the prerogative of merely the upper and upper middle classes; and secondly, as a result of this, the more elitist among the visitors left popular bathing resorts to seek 'undiscovered' out-of-the-way villages.<sup>2</sup> Thus Crail, for example, or Pittenweem, could expect to benefit from the increasing number of tourists in general, and from tourists seeking hitherto undeveloped resorts in particular.

Crail, despite its isolation - or perhaps because of it - was the most popular of the newer resorts almost from the beginning. By 1872, the East of Fife Record was publishing visitors' lists for Crail - a service previously only extended to Elie and Earlsferry;<sup>3</sup> Pittenweem was to be included in 1876, Anstruther in 1877 and St. Monance in 1890, which illustrates with reasonable accuracy the relative importance of tourism in the various burghs.<sup>4</sup> But in each of the burghs there still persisted a less realistic section of the community who thought that Crail, Pittenweem, St. Monance and Anstruther could yet enjoy a prosperous future as commercial and industrial centres; in 1873, for example, a suggestion was made to form a joint stock company to promote manufacturing industry in Crail.<sup>5</sup> But the entire history of the burghs, their size and their geographical position dictated that it would require an immense injection of capital to give them more than the restricted commercial prosperity derived from the fisheries; the more percipient advocated gardens, bowling greens and croquet lawns in preference to factories.<sup>6</sup>

By 1880, such facilities were increasing in demand. Crail, even

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1. East of Fife Record, June 6th 1873
  2. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.100-105
  3. St. Andrews, having its own local paper, received only fringe coverage in the East of Fife Record.
  4. Visitors' Lists were published in the East of Fife Record between July and mid-September.
  5. East of Fife Record, July 25th 1873
  6. Ibid, June 20th 1873



Graph V.1. Expansion of Housing in Crail 1841-1891  
(showing the increase in the number of uninhabited houses)

- a) Inhabited Houses
- b) Uninhabited Houses.

without the advantages bestowed by the railways, had already surpassed such old-established Fife resorts as Leven and Largo in popularity, attracting visitors from all the major urban centres of Scotland, together with a sprinkling from England and the Colonies<sup>1</sup> - and the opening of the proposed Anstruther and St. Andrews Railway was confidently expected to bring more.<sup>2</sup> To accommodate the increasing number of visitors, new houses were erected in the burgh,<sup>3</sup> the number of houses, which had decreased from 286 to 266 between 1841 and 1861, now increased to 284 in 1881, and, with the added impetus given to tourism by the opening of the railway in 1887, to 322 in 1891. (See Graph V.1). In a town in which uninhabited houses had previously been a constant reminder of declining prosperity, they now became a symbol of the new prosperity brought to the burgh by the summer season.<sup>4</sup> Evidence of the growing popularity of Crail was to be seen in the opening of the new five-bedroomed East of Neuk Hotel in 1884.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, a Lawn Tennis Club was formed,<sup>6</sup> a facility without which any resort with fashionable pretensions was considered incomplete at that time.<sup>7</sup> The Council, too, was eager to add to the attractions of the resort, though, characteristically of most seaside resorts, it had attached greater importance to planting trees in the Marketgate<sup>8</sup> - the main street - than to improving the burgh's water supply.<sup>9</sup> However, the Council was alive to the importance of golf as an attraction for visitors,<sup>10</sup> and when the old Sauchope Links became insufficient in meeting the demands of the growing number of golfers, it was active in promoting the acquisition of Balcomie Links as a golf course, and in employing Tom Morris to lay out a nine hole course there in 1895.<sup>11</sup> Moreover,

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1. Visitors' Lists indicate that about half of the visitors came from Edinburgh.
  2. East of Fife Record, Aug 6th 1880
  3. E.g. the row of villas known as Downie Terrace.
  4. See Graph V.1.
  5. East of Fife Record, May 30th 1884
  6. Ibid, June 27th 1884
  7. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.114
  8. Minutes of the Town Council of Crail, Aug 24th 1887
  9. Only after continual promptings from the local Board of Supervision to improve their water supply did the Town Council finally act in 1887. See Minutes of the Town Council of Crail, Nov 27th 1884; Dec 22nd 1884; Oct 1st 1886; July 15th 1887.
  10. Ibid, April 7th 1890; Dec 3rd 1894.
  11. St. Andrews Citizen, May 18th 1895

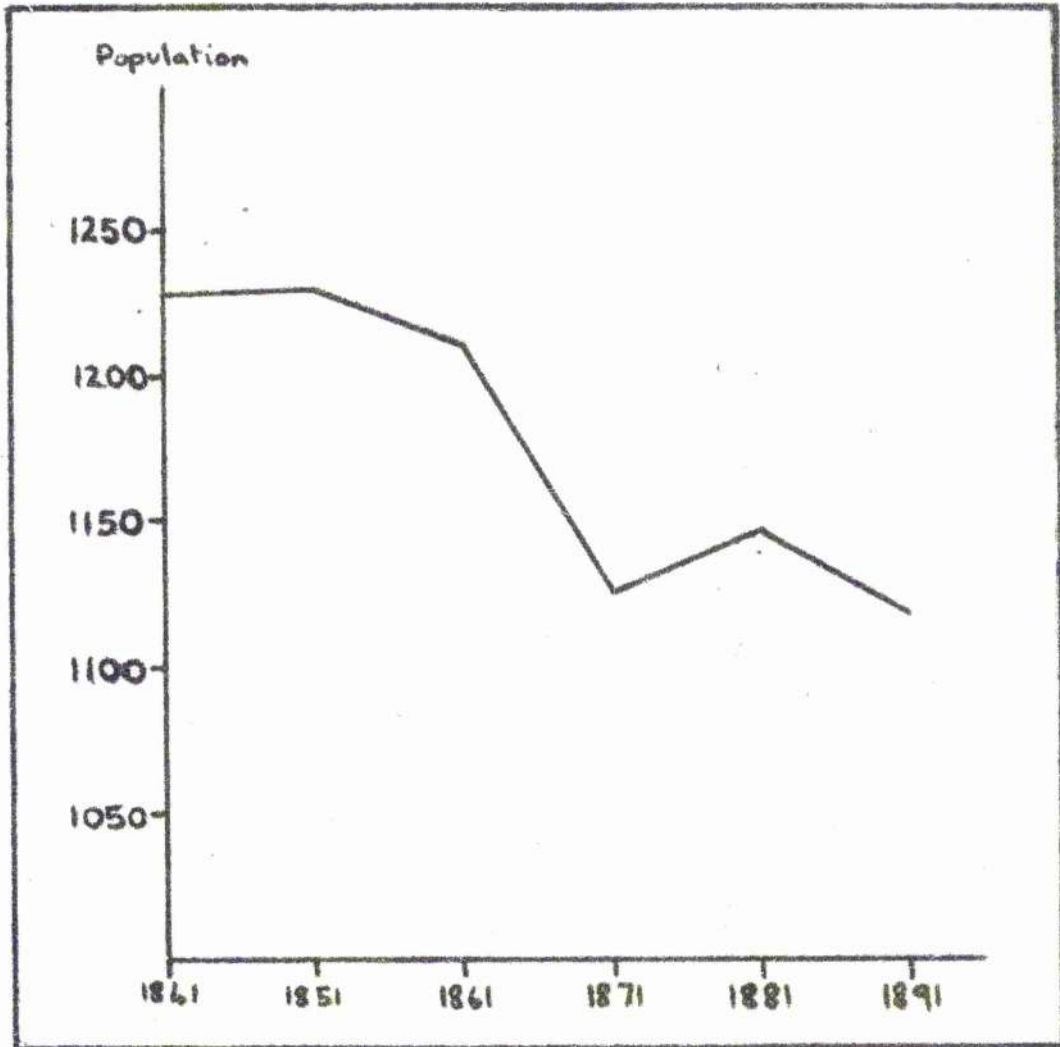
for the convenience of visitors, an hourly omnibus service was established between the burgh and the Links throughout the summer season.<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1890's, Crail had established for itself a nation-wide reputation as a fashionable resort to frequent in the search for peace and repose. Miss Amy Davidson in 'Women' wrote of Crail that it was 'a most enjoyable resort to those who, tiring of fashionable places with their brass bands and smart dresses, are prepared to dispense with luxuries and thoroughly enjoy a free, unconventional life'.<sup>2</sup> This opinion was endorsed by the Scots Observer which stated that 'Crail can never become as popular with the holiday-monger as some other towns of Fife . . . . By no possibility can it be converted into such a duodecimo Edinburgh as Elie; and in golf, ecclesiastical antiquities and gentlemanlike feeling, it will never be able to compete with St. Andrews. It is a place for retirement, for reflection'.<sup>3</sup> The price paid for this popularity, however, was a decline in population similar to that experienced by Elie earlier in the century.<sup>4</sup> The population which had steadily increased between 1841 and 1861 under the influence of the peripheral prosperity enjoyed by the burgh during the East Neuk fishing boom of that period, steadily declined during the ensuing three decades (See Graph V.2). But by way of compensation, 700 visitors were residing in Crail by August of 1891.<sup>5</sup>

Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance experienced a more modest growth as resorts, and by their very nature relied upon the trade of a less fashionable class of visitor. Standards of sanitation were certainly much lower in what were still very active fishing ports. Epidemics of scarlet fever were common in all three burghs throughout the 1870's.<sup>6</sup> In Anstruther, drains had to be continually washed with calcium chloride and carbolic acid to prevent outbreaks of typhoid;<sup>7</sup> but cases still occurred, and as late as 1890 an epidemic was claiming children's lives in Pittenweem,<sup>8</sup> which was generally considered to be

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1. Rev. John Jackson: Guide to Crail and the Neighbourhood (Cupar 1896) p.4
  2. Included in East of Fife Record, Aug 8th 1890
  3. Ibid, Sept 5th 1890
  4. See above p.110
  5. East of Fife Record, Aug 14th 1891
  6. Ibid, Nov 13th 1874; Jan 22nd 1875; March 5th 1875
  7. Ibid, June 30th 1871
  8. Ibid, Oct 31st 1890





Graph V.2. Population of Crail 1841-1891.

the cleanest of the fishing towns.<sup>1</sup>

St. Monance was notoriously filthy. In 1870, its drainage system consisted entirely of open sewers meandering through, and across, the streets.<sup>2</sup> In 1877 the Fife Journal opined that 'surely there are very few places anywhere in which the sanitation can be as bad, and of which an epidemic of fever could make so much'.<sup>3</sup> Though a sector of the local community claimed when opposing a new water supply in 1881 that 'we have had no other supply from time immemorial, and we have less ill health and less disease than other places',<sup>4</sup> the Medical Officer, in a report of the following year, described the sanitary condition of the town as 'a disgrace to any civilised community'<sup>5</sup> - an opinion shared by the Inverness Courier which could not believe 'that men and women can live in the presence of such dirt, such odours, such shiftlessness'.<sup>6</sup> A new water supply was introduced in 1883 in company with Elie,<sup>7</sup> but the drainage system remained substantially unaltered, and typhoid fever was again rampant in St. Monance in 1890.<sup>8</sup>

However, sufficient people seemed willing to ignore sanitary imperfections to ensure a steady flow of visitors. More annoying, apparently, were the attentions of scions of the fishing community who delighted in greeting the bathers with stones and abusive language.<sup>9</sup> Yet these same young ruffians were themselves a increasing attraction for visiting artists committing scenes of the various fishing villages to canvas. Crail, still today the delight of compilers of scenic calendars, was particularly popular as a subject for watercolours; by 1884 the burgh was describing itself as 'the resort of artists'.<sup>10</sup> But Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance had almost as many artistic visitors, both amateur and professional, painting the harbours, the quaint streets, old fishermen or groups of barefooted young boys.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, at the Glasgow

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1. East of Fife Record, Sept 1st 1882; quoting the Inverness Courier which called it 'an aristocrat among the Fife towns' without 'such an overweening smell of the fish industry'.
  2. Ibid, April 1st 1870
  3. Fife Journal, April 4th 1877
  4. East of Fife Record, Aug 12th 1881
  5. Ibid, Aug 25th 1882
  6. Quoted in East of Fife Record, Sept 1st 1882
  7. Ibid, April 6th 1883
  8. Ibid, Aug 29th 1890
  9. Ibid, Aug 18th 1876
  10. Ibid, Aug 29th 1884
  11. Ibid, July 22nd 1881; July 17th 1891; Dec 11th 1891

Exhibition of Fine Arts in 1892, nine artists exhibited paintings of East Neuk coastal scenes.<sup>1</sup>

But the fishing villages were far from being mere bohemian resorts. The major attraction for visitors was bathing, and local authorities were not slow to improve facilities. Though the beaches at Pittenweem, Anstruther and St. Monance could not compete with those of Crail, Elie or St. Andrews in either extent or quality,<sup>2</sup> attempts were made to render them as attractive as possible. In 1881, the local council at Anstruther expended £45 to convert the West Haven into a proper bathing place,<sup>3</sup> whilst in the same year a subscription list was opened in Pittenweem to improve the bathing ground at the West Braes.<sup>4</sup> But as the number of visitors gradually increased, so, too, did the ambitions of the various burghs. By 1890 it was confidently anticipated that:

'Anstruther may yet thrive as Crail is thriving, indeed as all the Fife south coast line is thriving from Leven east, with patronising sojourners and visitors from Glasgow and that part of the West Country. The estuaries of the Clyde are about exhausted with villadom and giganity; and of late years the Glasgow folk have discovered that the air from the North Sea is more bracing . . . It is a pity for many reasons to see an old Custom House shut up;<sup>5</sup> nevertheless the close of the account is not yet with Anstruther, for the overflowing wealth and movement of Glasgow has turned its thoughts eastwards'.<sup>6</sup>

In St. Monance it was hoped that the absence of whole families during the summer fishing season could be turned to the advantage of the town, by encouraging the fishermen to let their houses to summer visitors in July and August.<sup>7</sup> In 1889, citizens of Pittenweem and Anstruther, with the encouragement of their respective councils, united to form the East of Fife Golf Club, and acquired the use of a piece of land at Grangemuir, upon which a nine hole course was laid out.<sup>8</sup> By that date, a golf course was considered something of a sine qua non among visitors to the Fife Coast, and in 1896

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1. Quoted in East of Fife Record, Feb 12th 1892
  2. East of Fife Record, Aug 1st 1884; July 21st 1893
  3. Ibid, Jan 21st 1881;                      4. Ibid, June 24th 1881
  5. The Custom house at Anstruther, established in 1710, was closed in 1890 owing to the decay of trade.
  6. East of Fife Record, Aug 22nd 1890
  7. Ibid, Sept 15th 1893                      8. Ibid, Aug 2nd 1889

Cellardyke, too, was attempting to acquire one.<sup>1</sup> Other facilities for tourists included a bowling green which was opened at Anstruther in 1894,<sup>2</sup> and the formation of a Lawn Tennis Club at Pittenweem in the same year.<sup>3</sup> In both burghs, Visitors' Concerts were enthusiastically organized to raise funds for further improvements.<sup>4</sup>

Compared to the crowds of visitors flocking to St. Andrews, Elie or even Crail, the numbers arriving at Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance were still small in the early 1890's. In Pittenweem, the most popular of the three, they barely exceeded two or three hundred - or less than half the number visiting Crail at the height of the season.<sup>5</sup> In Anstruther the fact that 40 people had been bathing at the Hynd at one time was noted with great satisfaction;<sup>6</sup> whilst in St. Monance only a few families were renting accommodation in 1893, though day-trippers from neighbouring resorts were a common sight.<sup>7</sup> But in each of the burghs the spending power of the summer visitors was keenly appreciated, and their arrival in greater numbers hopefully anticipated and promoted.

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No particular concern was experienced in either St. Andrews or Elie at this growing competition from their neighbouring burghs in the East Neuk. Each had already by the 1890's established for itself a particular reputation and position as a resort. Elie underwent a period of rapid development as a resort in the quarter century after 1870, as did, in its wake, the neighbouring old royal burgh of Earlsferry. The qualities emphasised by promoters of the resort were its simplicity and lack of vulgarity. A Fife guide book of 1882 described Elie as 'the most favoured and frequented of all the Fife summer resorts', a place where there was no theatre and no German band, but only bathing, a sandy beach and plentiful seaware to collect.<sup>8</sup> Six years later, Elie was said to be a resort 'a long way removed from the kind of place which in the south passes by that name, the place which is vulgarised by the tuneful nigger and the discordant

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1. St. Andrews Citizen, Oct 10th 1896.
  2. East of Fife Record, Aug 31st 1894.
  3. Ibid, April 20th 1894.
  4. Ibid, Aug 25th 1893; St. Andrews Citizen, Aug 24th 1895
  5. See above p.129
  6. East of Fife Record, Aug 25th 1893
  7. Ibid, July 21st 1893.
  8. 'Kilrounie': The Kingdom, A Handbook to Fife (Edinburgh 1882) p.39

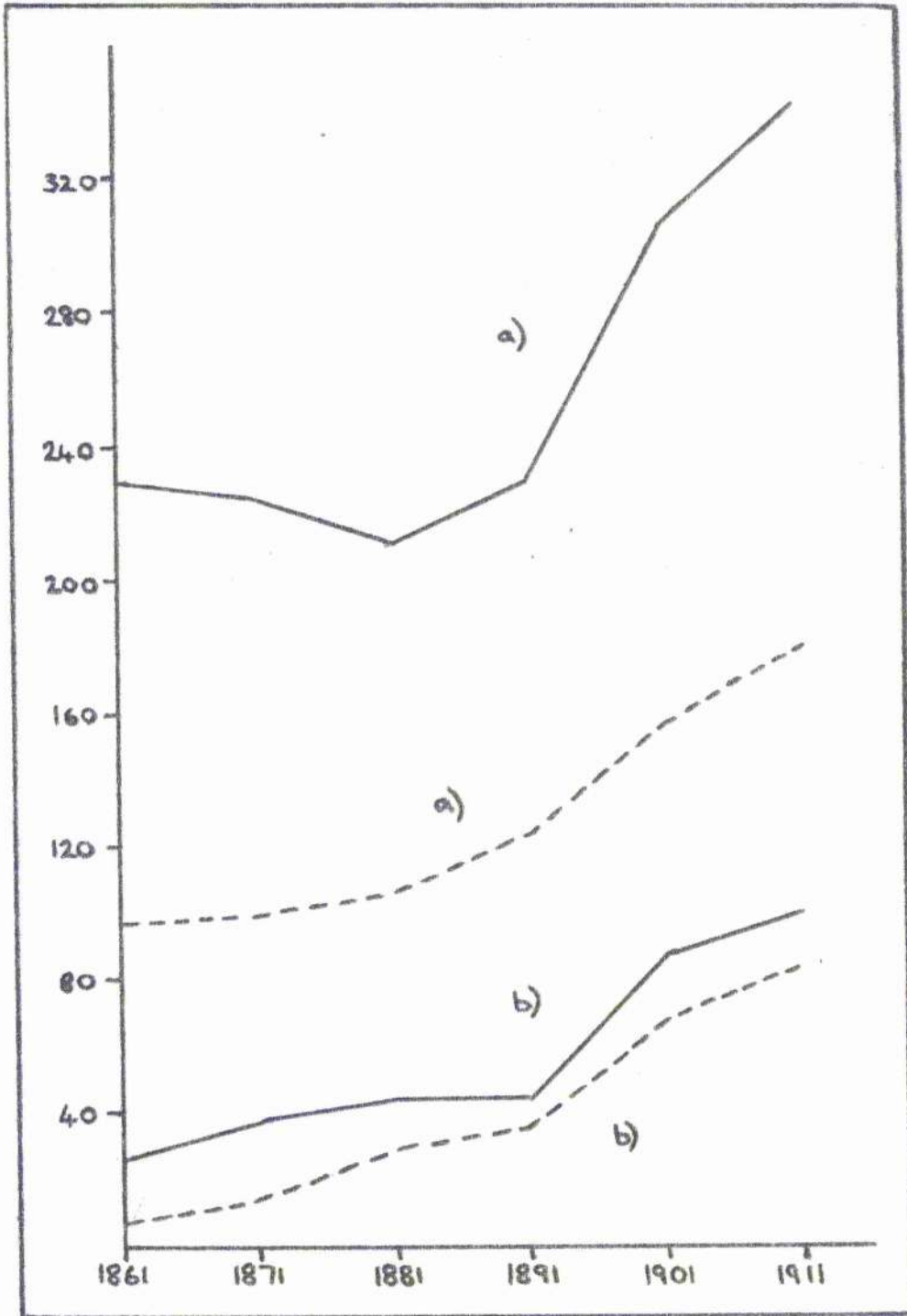
brass bands.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly there was a demand for a resort of Elie's character. Every year brought a larger influx of visitors, predominantly from Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> But as Elie's reputation spread in the 1880's, holiday-makers came from further afield, and by 1886 about 10% of all the visitors were from England - principally London - together with a sprinkling from the Colonies, Europe and the U.S.A.<sup>3</sup> After 1880, the demand for accommodation in the two burghs frequently exceeded the supply, and disappointed visitors were forced to go elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> The popularity of the resort became such that in 1885 the steamer 'Stirling Castle' from Leith was accompanied by the 'Effort' to carry excess baggage and passengers arriving to take up residence during the peak month of August.<sup>5</sup> Despite a wave of new building in Elie, Earlsferry accommodated an increasing number of the visitors, and the interests of the two burghs became closely identified. In 1886, the Leith steamship company, Galloway's, erected a temporary jetty at Earlsferry for the landing of passengers during the season,<sup>6</sup> and this was replaced by a permanent pier in 1888.<sup>7</sup>

By 1896 the number of visitors to the two burghs reached as high as 3,000 in August, and accommodation of all descriptions had to be extended to cope with the demand. In Elie, the number of houses increased from 211 in 1881, to 296 by 1901; whilst in Earlsferry the number rose from 106 to 157 during the same period.(See Graph V.3). In addition a 22 bed-room hotel, the Marine, was built in Elie by a joint stock company, formed by a number of Glasgow and Edinburgh visitors, at a cost of £6,000.<sup>8</sup> But even this was insufficient, and within a year a further £3,000 of capital was raised to build a 14 bedroom extension.<sup>9</sup> A further amenity was provided by the construction of a new restaurant in Elie in 1896 at a cost of £2,500.<sup>10</sup> In Earlsferry, too, the Golf Tavern underwent extension in 1894.<sup>11</sup>

Three thousand visitors in August was difficult to reconcile

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1. East of Fife Record, Dec 7th 1888
  2. Visitors' Lists, East of Fife Record
  3. Ibid
  4. Ibid, Aug 13th 1880
  5. Ibid, Aug 7th 1885
  6. Earlsferry Town Council Minutes, June 5th 1886
  7. Ibid, May 15th 1888
  8. East of Fife Record, April 5th 1889
  9. Ibid, Jan 17th 1890
  10. St. Andrews Citizen, April 25th 1896
  11. Earlsferry Town Council Minutes, Aug 6th 1894.



Graph V.3. Housing in Elie and Earlsferry 1861-1911.

(from Official Census Returns).

————— Elie.

- - - - - Earlsferry.

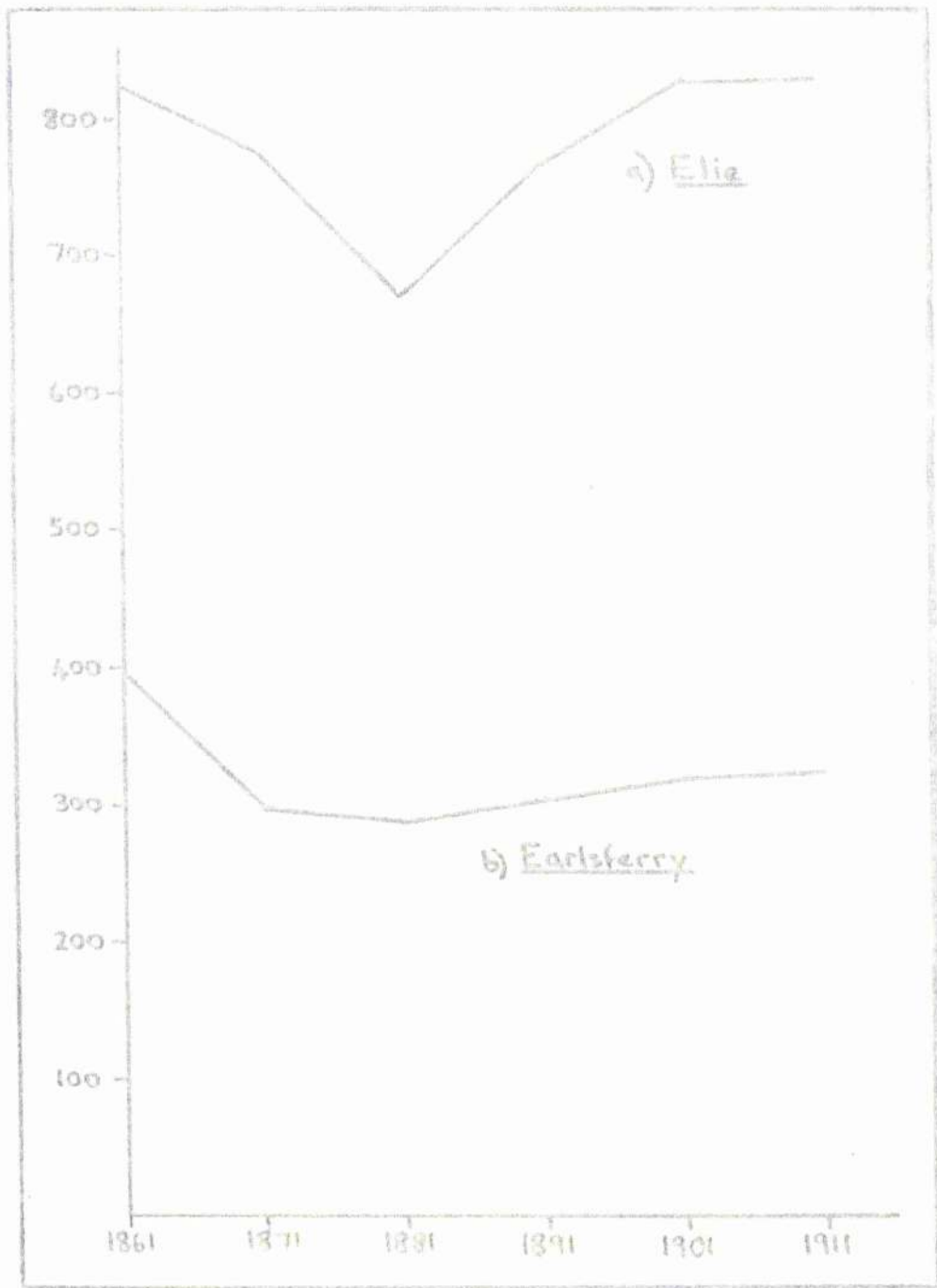
a) Total of Houses.

b) Uninhabited Houses.

with simplicity and repose in a resort whose population was only 1,068 in 1891.<sup>1</sup> The difference between the Elie of 1871 and that of 1891 was described by the author of a guide book as being 'that between a beauty still unconscious of her power and one that begins to know her own charms and is willing to set them off to the best advantage'.<sup>2</sup> The visitor who once came to Elie for its tranquility was now more likely to visit Crail. Elie, instead, began to regard itself as the 'Brighton of the North' and developed its attractions accordingly.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, golf was foremost amongst these. A new club house was built in 1877 at an expense of £1,000.<sup>4</sup> The popularity of the game in Elie was said to be equal to that in St. Andrews,<sup>5</sup> and in 1895 a new 18 hole course replaced the old one of eleven holes.<sup>6</sup> By that date, the Record was recommending the acquisition of the Links by the burghs to protect the interests of Elie and Earlsferry - as had been the case in St. Andrews, Carnoustie and Crail.<sup>7</sup> Other facilities offered to visitors included those for bowling, boating, cricket and tennis.<sup>8</sup>

The entire economics of the two burghs became entirely dependent upon the success of the summer season. Plans to erect a paper mill on the Toft at Elie, and to plant a fishing village at Ruby Bay, were laid aside for fear of the adverse effect they might have on tourism.<sup>9</sup> The harbour was given over almost entirely to the use of pleasure craft with the exception of some small shipments of potatoes in winter.<sup>10</sup> The fishing population, always small, declined from 30 in 1870 to 18 in 1890<sup>11</sup> - and even these were increasingly concerned with organising

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1. Official Census Returns, 1891; combined figures for burghs of Elie and Earlsferry.
  2. John Geddie: The Fringes of Fife, (Edinburgh 1894) p.139
  3. J. More Dall: Guide to Elie and Earlsferry, (Cupar 1897) p.1
  4. East of Fife Record, Aug 31st 1877
  5. By 1895 there were three golf clubs, the Earlsferry and Elie Golf Club, the Elie Golf House Club and the Earlsferry Thistle Club; the latter produced among others the great professional James Braid. See Thomas Chapman: Handbook to Elie and the East of Fife, (Leven 1898) p.92-99
  6. East of Fife Record, Oct 11th 1895
  7. Ibid, Jan 11th 1895
  8. D. Hay Fleming: Guide to the East Neuk of Fife, (Cupar 1886, 2 vols) vol.2 p.22
  9. Thomas Chapman: Handbook to Elie and the East of Fife, (Leven 1898) p.20
  10. Ibid, p.22
  11. Anstruther District Private Herring Books 1870, 1890; AF19/15/4,7



Graph V.4. Population of Elie and Earlsferry 1861-1911.  
(from Official Census Returns).



pleasure parties aboard their boats in summer.<sup>1</sup> But the result was an undeniable prosperity. Population, so long in decline began to rise again. The population of Elie which had dropped from 1029 to 670 between 1831 and 1881 now rose to 764 by 1891 and 825 by 1901; Earlsferry, where the decline between 1831 and 1881 had been from 538 to 286, increased in population to 304 by 1891 and 317 by 1901. (See GraphV.4). Property values rose too. The rental of Earlsferry rose from £493 in 1856, to £1,000 in 1884 and £1,950 in 1894; while that of Elie increased from £2,300 in 1864, to £3,900 in 1883 and £5,700 in 1895.<sup>2</sup> However the price the burghs paid for this prosperity was streets that were in the summer in the hands of the stranger,<sup>3</sup> and in the winter 'deserted and cheerless',<sup>4</sup> with 35% of all houses uninhabited.

\* \* \* \* \*

St. Andrews, like Elie, experienced a rapid growth in the numbers of its visitors after 1870. Unlike Elie, St. Andrews enjoyed a considerable excursion trade. During the Dundee, Edinburgh or Glasgow holidays, carts, trains and steamers filled with excursionists converged on the town, often in fancy dress<sup>6</sup> and accompanied by bands,<sup>7</sup> to see the sights, dance or play games. Excursion parties of over 2,000 people were not uncommon,<sup>8</sup> and by the 1890's it was a normal occurrence for over 2,500 such temporary visitors to be thronging the sands, Links and streets of St. Andrews<sup>9</sup> on a busy day during the summer, arriving by train from Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, Edinburgh, Galashiels and Dunfermline,<sup>10</sup> or by steamers from Leith and Arbroath.

However, it was the more permanent - and more affluent - visitors willing to rent accomodation during the summer whom the burgh wished to attract, and not the ebullient excursionists described as 'specimens of male blackguardism, as displayed in

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1. East of Fife Record, May 11th 1888; Thomas Chapman: Handbook to Elie and the East of Fife, (Leven 1898) p.99
  2. East of Fife Record, Jan 11th 1895
  3. John Geddie: The Fringes of Fife, (Edinburgh 1894) p.138
  4. St. Andrews Gazette, June 27th 1874
  5. Official Census Returns for Scotland, 1891
  6. St. Andrews Gazette, July 9th 1870
  7. Ibid, Aug 23rd 1873; June 27th 1874
  8. Ibid, June 27th 1874
  9. St. Andrews Citizen, Aug 10th 1895
  10. The openings of the Tay and Forth Bridges further increased excursion traffic by rail.

speech and conduct rarely to be met with, we trust, in any decent community'.<sup>1</sup> Certainly nothing was done to encourage the arrival of the more vulgar tourists. Though the occasional travelling show or circus might arrive during the course of the summer,<sup>2</sup> the only contribution made by the Town Council towards the facilities for entertainment offered by the burgh was to allow the City Brass Band to perform open-air concerts during the season.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise, the city continued to rely on and promote their traditional attractions of golf and bathing, the only concession to more modern fads being the formation of a Lawn Tennis Club and the provision of Tennis Courts.<sup>4</sup>

Even in respect of bathing facilities, the Town Council were slow to improve upon those afforded by nature. Complaints were frequently voiced about the filth and rubbish which were a prominent feature of the main bathing stations.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, complaints were to be heard about the inadequacies of changing facilities, particularly at the Step Rock,<sup>6</sup> and the continued practice of discharging sewage into the sea in close proximity to the most popular bathing stations.<sup>7</sup> By 1875, conditions at the Step Rock<sup>8</sup> were so bad that a petition signed by large numbers of visitors and citizens was presented to the Council to ask for improvements to be made there.<sup>9</sup> The Council, however, were unwilling to burden the rates with improvements of bathing facilities, though, as Councillor Jack pointed out, it was not by spending £10 or £12 that St. Andrews would rank with Southport, Scarborough or Rothesay.<sup>10</sup> It was not until 1881 that the Council appointed a Bathing Committee to promote the burgh's facilities for sea-bathing,<sup>11</sup> but only limited funds were available and these

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1. St. Andrews Citizen, June 17th 1899; the St. Andrews Gazette, June 22nd 1878, opined that 'family parties from the big towns are stupid' because they knew no golf.
  2. St. Andrews Citizen, Aug 20th 1890, for example, notes the arrival of Ginett's circus.
  3. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes, June 25th 1889
  4. St. Andrews Gazette, Sept 10th 1881
  5. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes, July 31st 1874; St. Andrews Gazette, Aug 19th 1871
  6. St. Andrews Gazette, July 31st 1875
  7. Ibid, Aug 7th 1875
  8. The Step Rock was the male bathing station
  9. St. Andrews Gazette, Nov 27th 1875
  10. Ibid,
  11. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes, June 29th 1881

had to be used to effect necessary repairs rather than institute any notable improvement in the facilities.<sup>1</sup> An attempt to devote £200 from the Bell Fund towards such an end was defeated by the opposition of the Lord Lieutenant of the county.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, only limited improvements occurred during the 1880's and 1890's; in 1885 a life-saver was employed for the first time at Step Rock,<sup>3</sup> and in 1889 a springboard was acquired for the same bathing station.<sup>4</sup> Improved changing shelters were provided at the ladies' pool at the Castle in 1892<sup>5</sup> and at the Step Rock in 1894.<sup>6</sup> But by 1895, the facilities in general were as old-fashioned as the swimming costumes of the women who used them, which were described in 'Pelican' magazine as 'the most proper and ugly I have ever beheld'.<sup>7</sup>

St. Andrews could afford to neglect its bathing facilities, though. By the 1890's the prosperity of St. Andrews rested largely upon the greens and fairways of the Links. As early as 1869 the St. Andrews Gazette had stated that because of golf the burgh 'is extending its boundaries, adding to the size of its resident population and becoming yearly more attractive, in its buildings, to the upper crust'.<sup>8</sup> In 1878 the same paper wrote that 'the city could better want its University system, as regards the precious metals which circulate in it, than the Royal and Ancient Golf Club'.<sup>9</sup> The Evening Express went so far as to predict that 'were it not for the Links, St. Andrews would at once fade into nothingness'.<sup>10</sup> The Links were described in a guide to the burgh in 1884 as the 'play-ground at times of all Scotland, for here is the special haunt of the golfer. Everyone plays golf, from venerable grandfathers of eighty and upwards down to wee flaxen-haired laddies and tiny girls'.<sup>11</sup>

The demand to play on the Links was so great that already by 1881 a systematic order of play had to be strictly observed.<sup>12</sup>

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1. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes Oct 3rd 1881; Sept 24th 1889
  2. Ibid Sept 19th 1882. The Bell Fund was a bequest to the burgh of £50,000, made by the Rev. Andrew Bell in 1831 for 'religious and moral improvements' and jointly administered by the Town Council and the Lord Lieutenant.
  3. Ibid June 30th 1885.
  4. Ibid Sept 24th 1889
  5. Ibid July 11th 1892
  6. St. Andrews Citizen June 2nd 1894
  7. Ibid Oct 5th 1895
  8. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 4th 1869
  9. Ibid Sept 28th 1878
  10. Ibid Aug 21st 1880
  11. A. Alexander: 'Alma-Mater on Sea' (in Gentleman's Magazine, Aug 1884) p.175-6.
  12. St. Andrews Gazette Aug 20th 1881

Since golf was free to all citizens and visitors, under the terms of the town's rights to exercise its chartered privilege to pursue the game on the Links,<sup>1</sup> it was understandable if most visitors, however inexperienced, chose to play. By 1893, the Town Council was discussing the possibility of extending the Links to ease the congestion.<sup>2</sup> But the Royal and Ancient, too, was concerned by the difficulty its members experienced in getting a game of golf on the course which they had largely fashioned and maintained.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, in September 1893, the Royal and Ancient persuaded the Laird of Strathtyrum, Mr Cheape, to sell the Links to the Club at a cost of £5,000,<sup>4</sup> and proposed constructing a new course for the private use of its members.<sup>5</sup>

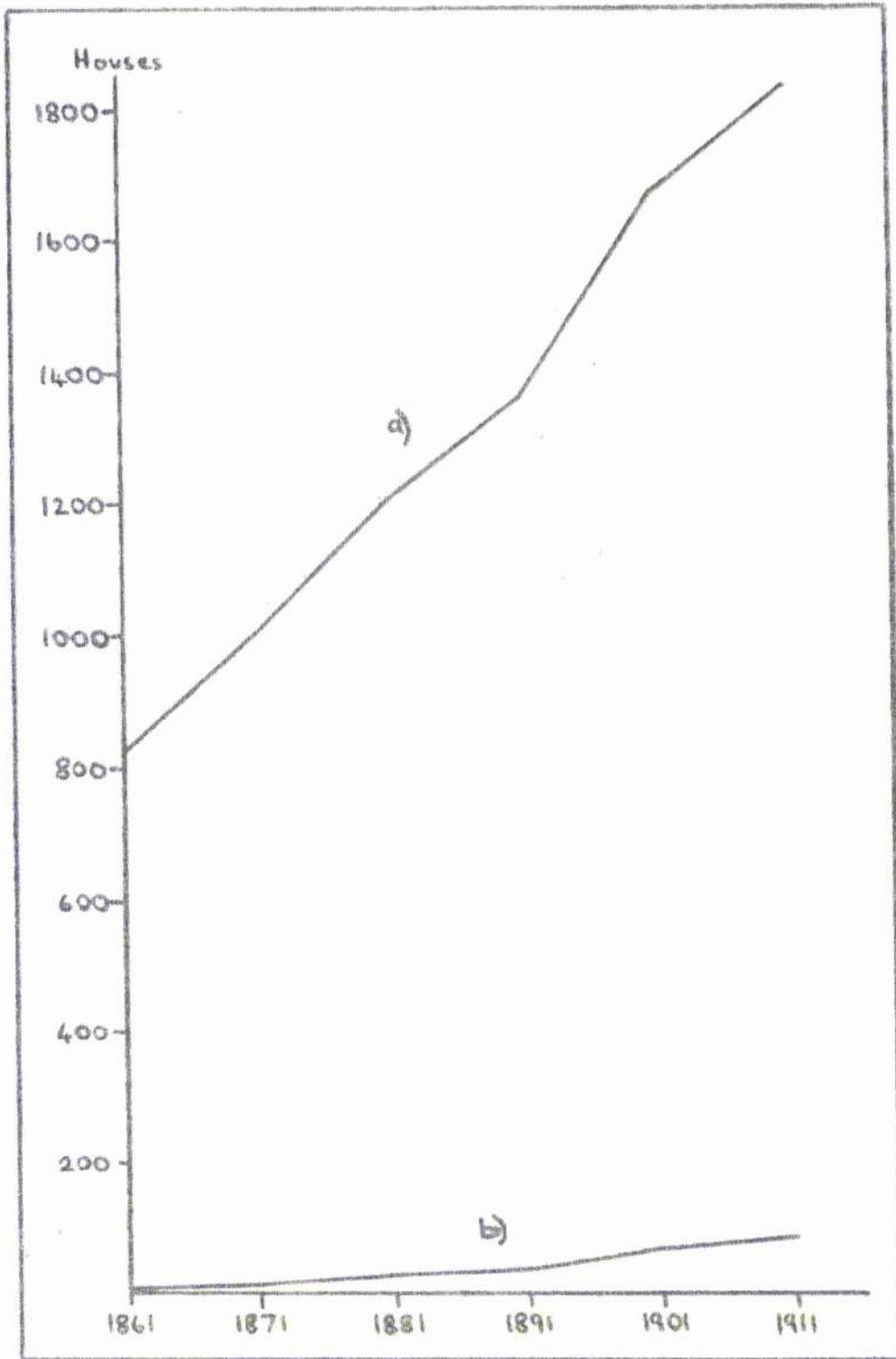
This transaction aroused intense dissatisfaction in the burgh since, rightly or wrongly, it was anticipated that the rights of the public would not receive the same respect in the future as they had in the past, and that the energies and resources of the R. and A. would be expended on the maintenance of the new private course, while the old public course would be allowed to deteriorate.<sup>6</sup> Parliament was appealed to in order to grant the burgh the right to buy back the Links they had sold in 1799.<sup>7</sup> The St. Andrews Links Act received the Royal Assent on July 20th 1894,<sup>8</sup> and an agreement was reached between Club and Town Council whereby the burgh acquired the Links for £5,000 and expenses. The Links were to be managed by a Green Committee composing five members of the Club and two town councillors, to be appointed annually. The R. and A. was to maintain the present course at its own expense, lay out and maintain a new course, and maintain a course for the exclusive use of ladies at a reasonable rental. Furthermore, the Old Course was to be open to all members of the public free of charge, whilst the New Course was to be free at all times except the months of July, August and

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1. D. Hay Fleming: Historical Notes and Extracts concerning the Links of St. Andrews (St. Andrews 1893) for the early history of the burgh's golfing rights over the Links.
  2. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes Apl 15th 1893
  3. J. K. Robertson: St. Andrews, Home of Golf (Cupar 1967) p.60
  4. St. Andrews Citizen Oct 7th 1893
  5. Scotsman Sept 27th 1893
  6. St. Andrews Citizen Oct 7th 1893
  7. J. K. Robertson: St. Andrews, Home of Golf (Cupar)1967) p.60
  8. J. B. Salmond: The Story of the R. and A. (London 1956) p.154

September, when it would be free to members of the R. and A., rate-payers of St. Andrews and the proprietor of Strathtyrum and his family and guests, but when it would cost all other parties wishing to play over it 2s. 6d. per day, 8s. 6d. per week or £1 per month.<sup>1</sup>

With this agreement, the so-called 'Links Controversy' was brought to a close. The New Course opened for play in April 1895 at a cost of £1850;<sup>2</sup> St. Andrews' position as the golfing metropolis was safeguarded. Not that the influence of St. Andrews upon the development of the game could have been entirely jeopardised at that time even if the Royal and Ancient had acquired the Links. Golf was literally spreading from St. Andrews to all parts of Britain, and the world. St. Andrews' golfers became greenkeepers and professionals at clubs throughout England and Scotland; others such as George Strath and D. and J. Forgan - sons of the St. Andrews clubmaker - were instrumental in its development in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Tom Morris was increasingly absent from his duties in St. Andrews, due to the demand for him to lay out courses throughout Britain.<sup>4</sup> By the 1890's golf was indubitably the major source of employment in St. Andrews.<sup>5</sup> There were five firms of golf club and ball makers,<sup>6</sup> of whom the largest, Robert Forgan and Sons, employed nearly fifty men.<sup>7</sup> At the same time there were about fifty full-time caddies, excluding the numerous part-time ones who only carried clubs in the summer season.<sup>8</sup> Many of the latter were fishermen and the local Fishery Officer did not know 'whether it is more profitable for fishermen to carry golf clubs than fish for haddocks.'<sup>9</sup> Nor did this figure include the growing numbers tempted to seek a living as professional golfers.<sup>10</sup> At the height of the season, over 300 men

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1. J. B. Salmond: The Story of the R. and A. (London 1956) p.155-6.
  2. Ibid p.156
  3. See J. K. Robertson: St. Andrews, Home of Golf (Cupar 1967) p.75-90 for influence of St. Andrews on the spread of golf.
  4. For example, the St. Andrews Citizen, March 14th 1896 reports him at Islay; Ibid, Oct 20th 1894 reports him at Barnton, Tayport, Thornhill and Lockerbie during one week. By then Tom was a figure of national repute described in 'World' magazine (reprinted in the St. Andrews Citizen Oct 6th 1894) as 'the great and good Tom Morris, the most famous professional golfer who has ever lived.'
  5. Private Herring Book 1883-1894; AF19/15/6,7. The number of fishermen declined in this period from 208 to 138.
  6. Wilson's Directory of St. Andrews 1894 (St. Andrews 1894)
  7. St. Andrews Citizen Jan 9th 1897
  8. Ibid Feb 20th 1897
  9. Letters and Reports May 26th 1893; AF19/4/1
  10. Andrew Kirkcaldy, one of the most famous St. Andrews professionals started as a caddie.



Graph V.5. Expansion of Housing in St. Andrews 1861-1911.

(from Official Census Returns)

a) Total of Houses.

b) Uninhabited Houses.

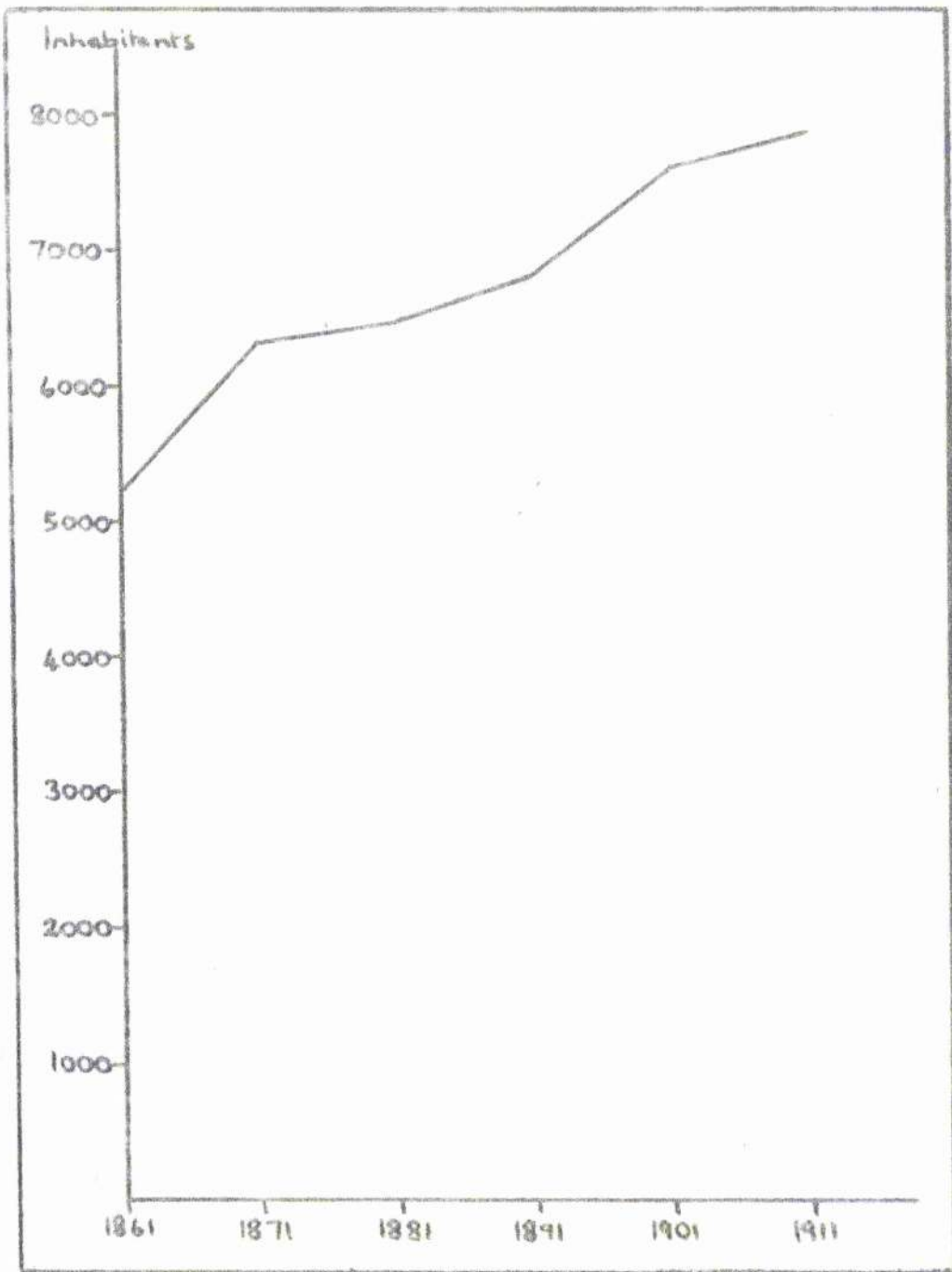
were dependent upon golf for their income. Truly might a local poet write

'Would you like to see a city given over,  
Soul and body to a tyrannising game.'

The rich and famous began to flock to St. Andrews from all parts of Britain, the Colonies and the United States.<sup>2</sup> Majestic hotels were constructed near the Links to accommodate them. The six hotels St. Andrews had boasted in 1861<sup>3</sup> increased to ten by 1894.<sup>4</sup> By the latter date, every resort of consequence had at least one or two big hotels<sup>5</sup> - indeed status depended upon their presence - and St. Andrews was not backward in this respect. The first to be built had been the Imperial in 1881;<sup>6</sup> but by the 1890's this had been easily surpassed by Rusack's Marine Hotel, and the six storey Grand Hotel, built in 1894 by a Glasgow-based consortium of businessmen at a cost of £10,000.<sup>7</sup> Each had over sixty bedrooms<sup>8</sup> and provided their patrons with every modern comfort including elevators to every part of the building.<sup>9</sup> Understandably, it was to these that wealthy visitors had recourse during their visits; but most people still stayed in lodgings or rented accommodation during their visits, and particularly popular were the houses at the western end of the town near to the golf course.<sup>10</sup>

The wave of new building which had begun in the 1820's continued unabated; between 1871 and 1891, the number of houses increased from 925 to 1301. (See Graph V.5). This was partly due to the demand created by St. Andrews continued popularity as a residential centre; 'retired Indian and Colonial men, old military and naval officers, younger members of the county families, attracted by educational advantages for their children and golf for themselves.'<sup>11</sup>

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1. R. F. Murray: The Scarlet Gown (Glasgow 1891) p.12
  2. St. Andrews Citizen Aug 2nd 1890 includes in its visitor's list Sir John and Lady Hay, Sir A. and Lady Napier, Sir Uthred and Lady Dunbar, Sir Guy and Lady Campbell, Sir George and Lady Harris, Sir W. and Lady Style
  3. Westwood's Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross (Glasgow 1862) p.198
  4. Wilson's Directory for St. Andrews 1894 (St. Andrews 1894)
  5. Sarah Rowells: The Seaside (London 1974) p.125-126
  6. St. Andrews Gazette May 21st 1881
  7. Grand Hotel Company Ltd; Files of Dissolved Companies, BT2/2436
  8. St. Andrews Citizen Feb 22nd 1896
  9. G. Wilson: St. Andrews Illustrated as a Summer and Health Resort (Dundee 1904) p.98-108
  10. See Visitors' Lists in St. Andrews Gazette and St. Andrews Citizen
  11. A. Alexander: 'Alma-Mater on Sea' (Gentleman's Magazine Aug 1884) p.177



Graph V.6. Population of St. Andrews 1861-1911  
(from Official Census Returns).



The burgh was an equally popular retirement centre for widows and spinsters.<sup>1</sup> Evidence of this residential popularity was the fact that, unlike in Elie, only a small proportion of the houses were uninhabited.<sup>2</sup> In the select area near the Links property values rocketed. One house in Golf Place, acquired in 1879 for £900, was sold for £1660 in 1881.<sup>3</sup> The valuation of the burgh increased from £17,9000 in 1863-4 to £40740 in 1892-3.<sup>4</sup> Population, too, continued its steady 19th century upward trend from 6320 in 1871 to 6863 in 1891. Guide books were constantly produced for the intending visitor. Local historian, David Hay Fleming, alone produced volumes in 1881, 1887, 1893, 1894 and 1897,<sup>5</sup> each edition selling in the region of 2,000 copies, in the face of strong competition from rival authors,<sup>6</sup> and including an amusing parody.<sup>7</sup>

As tourism thrived throughout the East Neuk, the whole area became a fruitful subject for compilers of guide books.<sup>8</sup> The North British Railway regularly increased its services to the area, but rail facilities remained inadequate.<sup>9</sup> By 1896, trains to the area from Glasgow Queen Street were being run in duplicate at the commencement of the annual holidays; to other trains additional luggage vans had to be attached.<sup>10</sup> With the additional prospect of a rejuvenated fishing industry as a result of the introduction of steam fishing boats in the East Neuk fishing ports,<sup>11</sup> a prosperous new century could be confidently anticipated by the East Neuk burghs.

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1. Wilson's Directory for St. Andrews 1894 (St. Andrews 1894)
  2. Only 65 out of 1301 in 1891, or 5%. Official Census Returns for Scotland 1891.
  3. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 17th 1881
  4. Valuation Rolls for the Burgh of St. Andrews 1863-4, 1892-3
  5. Alphabetic Guide Book to St. Andrews (St. Andrews 1881); Tourists Handbook to St. Andrews and Neighbourhood (Cupar 1887, 1893, 1894); Guide to St. Andrews and Neighbourhood (Cupar 1897)
  6. e.g. James Howie: Guide to St. Andrews (Cupar 1874); J. Cook: The Excursionists Guide to St. Andrews (St. Andrews 1871); Handybook of St. Andrews (Cupar 1865)
  7. W. de Aula: St. Andrews, Ancient and Modern (Edinburgh 1870)
  8. E.g. Henry Farnie: Handybook of the Fife Coast from Queensferry to Fifeness (Cupar 1860, 1883); 'Kilrounie': The Kingdom, a Handbook to Fife (Edinburgh 1882); D. Hay Fleming: Guide to the East Neuk of Fife (Cupar 1886); John Geddie: The Fringes of Fife (Edinburgh 1894); John Jackson: Guide to Crail and Neighbourhood (Cupar 1896); J. More Dall: Guide to Elie and Earlsferry (Cupar 1897)
  9. East of Fife Record May 23rd 1890
  10. St. Andrews Citizen July 4th 1896
  11. See below p.169 et seq

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CHAPTER VI.

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VI

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST NEUK FISHING INDUSTRY 1865-1914.

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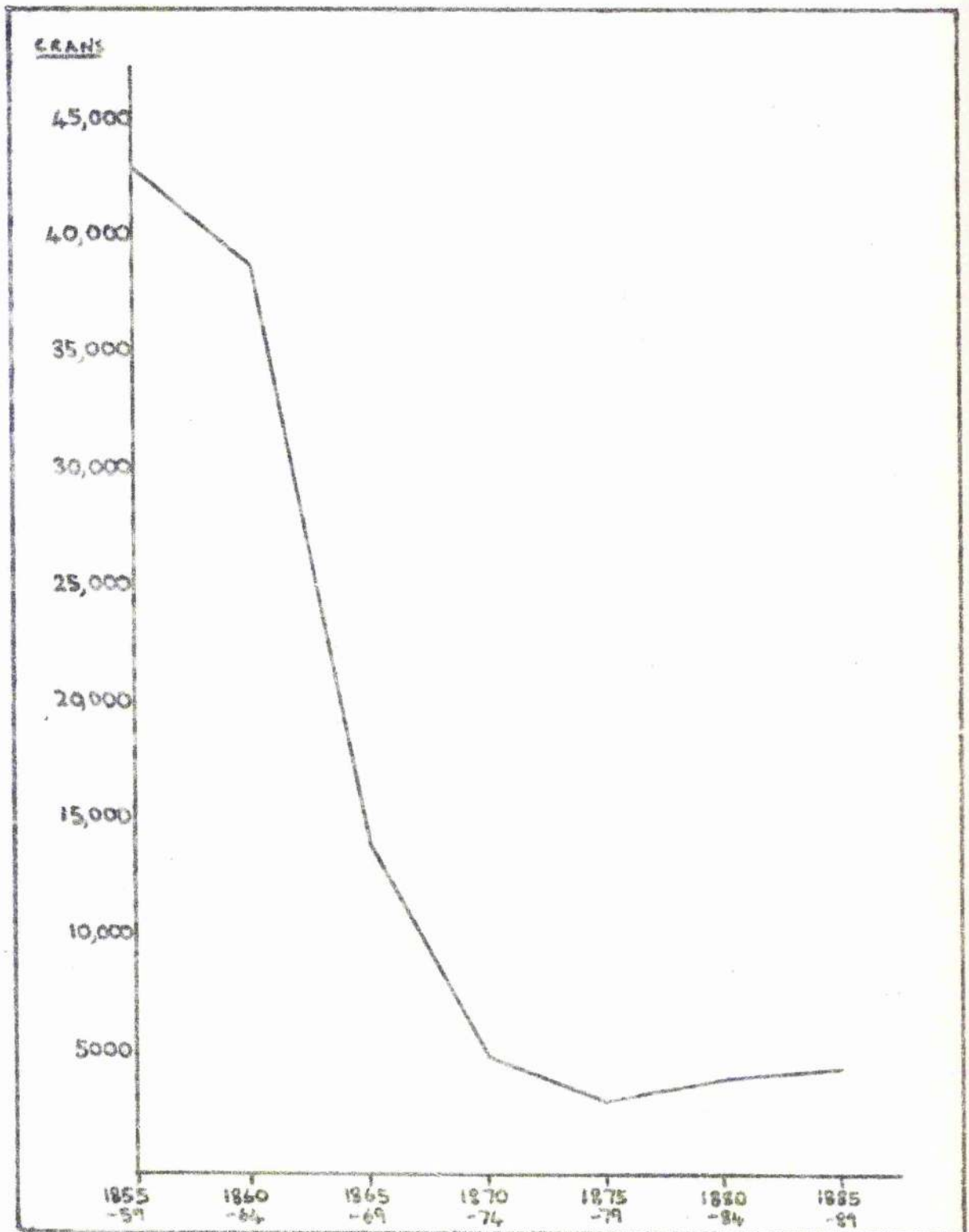
After the brief resurgence of the 1840's and 1850's, the East Neuk summer fishing began to show a noticeable decline during the 1860's. (See Graph VI.1). The last major Lamma drave in the Firth of Forth was that of 1860 when 83,000 crans were landed in Anstruther district.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, takes declined rapidly with the first serious failure of the drave occurring in 1863 when a mere 12,360 crans were landed.<sup>2</sup> The draves of 1861 and 1862 had been considered poor,<sup>3</sup> but that of 1863 was disastrous to the economy of the East Neuk. The East of Fife Record commented that

'in the cooper trade, for instance, which used to employ several hundred journeymen in the several coast towns here at this season of the year, there is at present scarcely one employed, the great number of barrels remaining unused from the last fishing precluding the addition of any new ones. Indeed, some of the curers have so many on hand, that in some cases it is difficult to find storage for them. Grocers and drapers have partaken of this dull state of matters, and many of them; we believe, have not turned over one half of the cash they were want to do in prosperous years.'<sup>4</sup>

Many local crews had gone to Arbroath, Montrose and Stonehaven to fish for days or even weeks owing to the scarcity of any great shoal; and many of the Pittenweem and St. Monance boats which had fished locally had landed only 5 to 12 crans.<sup>5</sup>

At first it was considered that the failure was only a temporary fluctuation in the drave; failures had occurred in the peak years of the 1850's in 1851 and 1856.<sup>6</sup> The fleet engaged in the East Neuk drave did not reach its peak until 1864, when 500 boats fished from the ports during the summer.<sup>7</sup> Though there was a moderate improvement

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1. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1860; AF19/12/2
  2. Ibid 1863; AF19/12/3
  3. The catch for 1861 was 39,931 crans, and for 1862, 28,300 crans; Weekly Report of Fishing 1861; AF19/12/3
  4. East of Fife Record Nov 27th 1863
  5. Letters and Reports Dec 31st 1863; AF19/3/5
  6. Ibid Dec 31st 1851; Dec 31st 1856; AF19/3/4
  7. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1864



Graph VI.1. Decline of the Lamma Herring Drive in the East Neuk  
(average annual catches for quincennial periods 1855-1889)

from Weekly Reports of Fishing 1855-89; AF19/12/2-8.

in that year to 31,700 crans,<sup>1</sup> it became increasingly evident that large shoals were ceasing to visit their old haunts in the locality with the frequency that had been experienced in previous years. In 1865, only 15,000 crans were landed in the East Neuk, and in 1866 a mere 8,800.<sup>2</sup> Curers such as Thomas Napier of Montrose abandoned Anstruther as an out-station and moved their stock elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Local curers began to import herrings from other districts to provide work for their employees. Curing stances remained unlet; by 1867 only six of the 22 stances in Pittenweem were let at the annual roup.<sup>4</sup> The East of Fife Record noted that 'there is less spirit and preparation visible in the herring trade here this season than has been the case for years.'<sup>5</sup>

The number of boats engaged declined rapidly from 500 in 1864 to 290 by 1870.<sup>6</sup> Local boats as well as stranger ones stopped fishing in the Firth during the summer, and resumed the former practice of fishing from the northern ports during the Lammis drave.<sup>7</sup> Since the late 1850's, 60 to 70 East Neuk boats had fished from northern stations - principally Gourdon and Stonehaven - during the early summer months prior to returning to their home ports in early August for the most fruitful period of the Lammis drave in the Firth of Forth.<sup>8</sup> But offers to fish for the entire summer at the northern ports had found few takers.<sup>9</sup> However, the declining rewards of the East Neuk drave, led to increasing numbers of boats being absent at Peterhead, Wick or Fraserburgh during the late 1860's.<sup>10</sup> The Record refused to accept that the local summer fishing would not revive again and attacked 'this mania on the fisherman's part of deserting their own shores for some imaginary advantage to be got elsewhere.'<sup>11</sup> The advantages were far from being imaginary, however, since, while the average catch per boat in Anstruther district in 1867 was only 62½ crans,<sup>12</sup> that at Peterhead was 112 crans, and at

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1. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1864; AF19/12/3
  2. Ibid 1865, 1866; AF19/12/6
  3. Letters and Reports June 11th 1866; AF19/3/5
  4. East of Fife Record May 17th 1867
  5. Letters and Reports June 11th 1866; AF19/3/5
  6. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1870
  7. See above p. 31 et seq.
  8. Letters and Reports Dec 31st 1859, July 21st 1862; AF19/3/4,5
  9. Ibid Nov 2nd 1857; AF19/3/4
  10. Ibid July 1st 1867; AF19/3/5; East of Fife Record Sept 17th 1869
  11. East of Fife Record Aug 30th 1867
  12. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1867; AF19/12/4

Fraserburgh 154 crans.<sup>1</sup>

The trend continued throughout the 1870's; in 1870, 290 boats fished in the Firth during the summer;<sup>2</sup> by 1873 the number had declined to 80;<sup>3</sup> and by 1876 no boats at all fished regularly in the Firth during the Lammaas drave.<sup>4</sup> In 1875 only 280 crans were landed in the district during the entire summer, and in 1876 the figure was a mere 170.<sup>5</sup> Since large sums of money were spent annually by East Neuk fishermen on netting and cordage for the Lammaas drave, often through credit gained from expectations of a successful fishing,<sup>6</sup> it was understandable that they should abandon the local Lammaas drave until there was a better prospect of success. East Neuk curers, too, followed the example of the fishermen and in order to ensure a supply of fish some engaged boats to fish at Gourdon and Stonehaven, giving skippers the option of landing catches there or at Anstruther.<sup>7</sup> Others such as Thomas Cormack or John Todd, hired stances at Aberdeen or other northern ports and engaged East Neuk boats to fish for them from there.<sup>8</sup>

Anstruther district was not unique in the decline of its summer herring fishing. Rather it reflected a national trend whereby after 1860 the Firth fisheries in Scotland began to decline, and the open sea ones develop. New fishing grounds were discovered up to 110 miles off shore at such places as the White Spot and the Bell Rock,<sup>9</sup> and this led to three developments in the structure of the Scottish herring fisheries. Firstly the adoption of larger and decked boats was accelerated. As long as the fishing had remained a coastal one, it was widely thought that the open-styled boats were the best that could be employed; but by the 1870's the larger and more seaworthy decked and half-decked boats were being adopted due to the gradual increase in the distance from the shore that the herring boats had to go.<sup>10</sup> Sizes, too, increased

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1. East of Fife Record Sept 27th 1867
  2. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1870; AF19/3/6
  3. Ibid Jan 1st 1873; AF19/3/7
  4. East of Fife Record Aug 31st 1877
  5. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1875, 1876; AF19/12/5,6
  6. East of Fife Record Sept 10th 1869
  7. Ibid July 21st 1871
  8. Ibid June 28th 1872; June 6th 1873
  9. Ibid Sept 13th 1867
  10. James Bertram: The Harvest of the Sea (London 1865) p.272

rapidly from the standard length of 35-40 feet, which had been prevalent as long as open boats had been the medium by which the herring fishing was pursued,<sup>1</sup> to an average length for new first class boats of 47 feet in 1880 and 55 feet by 1884.<sup>2</sup>

This development led to the need for larger harbours to accommodate the increased size of boat. Ports such as Anstruther which had contained a sufficient depth of water at all states of the tide in 1865, were already too shallow by 1880.<sup>3</sup> The result of this was an increasing concentration of the industry at a small number of larger ports. New fishing grounds, the increased size of boats and the need for deeper harbours all facilitated the concentration of the Scottish herring fishery at Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Aberdeen.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the former pair had always enjoyed a prominent role in the Scottish herring fishing industry,<sup>5</sup> the growth of Aberdeen was entirely due to these changing conditions. Alone of the east Scottish harbours in the 1870's, Aberdeen possessed an entrance allowing boats free access and egress at all states of the tide, sufficient accommodation for all boats wanting to use it, a depth of water in every part of the harbour to enable them to be afloat at all states of the tide, and proper facilities for taking in their nets and gear and landing their fish.<sup>6</sup>

The figures in Table VI.1. give clear evidence of the importance of the Aberdeenshire ports in the late 19th century. Nor was it merely in Anstruther district that the herring fisheries were in decline; Leith, and the fishing ports of the Moray Firth underwent a similar decline.<sup>7</sup> Montrose, on the other hand, which before 1861 had primarily been concerned with the curing of herrings imported from other stations, enjoyed a period of growth and prosperity in the latter decades of the 19th century due to its

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1. Peter F. Anson: Fishing Boats and Fisher Folk on the East Neuk of Scotland (London 1930) p.24
  2. Letters and Reports Dec 21st 1884; AF19/3/9
  3. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.xxxix
  4. Ibid p.xii-xiii
  5. See above p.50
  6. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.xxxix
  7. Annual Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fisheries 1860-1881; Annual Reports of the Fishery Boards for Scotland 1882-1914

	Peterhead	Fraserburgh	Aberdeen <sup>1</sup>	Wick	Anstruther <sup>2</sup>	Scotland
1860-64	65,815	47,629	-	118,191	61,456	660,809
1865-69	81,448	78,272	-	54,360	28,005	672,693
1870-74	182,688	198,001	-	89,557	14,791	874,458
1875-79	146,315	211,432	78,102	62,991	5,325	827,292
1880-84	226,291	271,321	95,341	117,588	2,028	1,366,843
1885-89	201,438	255,706	107,680	120,123	10,673	1,340,996
1889-94	229,573	337,462	122,658	67,514	4,744	1,323,246
1895-99	185,203	304,820	114,515	106,421	2,700	1,398,099
1900-04	160,289	290,391	96,442	151,740	7,155	1,669,287
1905-09	290,210	340,373	147,058	162,845	15,122	2,155,577
1910-14	265,013	251,701	95,538	195,642	12,058	1,825,913

Table VI.1. Comparison of Herring Curing Industries at Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Aberdeen, Wick and Anstruther, Quinquennial Periods 1860-1914.<sup>3</sup>

1. Aberdeen was not established as an independent district until 1870.  
 2. Anstruther figures include barrels cured during the winter drive.  
 3. Figures represent barrels cured and are taken from Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery, 1860-1881; Annual Reports of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1881-1914



proximity to the deep-sea fishing grounds.<sup>1</sup> But the salient point in the decline of the Firth fisheries was not that they were unproductive, merely that they were uneconomic when compared with the deep-sea fisheries.<sup>2</sup> In the 1860's, Wick was still Scotland's major herring fishing and curing port. Though its 'golden era' was already past,<sup>3</sup> Wick still produced 15.2% of all the herring cured in Scotland during that decade, whilst Fraserburgh and Peterhead combined were responsible for 20.5%. But by the 1870's, Wick's long-established domination of the Scottish herring trade was broken by the rapid growth of the industry at the Aberdeenshire ports, where production increased by over 200% on the previous decade; at Wick, on the other hand, production declined by nearly 15% to 10.1% of the total Scottish output, compared with 48% for Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Aberdeen.

These three ports continued to dominate the Scottish herring curing industry for the remainder of the 19th century, while the role of Wick continued to diminish. Between 1880 and 1899, the Aberdeenshire ports were responsible for the production of 45% of all the herrings cured in Scotland, whilst Wick's share declined to only 8%. Though the industry revived again in Wick in the early 20th century, with production increasing by 84% between the periods 1895-99 and 1910-14, Peterhead and Fraserburgh - though their share of Scottish production declined - were to remain the principle centres for the curing industry until the outbreak of the First World War; by the period 1910-14, the ports still produced 28.3% of the total Scottish output, compared with a figure of 10.1% for Wick.

Anstruther, by that time, had ceased to be of any but the most peripheral significance as a herring curing centre. Between 1860 and 1864, the district had been responsible for 9.3% of Scottish production; by the period 1875-79 the figure had declined to a mere 0.64%. Though there was a moderate revival in production in the 1880's, the summer fishing in the Firth remained very limited in

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1. Frank Buckland and Spencer Walpole: Report on the Herring Fisheries of Scotland (London 1878) p.xi
  2. Ibid p.xii
  3. See above p. 29-30

scale. Catches were occasionally very high when shoals returned to such former haunts as the Auld Haiks, and boats landed catches of as much as 90 crans.<sup>1</sup> But the major fishing grounds were normally 20 to 60 miles seaward of the Isle of May, and not in coastal waters.<sup>2</sup> The boats that remained were usually yawls since almost the entire first class fleet preferred to fish from the northern ports.<sup>3</sup> By the late 1880's the fleet engaged in the local summer drave numbered only 20 to 30 boats,<sup>4</sup> though catches were sometimes landed by boats from other stations.<sup>5</sup> The curing industry inevitably declined into insignificance in the East Neuk. Most catches were sold fresh to cadgers,<sup>6</sup> and local curers relied more upon the importation of herrings from other districts for their supply of fish.<sup>7</sup>

After the national recession in the curing industry of 1884-85, an additional factor came into operation which further reduced the size of the catch landed at East Neuk ports. The decline of the engagement system, and the increasingly popular practice of selling fish by public auction which arose from the recession, meant that boats were unwilling to land catches in the East Neuk, where competition among buyers was small and therefore prices tended to be lower than at the more important northern stations.<sup>8</sup> Though annual catches of as much as 16,000 crans were landed in the East Neuk in the early 20th century,<sup>9</sup> and curing operations were once more to be seen at the Folly in Anstruther,<sup>10</sup> with curers from Leith,<sup>11</sup> and steamers from Danzig present at the harbour,<sup>12</sup> even the most sanguinely optimistic did not expect any large scale revival of the drave. The huge draves of the 1850's were remembered only by the older members of the community; both the local fishing community and the economy of the East Neuk ports had long since adapted

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1. East of Fife Record, Aug 22nd 1879, July 29th 1881
  2. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1886 p.xxiv
  3. Ibid, 1886 p.xxiv; 1889 p.7
  4. Letters and Reports 1885-89; AF19/3/9,10.
  5. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1882 p.xxiii
  6. East of Fife Record Aug 7th 1885
  7. Ibid Nov 16th 1877; Dec 3rd 1880
  8. See below p. 165 for details of recession.
  9. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1890 p.7
  10. Ibid 1910 p.197
  11. East of Fife Record Jan 18th 1907
  12. Ibid Sept 7th 1906

to a situation in which the Firth of Forth lamma drave was the year's most important and most lucrative pursuit.

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It was the northern herring fishery which rapidly assumed the importance of the local lamma drave in the economy of the East Neuk. After the departure of the local fleet for the northern stations, the harbours of Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance remained deserted apart from a small number of yawls engaged at the Firth herring fishing, or in the haddock and shell fishing.<sup>1</sup> In the early 1880's, prior to the recession in the curing industry of 1885, approximately 400 boats from the East Neuk were fishing from the Aberdeenshire ports.<sup>2</sup> The North British Railway Company offered reduced fares between the East Neuk fishing ports and Aberdeen, Fraserburgh and Peterhead, from May 1st to September 30th, for genuine fisher people.<sup>3</sup>

Earnings in the 1870's and 1880's were generally good. In 1871 engagements were generally at 20s. per cran with between £17 and £25 of bounty.<sup>4</sup> By 1882 engagements were at 23s. per cran with £20 of bounty, or 20s. per cran with £45 of bounty.<sup>5</sup> Though some crews might enjoy scant luck - one being recorded as having parted only 11s. per deal in 1871<sup>6</sup> - East Neuk boats were generally among the most successful at the northern ports. Earnings of as much as £420 per crew were recorded in the 1870's,<sup>7</sup> representing earnings of almost £60 for tenweeks work for a fisherman providing his own nets. For the East Neuk fleet, to fish the compliment of 200 crans per boat was the rule rather than the exception,<sup>8</sup> which meant that earnings averaged over £200 per crew - representing a gross income of upwards of £30,000 during each drave for the Cellardyke fleet alone.<sup>9</sup> Buyers and curers from the north travelled to the East Neuk to engage crews<sup>10</sup> and competition among curers for the services of successful crews led to a gradual increase in the size of bounties offered. In 1879 one skipper was being engaged at 20s. per cran with £45 of bounty;<sup>11</sup> by 1883, the top

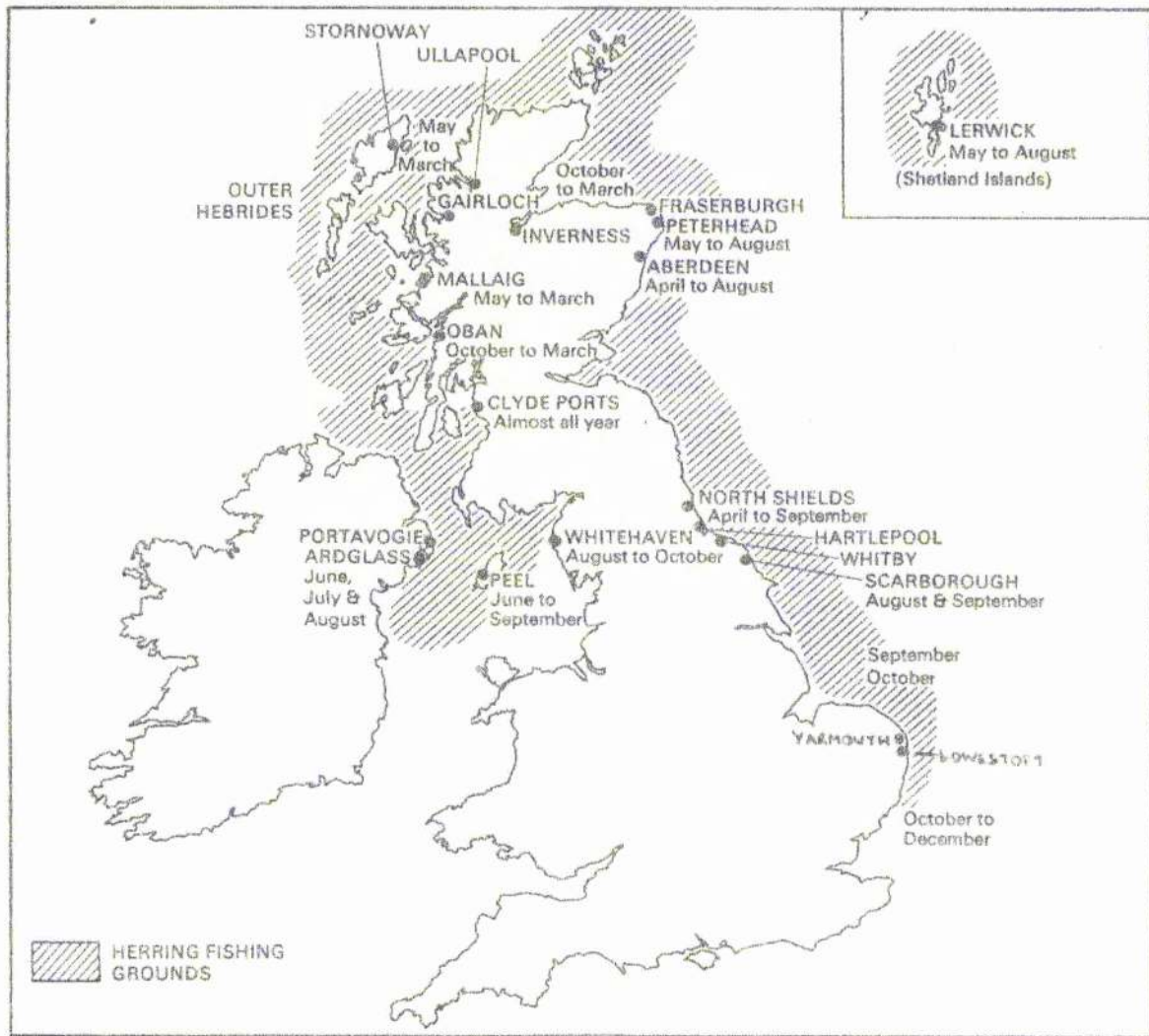
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1. East of Fife Record July 18th 1873
  2. Ibid June 29th 1883
  3. Ibid May 14th 1883
  4. Ibid Dec 8th 1871
  5. Letters and Reports Dec 1st 1882; AF19/3/9
  6. East of Fife Record Sept 8th 1871
  7. Ibid Sept 13th 1878
  8. Ibid Sept 5th 1873; Sept 11th 1874; Sept 10th 1875; Aug 20th 1880
  9. For example, in 1877 the figure was between £35,000 and £38,000;  
East of Fife Record Sept 14th 1877
  10. Ibid Dec 1st 1876; April 8th 1881
  11. Ibid Dec 5th 1879

Pittenweem crews were commanding £65 of bounty,<sup>1</sup> or approximately £1 a week for each share fisherman, regardless of whether or not any fish were caught.

Nor did East Neuk fishermen confine their activities away from the district to the summer fishing at the northern ports. By the late 1870's many local fishermen were spending half of the year fishing in other districts. Spring herring fisheries were attended in preference to pursuing the local great-line fishing, for example. As many as 40 East Neuk boats attended the Irish spring herring fishing at the Houth or Ardglass during the late 1870's,<sup>2</sup> when as much as £200 could be earned between late May and early July.<sup>3</sup> But when the Shetland spring fishing began to develop in the early 1880's, the Irish herring fishing rapidly decreased in popularity with East Neuk boats, though a few smaller boats from the district continued to attend until 1914.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, East Neuk fishermen were employed by the Irish Congested Districts Board to instruct fishermen on the west coast of Ireland.<sup>5</sup> But the unpredictable nature of the fishing - average earnings varying between £10<sup>6</sup> and £215<sup>7</sup> per season - rendered the journey unattractive to the majority of local fishermen.

A rival to the Irish spring fishing for the attendance of East Neuk crews in the 1870's was the spring fishing in the Hebrides at Borra and Stornaway.<sup>8</sup> It was not until 1879, though, that Cellardyke boats were reported as being present at the rapidly expanding Shetland spring fishing. By 1884, 50 Cellardyke<sup>9</sup> and 45 Pittenweem boats<sup>10</sup> were fishing there between May and early July. Engagements were generally for 160 crans,<sup>11</sup> but catches of as much as 450 crans by one boat were recorded.<sup>12</sup> Prices were generally lower than during the summer fishing, being 12s. per cran with between £5 and £7 of bounty,<sup>13</sup> but a measure of the remuneration was

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1. Letters and Reports Oct 1st 1883; AF19/3/9
  2. East of Fife Record May 26th 1876
  3. Ibid July 2nd 1875
  4. Annual Reports of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1896-1914
  5. Ibid 1896p.157
  6. Ibid 1909 p.202
  7. Ibid 1898 p.176
  8. St. Andrews Gazette May 21st 1870; May 18th 1872; East of Fife Record April 11th 1879
  9. East of Fife Record May 2nd 1884
  10. Ibid May 30th 1884
  11. Ibid July 3rd 1885
  12. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1883; AF19/3/9
  13. East of Fife Record Jan 1st 1904



Map VI.1. Major Herring Fishing Grounds visited by the East Neuk Fleet in the early 20th century.

the fact that by the early years of the 20th century line-fishing had been abandoned by early May in the East Neuk by all except the yawls crewed by the older men and young boys, so that preparations could be made for the Shetland herring fishing.<sup>1</sup> Baltasound, the centre of the fishing, though only a mile in length and half a mile in breadth at its widest point, was filled by a fleet of over 600 boats, whilst both sides were lined with curing stances, each with a short wharf projecting into the sea. The temporary fishing community of 8,000 people - which included curers and coopers, as well as fishermen from the East Neuk<sup>2</sup> - had its own doctor, hospital and numerous churches as well as an abundance of showfolk with roundabouts and stalls.<sup>3</sup>

In the autumn, too, it became the practice to continue herring fishing in some other district after the close of the northern summer fishing in preference to attending to the line-fishing in the East Neuk. The number of boats which adopted this practice was always less than the number which attended the northern fishing since the organisation of the crews was entirely different, halfdealsmen being dispensed with, so that all crews were invariably composed of full-time share fishermen. At first the most popular autumn herring fishing was in the Clyde, and was engaged in not by the large first class herring boats, but by the smaller yawls. Each crew took two yawls and both summer and winter nets.<sup>4</sup> Between Greenock and Helensburgh, 2,000 yawls, representing 1,000 crews, were fishing by 1869,<sup>5</sup> and a lucrative market was found by East Neuk owners for old smaller-sized boats which had been kept only in the absence, hitherto, of any market for such craft.<sup>6</sup>

As was the case with the Irish herring fishing, the Clyde fishing enjoyed only a temporary popularity among the East Neuk crews, being rapidly surpassed by the more profitable<sup>7</sup> autumn herring fishing off

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1. Letter Books May 23rd 1904; AF19/4/2

2. East of Fife Record July 1st 1904

3. Ibid May 9th 1884; St. Andrews Citizen May 19th 1906

4. Two yawls were essential to the operation of the nets which were stretched between both boats. Winter nets were whitened with alum, and summer nets were browned in kutch, both being cleansers and preservatives. East of Fife Record June 30th 1905

5. Ibid March 5th 1869

6. Ibid Nove 27th 1868

7. Earnings at the Clyde were often less than for those who remained at the line fishing. East of Fife Record Nov 27th 1868

the English coast of Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Scarborough. Cellardyke boats had first attended the spring fishing at Yarmouth during the mid-1850's,<sup>1</sup> and by 1860, 20 Cellardyke crews participated in the spring fishing there.<sup>2</sup> The development of the Irish, Hebridean and later, Shetland spring fishings led to the decline of this practice during the 1860's, however - though some boats continued to fish at Scarborough during the spring.<sup>3</sup> Instead, the English herring ports became increasingly popular destinations for the East Neuk fleet during the autumn, between October and early December. In 1865, ten boats from the district, as well as three fishcurers, were at Yarmouth for the autumn fishing;<sup>4</sup> by 1870, there were 43 boats present,<sup>5</sup> as well as representatives of many of the local curers.<sup>6</sup> The number of boats continued to increase throughout the 1870's to a total of 100 in 1875<sup>7</sup> and 130 in 1878.<sup>8</sup>

Expenses incurred were heavy, varying between £40 and £70 per crew;<sup>9</sup> lodgings had to be acquired and a pilot hired to solve the intricacies of navigation, and to acquaint the crew with local customs - the usual charge being 20s. of arles and ls. 6d. per pound on the gross receipts. Herrings were sold by the last of 10,000 fish in the Billingsgate market of Yarmouth, and in the event of a heavy catch, boys were to help unload at ls. per last.<sup>10</sup> All fish were sold at auction by salesmen who frequently visited the East Neuk to secure the patronage of local crews;<sup>11</sup> other crews resorted to Lowestoft and Yarmouth fish merchants who attended the winter drave in the East Neuk.<sup>12</sup> Earnings sometimes failed to cover these expenses,<sup>13</sup> but were, in general, considered good, averaging £205 per crew between 1870 and 1885, being £20 per crew member for 10 weeks fishing after the deduction of expenses.<sup>14</sup> The best-fished boats often grossed over £600 in one season.<sup>15</sup> But against this must be balanced the hazardous

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1. Letters and Reports June 1st 1857; AF19/3/4
  2. Ibid May 11th 1860; AF19/3/4
  3. Ibid May 12th 1862; AF19/3/5
  4. Ibid Oct 11th 1865; AF19/3/5
  5. Ibid Jan 1st 1871; AF19/3/6
  6. East of Fife Record Oct 27th 1871
  7. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1876; AF19/3/7
  8. Ibid Jan 1st 1879; AF19/3/8
  9. East of Fife Record Nov 21st 1873; Nov 24th 1876
  10. Ibid Jan 29th 1869; Feb 5th 1869
  11. Ibid March 6th 1874
  12. Ibid Feb 5th 1869
  13. Ibid Nov 14th 1873; Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1879; AF19/3/8
  14. Annual averages derived from Letters and Reports 1870-1885; AF19/3/6-9; and East of Fife Record 1870-1885
  15. East of Fife Record Nov 25th 1881; Nov 30th 1883.

	Tonnage of Boats	Value of Boats	Area of Nets in sq. yds.	Value of Nets	Length of Lines in sq. yds.	Value of Lines	No. of Fishermen
1860	7334	£26,017	9,862,734	£43,308	6,472,410	£11,070	1637
1865	8802	£29,315	15,673,000	£61,673	6,765,400	£10,615	1654
1870	7086	£27,075	14,294,000	£50,938	7,600,160	£12,637	1591
1875	7524	£27,806	18,624,300	£56,395	8,106,240	£14,922	1818
1880	9234	£48,383	23,960,200	£68,402	7,389,080	£13,403	1864
1885	12884	£87,528	26,505,300	£101,423	7,786,680	£14,246	2365

Table VI.2. Increasing Importance of Herring Fishing for East Neuk fishermen, 1860-1885.



nature of the journey between Yarmouth and the East Neuk. The boats travelled in squadrons, normally combining with boats from other districts such as Buckie.<sup>1</sup> But in the journey which lasted 32 to 50 hours, storms could often occur, and with them disasters and loss of life, such as that of November 1875.<sup>2</sup> The homecoming fleet was therefore greeted with feelings of relief and happiness, and the period after its return was often the occasion for marriages being celebrated.<sup>3</sup>

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By 1855, the East Neuk fisherman had become largely itinerant, and predominantly a herring fisherman. That he was prosperous can be seen by the most cursory examination of statistics for the number of fishermen and the number and value of boats and fishing gear. (see Table VI.2.). These figures show that with the decline of the Lamma drave in the district after 1865, there was a recession which affected all but the line fishing, which had been in decline when the Lamma drave was at its peak. The value of fishing lines rose by 19% between 1865 and 1870; but the overall importance of the herring fishery can be gauged from the fact that, with the herring fishery in decline, the size of the fleet and the number of full-time fishermen declined by 19.5% and 3.8% respectively. After 1870, the length and value of lines, after their temporary resurgence, began to decline;<sup>4</sup> the value and extent of herring nets, on the other hand, expanded rapidly<sup>5</sup> and with them the size and value of the fishing fleet,<sup>6</sup> and the number of fishermen in the district.<sup>7</sup>

It was not the cod-fishing which declined in the East Neuk, however. While the Lamma drave in the Firth of Forth had prospered, the cod fishing had been somewhat neglected by local fishermen. But after 1865 the cod fishing expanded rapidly despite the fact that the spring and autumn herring fishings at various stations had reduced the cod fishing season largely into the period from late March to early May.<sup>8</sup> Between

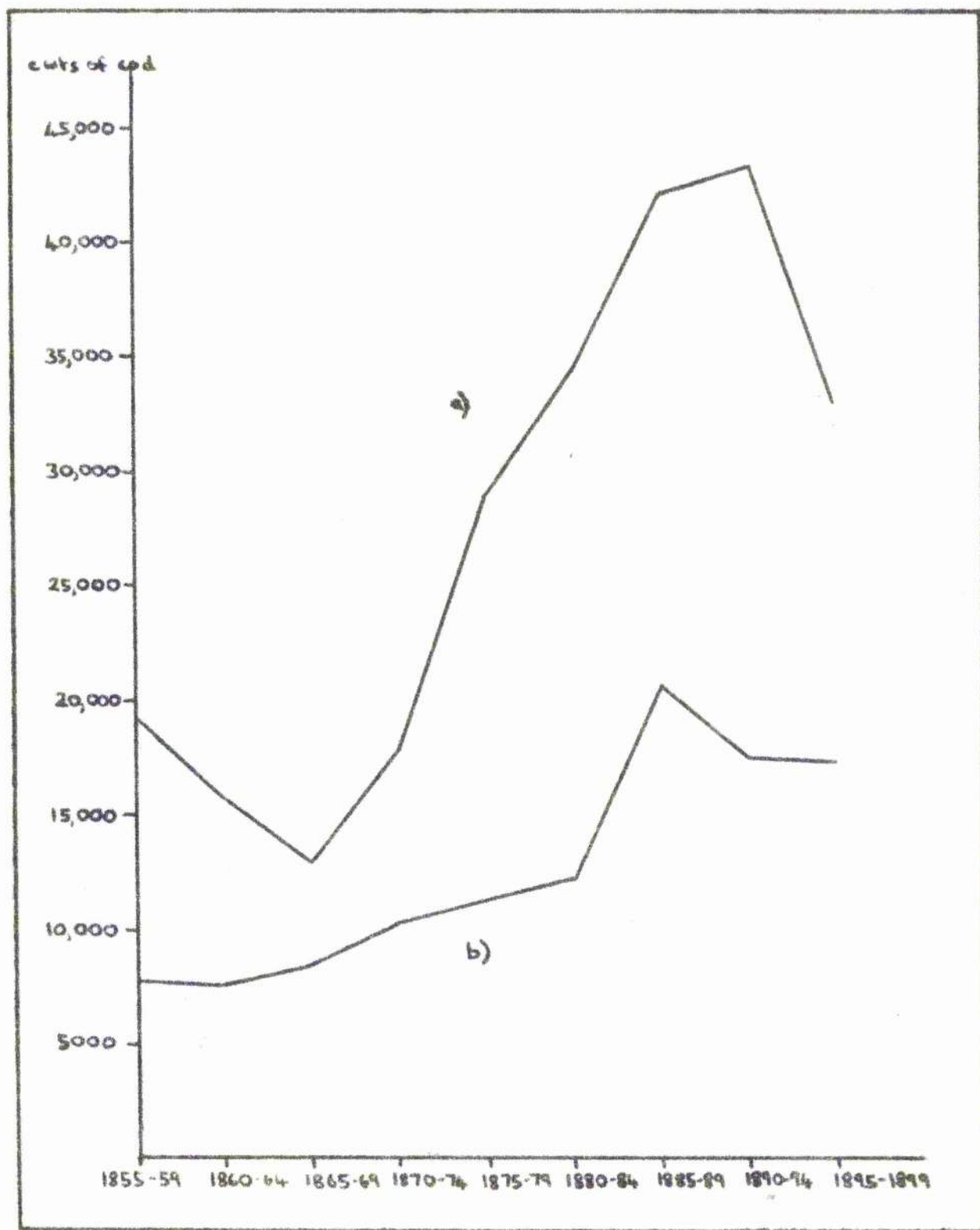
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1. George Gourlay: Fisher Life (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.109  
2. See below p.202  
3. See below p.213  
4. By 4.5% in value, and 5.2% in length, between 1875 and 1885 (see Table VI.2.)  
5. By 80% in value, and by 33% in area between 1875 and 1885 (see Table VI.2.)  
6. By 71% in tonnage and 215% in value between 1875 and 1885 (see Table VI.2.)  
7. By 24% between 1875 and 1885 (See Table VI.2)  
8. Though some continued the deep-sea fishing until late June in preference to the spring herring fishing. Letters and Reports June 21st 1880; AF19/3/8

the periods 1865-69 and 1885-89, catches of cod and ling increased by 237%;<sup>1</sup> and by 1889 the annual value of the cod catch was over £16,000, accounting for almost one-third of all the fish landed in the East Neuk by value.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the English fresh fish market continued to increase. By 1870 local fish-buyers were importing cargoes of ice into Anstruther in order to preserve fish in good condition for the London market.<sup>3</sup> The proportion of fresh fish sent to the English market rose from 34½% in the period 1855-59 to 81% by the period 1880-84. (see Graph VI.2.).

The fishing grounds ranged from 80 to 150 miles seaward,<sup>4</sup> and by the mid-1880's were fished by a fleet of 145 boats and 1015 men.<sup>5</sup> Earnings for a crew could reach as high as £46 in a good week,<sup>6</sup> but more generally earnings throughout the 1870's and 1880's averaged between £10 and £20 per week for each crew, representing earnings of 25s. to 50s. a week for each fisherman.<sup>7</sup> For a short period in the early 1880's prior to the development of Aberdeen's domination of the Scottish fresh fish market, Anstruther district was the major fresh cod producing centre in Scotland.<sup>8</sup> But this position was only gained at the expense of a steady decline in the small line fishing for haddocks,<sup>9</sup> which also suffered as a result of the growing importance of the autumn herring fishing off the English coast.<sup>10</sup> By the 1880's, though about 75 yawls engaged in haddock fishing throughout the year,<sup>11</sup> the majority of fishermen took part only during the month of December, after their return from the English herring fishing and prior to the start of the winter drave.<sup>12</sup> Between 1883 and 1889, the East Neuk haddock catch declined by 62% in value and 42% in quantity; whilst in Scotland as a whole the catch increased by 45.8% in quantity, though declining by 2.8% in value. During the same period, the East Neuk's share of Scotland's haddock

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1. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery, 1865-69; Annual Reports of the Fishery Board for Scotland, 1885-89
  2. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1889
  3. East of Fife Record Feb 1st 1870
  4. Ibid May 25th 1888.
  5. Letters and Reports Feb 5th 1888; AF19/3/10
  6. Ibid May 11th 1882; AF19/3/8 7. Ibid 1875-1885; AF19/3/7-9
  8. Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1883-86 (Hereafter Fishery Board Reports)
  9. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1873; Jan 1st 1874; AF19/3/7
  10. Ibid Jan 1st 1884; AF19/3/7
  11. Fishery Board Reports 1887
  12. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1883; AF19/3/9



Graph VI.2. Development of Cod Fishing in the East Neuk.

(Annual average catches for Quincennial periods 1855-99).

a) Total catches of cod.

b) Amount of cod sold fresh.

catch dropped from 10% to 4%, whilst its share of the cod catch remained stable at 9.6%.<sup>1</sup>

With both the Lammae drave and the haddock fishing in decline locally, and only the cod fishing prospering, the winter drave necessarily played an increasingly dominant role in the East Neuk fisheries after 1865. By 1875, Anstruther was easily the principal fishing station in Scotland during the period of the winter herring fishing; 54% of the entire landings of winter herrings in the East Neuk were made at Anstruther,<sup>2</sup> and by 1880-84 the proportion had further risen to 66%.<sup>3</sup> As many as 30 English buyers were present by 1876,<sup>4</sup> and a fleet of 230 boats and 1350 fishermen were active during the busiest weeks.<sup>5</sup> Even a decline in catches during the late 1870's was less disastrous than failures of the Lammae drave, for, though the number of boats engaged dropped to only 200 in 1879-80,<sup>6</sup> the number of curers and buyers present remained high, 75-85 curers being at the winter herring fishery throughout the 1870's.<sup>7</sup> Therefore competition for catches was always keen, and since fish were sold by auction and not by engagement, average prices varied from 22s.<sup>8</sup> to 57s.<sup>9</sup> per cran, depending upon the size of the total catch.

The low catches of the late 1870's filled Fife fishermen with a fear that the winter herring might also be deserting the Firth of Forth. 'From Wemyss to Crail' wrote the East of Fife Record 'the talk is the same ..... of the world going away from the nets'.<sup>10</sup> The fears were allayed by a succession of good draves after 1880, culminating in an enormous catch of 40,636 crans in 1885, representing average earnings of almost £95 for each of the 220 boats engaged,<sup>11</sup> compared with the meagre £24 which had been the average in 1879.<sup>12</sup> But though 1885 produced a record winter drave in the East Neuk, and though the cod-fishing was prospering there and had yet to reach its

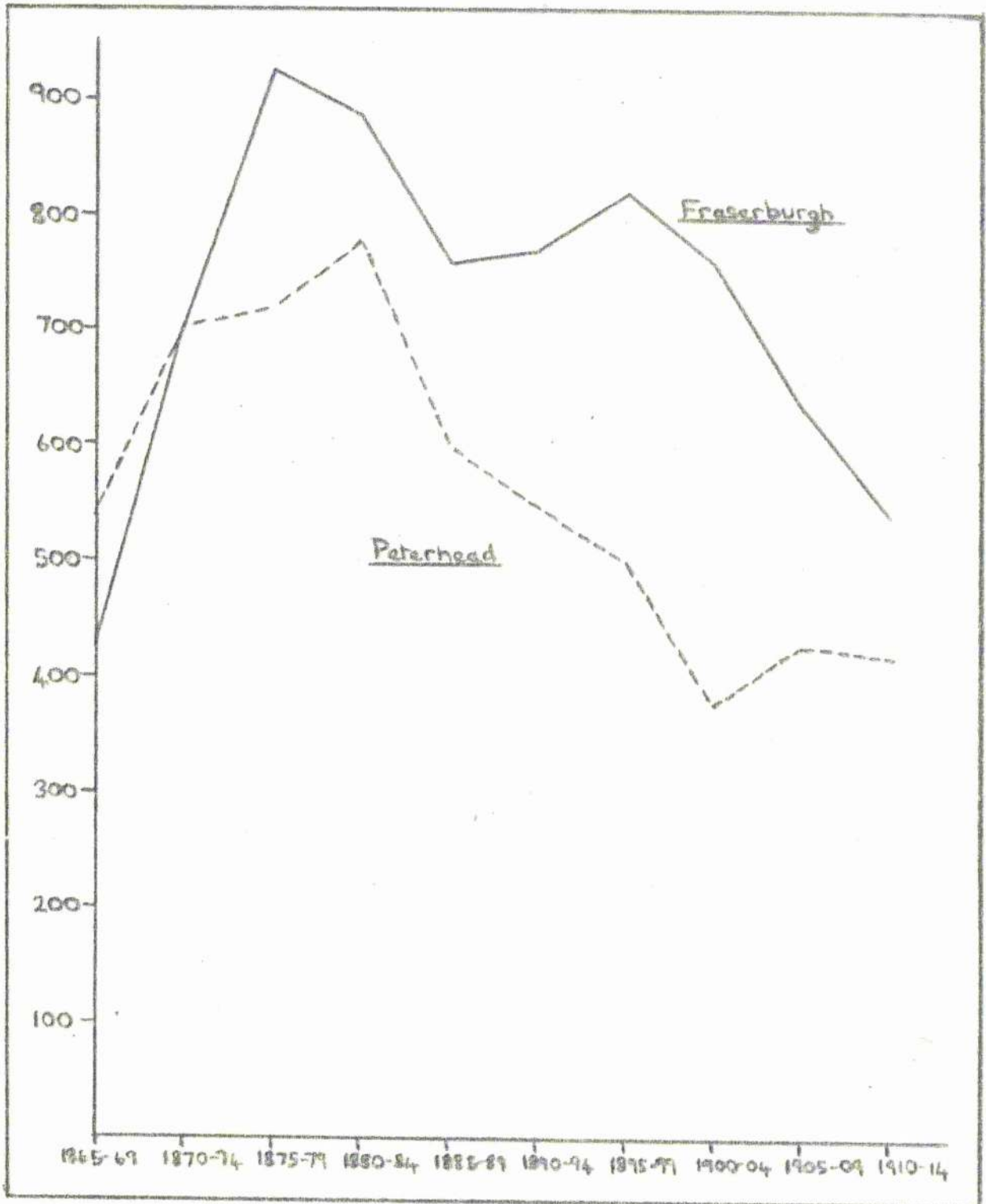
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1. Fishery Board Reports 1883, 1889
  2. East of Fife Record 1870-75 for winter herring landings at Anstruther
  3. Ibid 1880-84
  4. Ibid Feb 11th 1876
  5. Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1876
  6. Ibid 1876
  7. Ibid 1879, 1880
  8. In 1874 when 20,000 crans were landed. See Weekly Reports of Fishing 1874; AF19/12/5
  9. In 1877 when only 2,580 crans were landed. See Weekly Reports of Fishing 1877; AF19/12/6
  10. St. Andrews Gazette March 31st 1877
  11. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1885; AF19/12/7
  12. Ibid 1879; AF19/12/7

peak, the year in general was a disastrous one for the Scottish fishing industry, and marked the start of a depression that was to last a decade. The principal sufferer was the summer herring fishing, but the latter had become so important to the economy of almost every fishing district in Scotland that repercussions were to be felt in all sectors of the fishing industry as incomes declined and investments in boats and gear dwindled.

The depression was caused by the serious losses suffered by curers as a result of the record catches of herrings in Scotland during the summers of 1884 and 1885, being 1,697,077 crans in the former year and 1,572,952 crans in the latter - catches that were not to be equalled until 1898.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent depression arose from the organization of the curing industry which was based upon a system of credit both between curers and fishermen, and between curers and continental herring merchants. By 1885 the entire continental herring market was controlled by about 50 firms at six German and four Russian centres, one Stettin firm alone giving advances worth £70,000 to Scottish curers in 1885 through the London bankers' credit system.<sup>2</sup> In order to ensure an adequate supply of herring to meet their commitments to continental merchants, curers engaged boats at unprecedentedly high prices in both 1884 and 1885;<sup>3</sup> the abundant fishings were therefore a disaster to the curing industry, though extremely lucrative for the fishermen. Curers were forced to fulfil their agreements with fishermen and buy more herrings than they were able to dispose of, since the continental markets were rapidly glutted in both 1884 and 1885.<sup>4</sup> Indeed curers would have been better rewarded to sell fish as manure than to incur the cost of freight to the Baltic, where herrings remained unsold.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this glut of herrings, many curers were left with insufficient capital for efficient operation, and many became bankrupt.<sup>6</sup> Prices accordingly became much lower in the ensuing years as

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1884-1898
  2. W. S. Miln: An Exposure of the Position of the Scotch Herring Trade in 1885 (London 1886) p.66
  3. Ibid p.5
  4. Fishery Board Reports 1885 p.xii
  5. W. S. Miln: An Exposure of the Position of the Scotch Herring Trade in 1885 (London 1886) p.11
  6. Fishery Board Reports 1885 p.xii



Graph VI.3. Size of Fleets Fishing at Peterhead and Fraserburgh 1865-1914.  
(annual averages for quincennial periods; from Fishery Board Reports 1865-1914).

curers sought to avoid the disastrous results of 1884 and 1885.<sup>1</sup> Engagements became both less frequent and lower priced. Indeed, by 1887 only half the boats operated under the engagement system during the herring fishing, the rest selling their catches by public auction.<sup>2</sup> Fishermen, who had escaped the immediate effects of the crisis, soon experienced the repercussions. In 1887, there was a strike by fishermen at the northern ports during the summer fishing, led by those at Peterhead who refused to go to sea until the whole fleet was engaged at between 12s. and 16s. per cran; no boats were allowed to land fish, and vast quantities were thrown into the sea.<sup>3</sup> But the strike could not halt the course of a depression. The major result of the slump was a large reduction in the number of half-dealmen employed in the herring fishing, as full-time fishermen combined to form crews in order to minimize expenses.<sup>4</sup> The number of boats engaged in the summer fishing at Peterhead and Fraserburgh declined rapidly after 1885 (see Graph VI.3); and in Anstruther district the number of herring boats declined from a peak of 575 in 1885<sup>5</sup> to 343 in 1894.<sup>6</sup> Throughout Scotland investment in nets and boats declined; between 1885 and 1890 the value of nets declined by 20% and of boats by nearly 10%, whilst the tonnage of the fishing fleet dropped by nearly 10% and the number of fishermen by 11.7%.<sup>7</sup>

By 1895 the worst effects of the recession had passed and the Scottish fishing industry began to expand once more. But in Anstruther district the depression continued well into the 1890's. Between 1885 and 1893, the boat building industry was at a virtual standstill in the East Neuk,<sup>8</sup> as the entire herring fleet was rationalised in order to adapt to the new conditions. Owing to the comparatively low prices for herrings, success at the fishing depended on a large catch, and as the older boats were not fit to be taken to a sufficient offing - where the bulk of herrings were secured - they could not profitably be employed,

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1886 p.xi-xii
  2. Ibid 1887 p.24-25
  3. East of Fife Record July 22nd 1887
  4. Fishery Board Reports 1886 p.xi-xii
  5. Anstruther District Abstract Book 1885; AF19/33/3
  6. Anstruther District Statistics Note Book; AF19/41/1
  7. Fishery Board Reports 1885, 1890
  8. 28 first class boats had been built in 1883, but only two new boats were built between 1889 and 1893. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1884; AF19/3/9. Letter Books July 1st 1893; AF19/4/1

and crews could not be found to man them. Therefore boats that might have been good enough for a few years fishing, given the conditions operating prior to the recession of 1885, had to be broken up or sold for purposes other than fishing.<sup>1</sup> No fewer than 24 of the older first class boats were disposed of in 1895 alone.<sup>2</sup>

Thus with the fleet contracting in size, there were no longer enough berths to accommodate every fisherman seeking a place as a share fisherman.<sup>3</sup> Earnings at both the northern and the English herring fishings declined sharply. At the northern ports the number of East Neuk boats attending declined by 34 between 1885 and 1890.<sup>4</sup> In 1893 average earnings were only £70<sup>5</sup> and in 1894 £140<sup>6</sup> compared with the £200 or more of the period before 1885.<sup>7</sup> At the English herring fishing, the decline was even more drastic, though. As many as 150 boats from the district had fished from Yarmouth and Lowestoft in the early 1880's<sup>8</sup> and average earnings had exceeded £200.<sup>9</sup> But by the early 1890's boat owners were finding it increasingly difficult to meet the expense of upkeep and recoup the original cost of the boat from the boat's share,<sup>10</sup> which had remained unchanged for 30 years, despite the increased cost of first class fishing boats.<sup>11</sup> By 1892, the East Neuk fleet at the English autumn herring fishing had declined to 80 boats, though this was still the largest Scottish contingent and was responsible for 47% of all the fish landed by Scottish boats.<sup>12</sup> In 1893 there were only 52 East Neuk boats<sup>13</sup> and in 1894 a mere 21.<sup>14</sup> This rapid decrease was largely due to the decline in earnings which averaged only £120 per boat for the years between 1885 and 1895 and were as low as £83 in 1893.<sup>15</sup> It became more rewarding to participate in the shorter but less expensive Scarborough autumn herring fishing and by 1894, 82 East Neuk boats averaged earnings of £62 10s. during four or five weeks at Scarborough.<sup>16</sup>

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1894 p.146
  2. Ibid 1895 p.146
  3. Letter Books July 1st 1893; AF19/4/1
  4. Ibid July 11th 1890; AF19/4/1 5. Ibid Oct 21st 1893; AF19/4/1
  6. East of Fife Record Dec 28th 1894
  7. See above p.155 (northern earnings)
  8. East of Fife Record Sept 29th 1882
  9. See above p.159 (Yarmouth earnings)
  10. See above p.22 for organization of boat owning.
  11. Fishery Board Reports 1894 p.145
  12. Ibid 1892
  13. Letter Book Jan 1st 1893; AF19/4/1
  14. Ibid Jan 1st 1895; AF19/4/1
  15. Letter Books 1886-1895; AF19/3/10; AF19/4/1
  16. Ibid Jan 1st 1894; AF19/4/1



The winter drave, too, underwent a decline after the record catches between 1884 and 1888.<sup>1</sup> Between 1890 and 1898, the catch exceeded £10,000 in value only once, in 1893, and in general averaged only £5,916 annually.<sup>2</sup> The entire economy of the East Neuk, heavily dependent as it was upon fishing, appeared to be in jeopardy. The value of the local fishing fleet declined by 21% between 1885 and 1895, and the tonnage by 32%; fishing equipment declined in value by 30%.<sup>3</sup> Populations of the major fishing ports dropped, too, between 1881 and 1891 after almost a century of steady expansion.<sup>4</sup> The cod fishing alone seemed to prosper, increasing from an annual average of 34,370 cwts for the period between 1880 and 1884, to an average of 43,258 cwts worth £14,747 annually between 1890 and 1894, by which date the district was responsible for 9.4% of the total Scottish output. (see Graph VI.2)

By 1891, local businessmen, concerned by the declining returns from the fisheries, held a meeting in Anstruther to discuss means of reviving the fishing industry in the East Neuk. Thirty local men attended, and much discussion was given to the subject of steam-powered line fishing vessels, for which the major advocate was W. S. Bonthron, an Anstruther fish buyer.<sup>5</sup> After a number of additional meetings, it was finally agreed to form an Anstruther Steam Fishing Company, which was established in July 1891 with a share capital of £2,600.<sup>6</sup>

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The introduction of steam fishing boats into the East Neuk was essentially the first major technological advance of the 19th century in the local fishing industry. A steam fishing boat crewed by St. Monance men and owned by an Edinburgh company had been fishing in the Firth as long ago as 1854;<sup>7</sup> and an ambitious St. Andrews crew had paid £3,000 for a steam trawler in 1883.<sup>8</sup> But in general opinion among fishermen in the East Neuk was hostile to the introduction of steam fishing boats, preference being given to the purchase of large, first-

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1. Letters and Reports 1884-1888; AF19/3/9,10
  2. Ibid 1888-90; AF19/3/10. Letter Books 1890-98; AF19/4/1,2
  3. Fishery Board Reports 1885, 1895
  4. That of St. Monance by 2.7%, of Pittenweem by 6% and of Anstruther by 9.25%. Official Census Returns for Scotland 1881, 1891
  5. East of Fife Record April 17th 1891
  6. Files of Anstruther Steam Fishing Company BT2/2184
  7. Fife Herald April 6th 1854
  8. East of Fife Record May 11th 1883

class, sailing boats, for which boat-builders in the East Neuk had a national reputation.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-1880's such boats had changed considerably from their predecessors of the 1860's, being 55 feet in length and having two cabins fitted with beds, seats, tables, lockers, drawers and a cooking stove<sup>2</sup> - the finished vessel selling at a price of up to £400.<sup>3</sup> An opponent of steam vessels, such as Bailie Welch of St. Andrews - himself a member of the Fishery Board for Scotland - could still claim in 1886 that 'steam-trawling will not pay in Scotland .....; a stray here and there might be able to eke out a sickly existence, but, as a paying business, the days of steam trawling are numbered in Scotland'.<sup>4</sup> Another opponent considered that 'steam trawling will be the means of depopulating the whole fishing coast of Scotland'.<sup>5</sup>

But steam trawlers had proved to be extremely effective. Aberdeen, the centre for the Scottish steam trawling fleet, expanded at an enormous rate as a fishing port as a result of this effectiveness. In 1885, there were 15 steam trawlers fishing from the port, all owned by Aberdeen firms; by 1895 there were 59, and these figures do not include the significant numbers of steam trawlers from other districts which landed the majority of their catches at Aberdeen.<sup>6</sup> Landings of fish, excluding herrings,<sup>7</sup> at Aberdeen increased in value from £69,262 in 1883 to £241,097 in 1892. By the latter date 28.8% of all the fish landed in Scotland, excluding herrings, were landed at Aberdeen, compared with 11.4% in 1883. By contrast, the value of landings in the East Neuk declined by 52% between 1883 and 1892. In the course of a decade, Aberdeen had become Scotland's major fishing port, being responsible in 1892 for 18% of all the fish landed in Scotland. Significantly, 60% of all the fish landed at the port were caught by steam trawlers.<sup>8</sup>

Supporters of steam fishing boats in the East Neuk therefore had the successful example of Aberdeen to point to when urging the adoption of similar vessels in the district.<sup>9</sup> Prominent among the supporters of such a scheme was Stephen Williamson M.P., a wealthy Liverpool merchant

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1. St. Andrews Gazette April 30th 1881
  2. Letters and Reports Dec 21st 1884; AF19/3/9
  3. East of Fife Record Oct 29th 1886
  4. Ibid Dec 3rd 1886
  5. Ibid May 30th 1890
  6. Fishery Board Reports 1885, 1895
  7. The nature of herring fishing precluded the use of a trawl net.
  8. Fishery Board Reports 1883, 1892
  9. East of Fife Record April 17th 1891

and ship-owner, who had been born in Anstruther and was a former member of Parliament for the St. Andrews burghs.<sup>1</sup> In 1890 he had offered to help to procure two steam trawlers for Anstruther, if the majority of fishermen were not opposed to the idea.<sup>2</sup> Though opposition from some quarters was strong, Williamson was sufficiently encouraged to place an order for a steam trawler with a firm of Kinghorn shipbuilders,<sup>3</sup> which was duly launched in July 1891.<sup>4</sup>

However, it was not steam trawlers, but rather steam-powered line-fishing vessels that were to be the basis of the district's steam fishing fleet in the 1890's. The first of the local steam fishing companies, the Anstruther, decided against a proposal to build a trawler due to their prohibitive cost - in the region of £3,000.<sup>5</sup> Instead, a wooden, line-fishing boat was commissioned from William Jarvis, an Anstruther boatbuilder, at a cost of £2,260, with the engine being fitted at Leith.<sup>6</sup> When the vessel was launched in October 1891, the event was considered important enough for Anstruther shops to remain closed for half an hour during the ceremony.<sup>7</sup>

The experiment proved an amazing success. After only seven weeks of operations, the Directors of the company were able to declare a dividend of 5½% on subscribed capital at the first Annual General Meeting.<sup>8</sup> A second boat was commissioned in February 1892,<sup>9</sup> and a third in April of the same year, by raising additional share capital.<sup>10</sup> In June 1892, a dividend of 9% was declared for the first half of the year for holders of the original issue stock;<sup>11</sup> the future of steam-line fishing in the district looked bright and Stephen Williamson, the major share holder in the Company expressed the hope that 'fishermen would make up their minds to stay in the neighbourhood, and not go gadding about the whole coast to Ireland, Yarmouth, and other places, but live and fish at home'.<sup>12</sup> In October 1892, the Company commissioned a fourth boat and Williamson echoed the views of the shareholders when he said that local fishermen 'should not give so much attention to catching herrings, but rather try to supply the teeming population of the country with white fish

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1. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.94
  2. East of Fife Record May 25th 1890
  3. Ibid June 13th 1890
  4. Ibid July 17th 1891
  5. Ibid April 24th 1891
  6. Ibid May 29th 1891; June 5th 1891
  7. Ibid Oct 9th 1891
  8. Ibid Feb 5th 1892
  9. Ibid
  10. Ibid April 8th 1892
  11. Ibid June 3rd 1892
  12. Ibid

all the year round.<sup>1</sup> A total dividend of 11½% was paid to shareholders on the earnings of the boats in 1892,<sup>2</sup> and a further 6% in 1893, whilst accumulating at the same time a reserve fund of £739.<sup>3</sup>

The success of the Anstruther Steam Fishing Company caused a proliferation of rival companies to be established in the East Neuk. The first to be registered was the East of Fife Steam Fishing Company in November 1893;<sup>4</sup> this was followed by a further 11 companies before the end of 1896 - the Pittenweem and Cellardyke, the Crail, the St. Adrian, the Bay, the Castle, the Forth, the St. Monance, the White Cross, the Ness, the County and the Kilrenny. The companies ranged in size from the Anstruther, with a share capital of £10,000 and a fleet of 5 steam liners by 1895,<sup>5</sup> down to the short-lived Pittenweem and Cellardyke Fishing Company with a share capital of only £1,000.<sup>6</sup> Most companies, however, were remarkably similar in structure and organization. Far from being rivals, many shared the same managers, directors and shareholders. W. S. Banthron, for example, was the manager of the Anstruther,<sup>7</sup> East of Fife,<sup>8</sup> Forth,<sup>9</sup> Crail,<sup>10</sup> and Kilrenny Companies;<sup>11</sup> while Thomas Cunningham held a similar position with the County,<sup>12</sup> Castle,<sup>13</sup> Ness,<sup>14</sup> Bay<sup>15</sup> and St. Adrian companies.<sup>16</sup>

The major financial contributor was Stephen Williamson, who had £1,810 of shares in the Anstruther Company,<sup>17</sup> £800 worth in the Bay,<sup>18</sup> £640 in the Kilrenny<sup>19</sup> and £400 in the Ness,<sup>20</sup> as well as smaller

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1. East of Fife Record Oct 21st 1892
  2. Fishery Board Reports 1892 p.
  3. St. Andrews Citizen Feb 10th 1894
  4. Files of the East of Fife Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2595
  5. Fishery Board Reports 1895 p.145
  6. Files of the Pittenweem and Cellardyke Fishing Co. BT2/2776
  7. Files of the Anstruther Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2184
  8. Files of the East of Fife Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2595
  9. Files of the Forth Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2828
  10. Files of the Crail Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2919
  11. Files of the Kilrenny Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4804
  12. Files of the County Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3103
  13. Files of the Castle Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3089
  14. Files of the Ness Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2804
  15. Files of the Bay Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4863
  16. Files of the St. Adrian Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2845
  17. Files of the Anstruther Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2184
  18. Files of the Bay Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4863
  19. Files of the Kilrenny Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4804
  20. Files of the Ness Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2804

holdings in the County,<sup>1</sup> Forth,<sup>2</sup> White Cross,<sup>3</sup> Crail,<sup>4</sup> Castle<sup>5</sup> and East of Fife companies<sup>6</sup> - representing in all almost 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the entire stock of the East Neuk steam fishing companies. Other large shareholders included his sons, John and Archibald Williamson, his son-in-law John Black and various Liverpoolian business associates. Williamson himself, however, took no part in the administration of the various companies apart from this provision of capital. Nor did the various other large non-local shareholders such as Crans, the Edinburgh firm of engineers,<sup>7</sup> or such fish salesmen and merchants as Thomas Davidson of Aberdeen,<sup>8</sup> Robert Irvin of Shields,<sup>9</sup> James Watson of Leith<sup>10</sup> or Thomas Devlin of Newhaven.<sup>11</sup>

The control of the companies was normally left in the hands of the larger local shareholders, many of whom held directorships with several of the companies.<sup>12</sup> Local businessmen, farmers, widows and spinsters provided the major part of the locally raised share capital; but men with local political ambitions such as Major Sprott of Strathvithie and Sir John Gilmour each bought large shareholdings to strengthen their identification of interests with the local fishing industry, in the eyes of the electorate. Significantly, however, fishermen alone seemed unenthusiastic about the new companies, and few appeared among the lists of shareholders. In the largest of the companies, the Anstruther, for example, no fishermen held any shares;<sup>13</sup> in others such as the St. Monance, one or two fishermen might hold a small number of shares each.<sup>14</sup> The two exceptions were the shortlived

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1. Files of the County Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3103
  2. Files of the Forth Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2828
  3. Files of the White Cross Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3177
  4. Files of the Crail Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2919
  5. Files of the Castle Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3089
  6. Files of the East of Fife Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2595
  7. e.g. in the White Cross Company.
  8. Files of the Kilrenny Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4804; Files of the St. Monance Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3364
  9. Files of the Crail Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2919; Files of the White Cross Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3177
  10. Files of the Crail Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2919; Files of the County Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3103
  11. Files of the Kilrenny Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4804; Files of the St. Monance Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3364
  12. e.g. William Oliphant, an Anstruther banker; John Marr, an Anstruther draper; Thomas Dunsire, an Anstruther fish-curer; Alex. Mackintosh, an Anstruther solicitor; James Leslie, an Anstruther general merchant.
  13. Files of the Anstruther Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2184
  14. Files of the St. Monance Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3364

Pittenweem and Cellardyke Fishing Company in which Alex. Keay held 20% of the shares,<sup>1</sup> and the Castle Steam Fishing Company in which a group of five fishermen held 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ % of the shares - one of whom Henry Stevenson even held a directorship.<sup>2</sup>

None of the companies was to continue in business for any considerable period of time. The first to be liquidated was the Pittenweem and Cellardyke in 1896, after an existence of less than two years;<sup>3</sup> and though the Kilrenny continued to operate until 1905,<sup>4</sup> the remainder had all been liquidated by 1903. This is all the more surprising when one considers that most companies were able to pay handsome dividends to their shareholders in the early years of their existence. The East of Fife, for example, paid an average dividend of 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % between 1894 and 1896,<sup>5</sup> the St. Adrian paid 17% in 1898<sup>6</sup> and 10% in 1899,<sup>7</sup> and the White Cross 10%<sup>8</sup> and 11%<sup>9</sup> respectively in the same years. As late as 1903, the latter could still afford a dividend of 6%<sup>10</sup> whilst the Kilrenny paid 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ %.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, for many companies profits had declined rapidly by the late 1890's. In 1896 the St. Andrews Citizen had sanguinely declared that 'so firm a hold has the steam-line fishing got upon the community that it seems the days of the sailing craft are numbered';<sup>12</sup> yet by 1899, three companies - the East of Fife, the Crail and the Forth had already begun to find operations unprofitable and were entering voluntary liquidation.<sup>13</sup>

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The failure of the East Neuk steam fishing companies can be attributed to a number of factors. Partly it was because steam-liners were a very uneconomical form of fishing boat. Though less expensive than a trawler to build and equip, running costs could be exceptionally high. In addition to the cost of fuel and the wages of a fireman and engineer, a continual supply of bait was essential if fishing were to take place.<sup>14</sup> As early as 1890, a local fisherman had opined that such

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1. Files of the Pittenweem and Cellardyke Fishing Co. BT2/2776
  2. Files of the Castle Steam Fishing Co. BT2/3089
  3. Files of the Pittenweem and cellardyke Fishing Co. BT2/2776
  4. Files of the Kilrenny Steam Fishing Co. BT2/4804
  5. East of Fife Record Feb 8th 1895; Jan 10th 1896; Jan 8th 1897
  6. Ibid Oct 21st 1898
  7. Ibid Nov 3rd 1899
  8. Ibid July 15th 1898
  9. Ibid July 14th 1899
  10. Ibid Sept 18th 1903
  11. Ibid July 17th 1903
  12. St. Andrews Citizen Oct 10th 1896
  13. Files of the East of Fife Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2595; Crail Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2919; Forth Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2828
  14. Fishery Board Report 1900 p.218

vessels would prove uneconomic during certain periods of the year due to the difficulty in obtaining bait; and after the initial successes of the mid-1890's this certainly proved to be the case. This was true of steam-liners throughout Scotland, and after 1898 there was a steady conversion of such vessels into trawlers.<sup>1</sup>

The major factors, however, were the essential inadequacy of the East Neuk as a fishing centre by the 1890's and a revival in the profitability of the herring fisheries, which rendered it difficult to obtain crews to man the steam-liners. The former factor had been in operation since the 1860's,<sup>2</sup> the Union Harbour at Anstruther had been designed in 1864 to accommodate fishing boats from all the East Neuk ports.<sup>3</sup> Even if it had been properly designed, it would have been outdated by the 1890's. In 1864 the largest boats drew only four feet of water; by the 1890's the largest sailing boats drew six to seven feet of water, and the steam fishing boats nine feet, which meant that boats were unable to enter or leave the harbour at all states of the tide.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the design of the harbour was such that 'in bad weather it was infinitely worse than it was before it was attempted to be improved'.<sup>5</sup>

The situation was worse at neighbouring Pittenweem. Here, despite improvements to the harbour in 1872,<sup>6</sup> the basin was so filled with silt by 1888 that boats stuck fast and were trapped even at high water.<sup>7</sup> By that date, only four harbours on the entire east coast of Scotland were considered good - Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Cluny and Aberdeen.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, just as the increasing size of boats had caused the herring fishery to concentrate at the larger and more suitable harbours, so the same factor led to the concentration of the line-fishing and trawling upon Aberdeen, and, to a lesser extent, Leith. East Neuk boats had occasionally landed fish at Aberdeen as early as 1871.<sup>9</sup> As boats grew larger the practice became more popular, and not merely with East Neuk boats; but it was accelerated by the development of steam-fishing, since Aberdeen was one of the few fishing ports accessible at all states of the tide. As catches landed at Aberdeen increased, more buyers

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1. Fishery Board Report 1898
  2. See above p.79
  3. Fishery Board Reports 1892 p.84
  4. Ibid
  5. East of Fife Record Dec 4th 1874
  6. Ibid Jan 12th 1872
  7. Ibid Feb 24th 1888
  8. Fishery Board Reports 1882 p xv
  9. Letters and Reports Jan 1st 1871; AF19/3/6

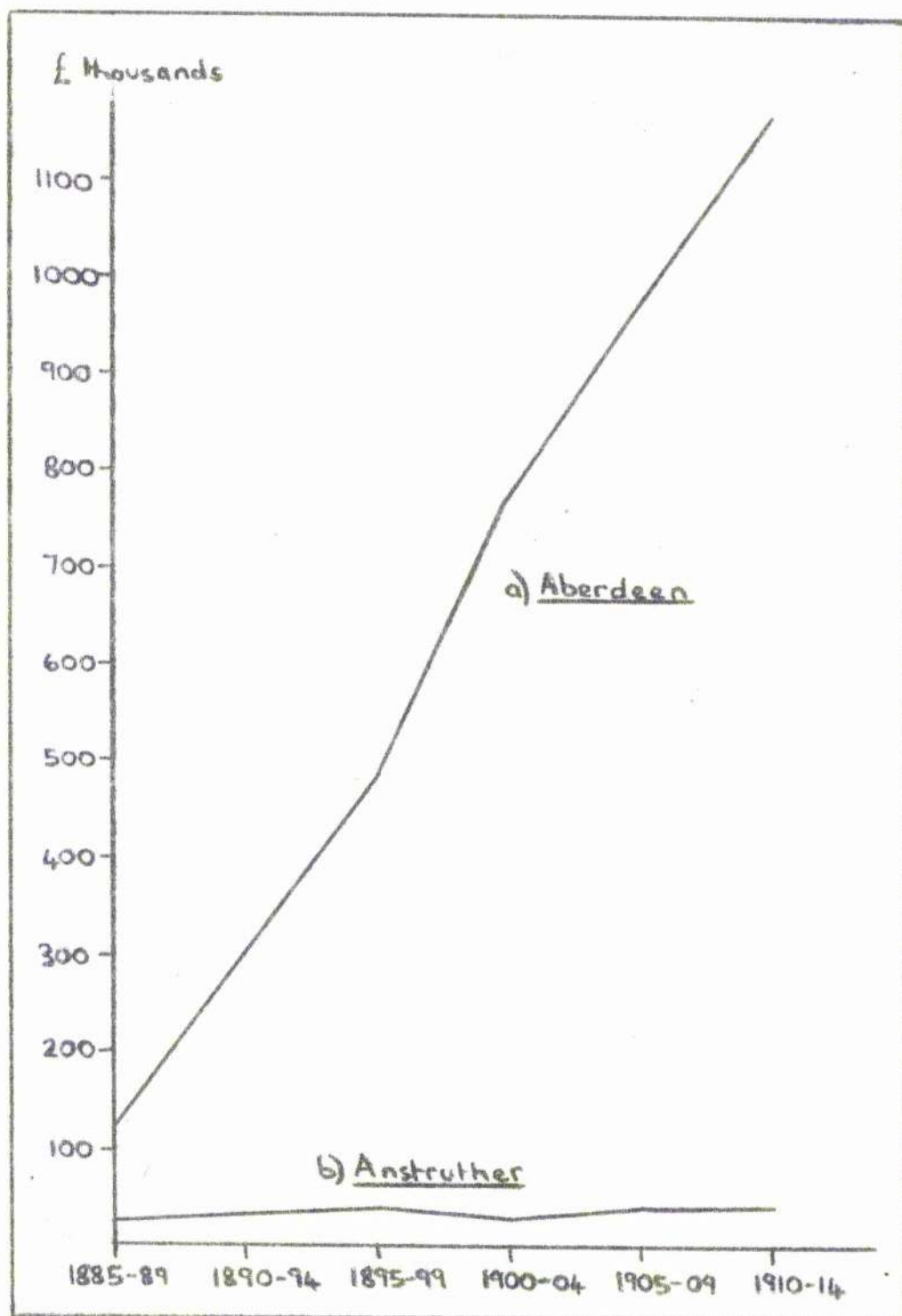
attended the harbour, which in turn led to increased prices, thereby rendering the port a still more attractive market for non-local boats. The expansion of Aberdeen therefore continued after 1895. Between 1890 and 1894 average landings at Aberdeen were 301,587 cwts. per year - 18.5% of the total for Scotland; by the period 1900-04, landings had risen to an annual average of 771,453 cwts., representing 33% of the total amount of fish landed in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

At first, the East Neuk steam-liners had been permitted to land their catches at Aberdeen - or at Shields if they were fishing off the English coast.<sup>2</sup> However, in a misguided attempt to halt the declining annual value of fish landed in the East Neuk after 1895,<sup>3</sup> the Anstruther based steam fishing companies attempted to introduce regulations enforcing steam-liners to land their catches at Anstruther.<sup>4</sup> Since prices were invariably lower at Anstruther than at Aberdeen, shareholders felt the effect in reduced dividends, and fishermen in reduced earnings.<sup>5</sup>

The latter proved disastrous to the viability of the companies. Steam-liners had never been popular among fishermen; though crewmen were employed on a share basis, working for joint-stock companies seemed to undermine their independence.<sup>6</sup> Strikes had occurred over payments, and contributions towards running costs.<sup>7</sup> But while the herring fisheries were in a depressed state, berths upon steam-liners were eagerly sought as a substitute source of earnings;<sup>8</sup> indeed, earnings reached as high as £140 per man in 1896 in some vessels, whilst the average was £100.<sup>9</sup> But in the late 1890's, the herring fishery began to revive. Locally the winter drave entered a period of renewed prosperity after 1899, averaging 34,188 crans annually, worth £38,287, in the decade 1899 to 1908, and reaching a record 50,000 crans worth over £70,000 in 1902.<sup>10</sup> Earnings and

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1890-1904
  2. St. Andrews Citizen Oct 3rd 1896
  3. Fishery Board Reports 1892-97; cod catches, in particular, declined during this period, by a total of 25% in value.
  4. Ibid 1898 p.176
  5. St. Andrews Citizen April 1st 1899
  6. East of Fife Record June 10th 1892
  7. St. Andrews Citizen April 3rd 1897
  8. Fishery Board Reports 1894
  9. Ibid 1896
  10. Anstruther District Letter Books 1899-1908; AF19/4/2,3





Graph VI.4. Gross Catches of Fishes, Anstruther and Aberdeen Districts, 1885-1914.

(annual averages for quincennial periods from Fishery Board Reports 1885-1914)

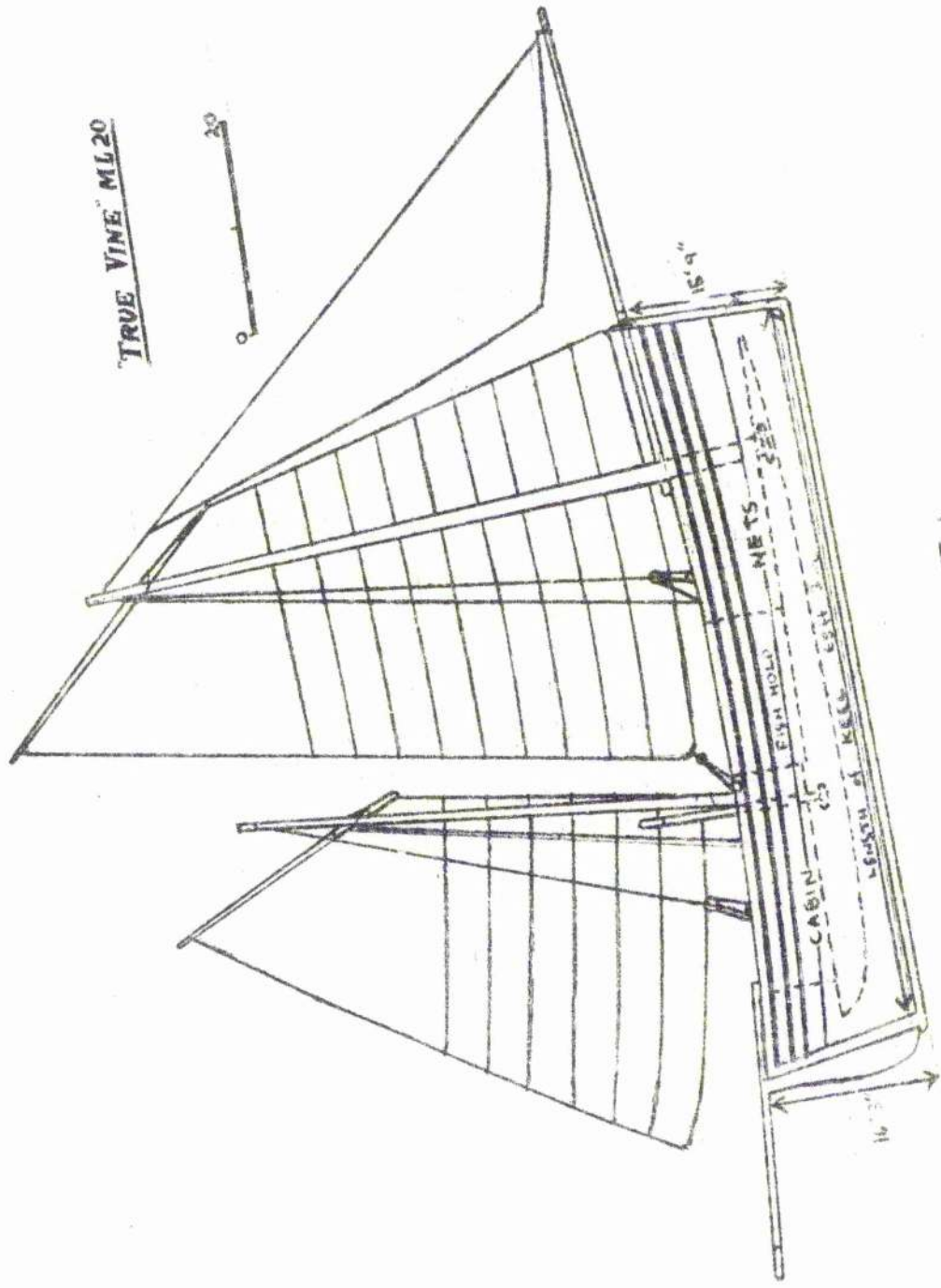
attendances at the Yarmouth fishing steadily rose again too; in 1894, 21 boats had averaged £156 each; by 1897, 38 boats averaged £240; and by 1899, 51 boats averaged £506.<sup>1</sup>

Crews had sometimes left the steam-liners during the summer fishing at the northern ports, but most had remained during the winter and autumn herring fishings during the mid-1890's. But with the revival of the herring fishing, the attractions of the steam-liners began to appear less attractive. Already by 1897, six skippers of steam-liners had indicated their intention of returning to sailing vessels,<sup>2</sup> and the renewed popularity of the herring fishing was clearly seen in the revival of the local boat building industry - particularly the building of first class sailing boats. Between 1895 and 1897, 13 first class sailing boats and 9 steam vessels were built in the district; between 1898 and 1900 the figures were 46 and 2 respectively; and between 1901 and 1903 the figures were 72 and 5 respectively.<sup>3</sup> By 1900 liners were finding it difficult to obtain crews;<sup>4</sup> and even those with crews were only in use for eight months of the year due to the refusal of crews to man them during the winter drave due to the greater expense of steam drift net fishing in comparatively narrow waters like the Forth.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1897 and 1902 the number of steam vessels owned by the joint-stock companies decreased from 21 to 8 - and of these, four were owned by local fishermen.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, line-fishing in the steamers had been reduced to only three months of the year, the summer being spent at the northern herring fishing and the autumn at Yarmouth or Lowestoft.<sup>7</sup> Though steam-powered vessels were to enjoy a renewed period of popularity after 1905 as their advantages over sailing boats for drift net fishing became increasingly apparent, the failure of the joint-stock companies marked the end of any hope of a revival for the locally based fisheries. Landings in the East Neuk declined from an average of £71,307 annually between 1900 and 1914. By the latter period, 50% of the landings in the East Neuk were herrings caught during the winter drave.<sup>8</sup>

Catches of cod, herrings, haddocks and flat-fish in the East Neuk

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1. Anstruther District Letter Books 1894-99; AF19/4/1,2
  2. East of Fife Record Dec 17th 1897
  3. Fishery Board Reports 1895-1903
  4. Ibid 1900
  5. Ibid 1903
  6. Ibid 1902
  7. Ibid 1902-06
  8. Ibid 1900-14



TRUE VINE ML20

PLAN VI.1  
St. Monance Fife, c. 1905

all declined in the decade before 1914.<sup>1</sup> Yet this disguised the essential prosperity enjoyed by East Neuk fishermen during this period. For though only 1.1% of the total Scottish catch was landed in the East Neuk between 1910 and 1914, the district fleet represented 7½% of the total tonnage of fishing boats in Scotland, and 5% of the total value.<sup>2</sup> Considerable investment in both fishing boats and fishing equipment had taken place between 1900 and 1914, with the fishing fleet increasing in value by 91.5%, and fishing gear by 10.8%.<sup>3</sup> The number of steam vessels increased from 17 in 1900 to 65 by 1914;<sup>4</sup> these vessels, however, were all steam drifters and almost all were owned by local fishermen - a measure of their prosperity since such boats cost in excess of £2,500. Boats were often jointly owned by two or three fishermen,<sup>5</sup> and the capital was normally raised by means of the 'bank cash credit' system, whereby successful and reliable fishermen obtained loans against the surety of a cautioner - normally fish salesmen to whom the boat owners undertook to sell their fish.<sup>6</sup> Even then, however, deposits of between ⅓ and ⅔ of the total value of the boat were normally necessary.<sup>7</sup>

In the light of the failure of the steam fishing companies of the 1890's, the popularity of steam vessels in the years immediately prior to 1914 might seem surprising. However, the advantages of steam power in terms of mobility had always been apparent to the East Neuk fishermen; their opposition to the earlier steam vessels had resulted from the loss of independence entailed by working for joint stock companies, and the essential economic inviability of steam line-fishing. By the 20th century, line fishing was rapidly becoming obsolete as a method of fishing. Development of the industry was to focus upon trawling and drift net fishing for herring, both of which could be successfully practised in steam-powered vessels.

Between 1900 and 1914, the number of first class sailing boats

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1909-14. Annual catches of haddock declined from an average of £5,483 for the period 1900-04 to £4,245 for the period 1910-14; in the same period catches of flat-fish declined from £2,623 to £1,918 and of cod from £6,987 to £5,459.
  2. Ibid 1910 and 1914
  3. Ibid
  4. Ibid
  5. East of Fife Record March 23rd 1911
  6. Fishery Board Reports 1911
  7. Anstruther District Letter Books Nov 16th 1911; AF19/4/3

in the East Neuk declined from 231 to 181 vessels.<sup>1</sup> After 1906, no large first class sailing boats were built in the district, though smaller sailing vessels continued to be produced for use in in-shore line-fishing, or in the winter drave, in which steam drifters took little part.<sup>2</sup> The steam vessels had proved themselves consistently more successful at both the northern and the English herring fisheries since 1906.<sup>3</sup> Nor was the enterprise of the East Neuk fishermen confined to the rapid acquisition of steam drifters. Diesel motors were installed in a number of boats after 1906,<sup>4</sup> particularly in the smaller first class boats and second class vessels, which were still widely preferred for the winter herring fishing in the Firth. Compared to other districts though, their adaption was less favoured in the East Neuk; by 1914 there were 694 motor-powered fishing vessels in Scotland of which only 24 were registered in the Anstruther district.<sup>5</sup>

By 1914, the salient feature of the East Neuk fishing industry was that the local fleet landed considerably more fish in other districts than it did in its home ports. Between 1909 and 1913, the total value of fish landed in the East Neuk averaged £37,382 annually; yet at the English autumn herring fishing alone, East Neuk boats landed catches worth an annual average of £66,169 during the same period.<sup>6</sup> Local councils believed that it was merely the inadequacy of the harbour facilities in the East Neuk which had led to this development, and therefore continually petitioned the Treasury for financial assistance in developing harbour facilities in the area. However, these efforts reflected the local rivalries which existed between the various fishing burghs, with each promoting its own claims for development as a deep-water harbour.<sup>7</sup> Only by presenting a united case for one such harbour on the northern shore of the Firth of Forth could there have been any hope of gaining Treasury assistance.

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1900 and 1914

2. Ibid 1906-1914

3. At the English autumn herring fishing of 1913 for example, earnings of steam drifters, ranged between £416 and £1,421, whilst those of sailing boats were between £60 and £350. See Fishery Board Reports 1913

4. Fishery Board Reports 1905-1914. Early motors were primarily designed to be an auxiliary source of power and were capable of speeds of 4 to 5 knots in calm conditions.

5. Ibid 1914

6. Ibid 1909-1914. Fishing was disrupted at Yarmouth in 1914 by the outbreak of war, resulting in an estimated loss of £57,000 to the East Neuk.

7. East of Fife Record March 20th 1903; Nov 17th 1910; Nov 27th 1913.

	Steam Vessels	Total Tonnage of Fleet.	Total Value of Fleet.	Fishermen
1). <u>1900</u>				
Anstruther	5.6	6.99	5.02	5.23
Aberdeen	60.92	7.59	35.64	5.19
Buckie	1.3	4.45	1.8	9.73
Fraserburgh	4.3	5.69	5.46	5.95
Peterhead	4.6	7.4	7.45	4.13
Wick	1.3	14.73	9.39	5.91
2). <u>1914</u>				
Anstruther	3.67	7.49	3.51	4.3
Aberdeen	20.46	16.14	26.41	9.66
Buckie	16.85	13.26	14.90	9.48
Fraserburgh	6.78	8.28	6.75	6.16
Peterhead	10.9	5.33	10.13	4.03
Wick	2.77	3.1	2.29	3.21

Table VI.3. Scottish District Fishing Fleets 1900-1914.

(figures for each district are expressed as a percentage of the total for Scotland; from Fishery Board Reports 1900 and 1914).

Accordingly, the efforts failed, and East Neuk boats continued to prefer Aberdeen, Peterhead and Fraserburgh as markets when they were fishing off the east coast of Scotland.

By 1914, the East Neuk fishing fleet had become an anomaly. For, whilst the Scottish fishing industry had become concentrated at a number of large centres, the fishing fleet was dispersed among such districts as Buckie and Anstruther, which, while having no suitable fishery of their own, still maintained large fishing fleets. (see Table VI.3.) Only the disruptive effect of the Great War was to rationalise the organization of the Scottish fisheries. The British herring fishery never really recovered from the loss of the Baltic market during this period; the emphasis in the post war period was to change towards deep-sea fishing for the fresh fish markets, which had already by 1914 become heavily concentrated on such centres as Aberdeen, Grimsby and Hull. The 1920's and 1930's were to see the continued concentration of the fishing industry at these ports; in the East Neuk on the other hand, the fishing industry returned to a similar role to that which it had played in the late 18th century, being primarily concerned with the provision of fresh fish for a localised market.

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CHAPTER VII.

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THE EAST NEUK TOURIST INDUSTRY 1895-1914.

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The years after 1870 had witnessed a great expansion in the tourist industry in the East Neuk. As more and more families became able to afford the advantage of a seaside holiday, not only did the popularity of the larger established resorts, such as St. Andrews and Elie, increase, but also that of the neighbouring coastal burghs from Crail to St. Monance, each of which was able to offer, to some degree, those facilities and attractions available at St. Andrews or Elie.

Elie was already housing between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors in mid-summer by 1896.<sup>1</sup> The early 20th century saw no decline in the demand for accommodation; on the contrary, demand frequently exceeded supply, and visitors were forced to seek accommodation elsewhere in July and August. This was despite the construction of a large number of new houses in Elie and Earlsferry between 1891 and 1911; during that period, the number of houses in the two burghs increased by 45% from 352 to 510, whilst the population rose by only 7.4% from 1068 to 1147.<sup>2</sup> Many of these new houses were specifically built as holiday homes, so that by 1911, 184 of the houses in the two burghs - an enormous 36% - were uninhabited for most of the year.<sup>3</sup> Property values soared with, in some cases, prices doubling in the course of a few years.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, whenever houses were publicly auctioned, competition for ownership was always keen.<sup>5</sup>

The volume of traffic to the burghs was such that extensions became necessary at Elie railway station in 1897.<sup>6</sup> Special trains from Elie to Glasgow and Edinburgh were operated in the summer by the North British Railway Company, for the benefit of professional or business men who wished both to attend to their businesses and enjoy a holiday at the coast with their families.<sup>7</sup> By 1900, whilst only 3 trains from the south left Crail, Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. during the summer, five left Elie.<sup>8</sup> Indeed such was the popularity of Elie that it entertained a

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1. St. Andrews Citizen April 25th 1896

2. Official Census Returns 1891 and 1911

3. Ibid

4. East of Fife Record Sept 6th 1901

5. Ibid March 23rd 1911

6. Ibid Dec 3rd 1897

7. St. Andrews Citizen April 1st 1899

8. East of Fife Record May 25th 1900

large number of visitors at Easter, as well as during the summer,<sup>1</sup> many of whom were visiting the burgh in order to secure accommodation for the summer months.<sup>2</sup> Though the preference was for rented houses and apartments, both the Victoria and Marine hotels were normally fully-booked during the tourist season;<sup>3</sup> and when the latter was destroyed by fire in 1904, a new, enlarged 50 bedroomed hotel quickly replaced it,<sup>4</sup> thereby enhancing the burgh's image as a first-class resort.

St. Andrews, too, enjoyed a golden era in the decades before the outbreak of the Great War, though the wealthy golfer, upon whom St. Andrews' prosperity as a resort and residential centre was founded, was no longer the staple of the Burgh's economy during the summer.<sup>5</sup> The Links were thronged with people from all backgrounds. Indeed, pressure on the links was so great that two additional courses were laid out in 1897<sup>6</sup> and in 1914.<sup>7</sup> At the shore, two concrete swimming pools were constructed in 1903 and 1904, the latter exclusively for the use of ladies.<sup>8</sup> New hotels were built to meet the increasing demand for this form of accommodation; in 1894 there were nine hotels in the burgh;<sup>9</sup> by 1914 there were fourteen.<sup>10</sup> Despite claims that the town was losing its unique charm by catering for the 'riff-raff',<sup>11</sup> its popularity as a residential centre continued unimpaired. Population increased by 14.5% between 1891 and 1911; and a wave of building activity increased the number of houses in the burgh by 34%, from 1,366 to 1,831 during the same period.<sup>12</sup>

For Crail, Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance, growth as resorts had been sudden and swift. Both Elie and St. Andrews had enjoyed a modest reputation as watering-places in the early 19th century; the other East Neuk ports were regarded primarily as fishing villages. Crail had been the first of these towns to become a popular tourist centre largely because the fishing industry only

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1. St. Andrews Citizen May 2nd 1896
  2. East of Fife Record March 23rd 1900
  3. Ibid April 28th 1905
  4. St. Andrews Citizen Dec 31st 1904
  5. Ibid Aug 24th 1901
  6. Ibid March 13th 1897
  7. Ibid July 4th 1914
  8. Ibid Jan 10th 1903; July 23rd 1904
  9. Wilson's Directory of St. Andrews 1894 (St. Andrews 1894)
  10. Ibid 1913 (St. Andrews 1913)
  11. St. Andrews Citizen May 23rd 1908
  12. Official Census Returns 1891 and 1911

attained a limited importance within the burgh; it had never developed as a major herring curing port, and by the latter decades of the 19th century its fleet of small yawls was primarily engaged in crab and lobster fishing.<sup>1</sup> Such quaint fishing villages were traditionally popular haunts for the British holiday-maker, and the extension of the railway to Crail had allowed the burgh to share in the prosperity which the visitors had already brought to Elie and St. Andrews. The North British Railway Guide of 1909 wrote of Crail that 'the industry is fishing but fortunately it has not yet attained to that success which might make it more than a picturesque feature'.<sup>2</sup> In 1897, between 600 and 700 visitors were resident in Crail at the peak of the season;<sup>3</sup> by 1905, the number had swollen to 1,500.<sup>4</sup> Each succeeding year was heralded as a record for the numbers of visitors to the burgh,<sup>5</sup> and by 1910 Crail's popularity was said to be expanding more rapidly than that of Elie.<sup>6</sup> Two new hotels - the Balcomie and the Croma - were built,<sup>7</sup> and designs for thirty new houses were submitted to the Burgh Council in 1907 alone.<sup>8</sup> Though the population of the burgh declined by 5.5% between 1891 and 1911,<sup>9</sup> tenants could always be found to occupy houses in the summer or at Easter, so that the number of houses in the burgh actually increased by 21.6% during the same period.<sup>10</sup>

The development of Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance as

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1. In the period 1899-1914, Crail was the most important crab fishing port in Scotland in terms of the value of the catch. In the 20 years before 1914, the annual catches of shell-fish landed at Crail were worth an average of over £2,100. The total catch landed at Crail, of all fish, during the same period averaged £3,577 a year, which compared very favourably with the annual average landings of £4,864 at Pittenweem. However the true insignificance of the Crail fishing industry and the nature of the East Neuk fishing industry as a whole is clearly revealed in the figures for the fleets from Crail and Pittenweem. In 1910, Crail had a fleet of 34 boats weighing 101 tons and valued at £536; that of Pittenweem numbered 85 vessels weighing 1,762 tons and worth £31,201.
  2. The Beauties of Scotland (the North British Railway Official Tourist Guide, Edinburgh 1909) p.132
  3. East of Fife Record July 23rd 1897
  4. Ibid Aug 11th 1905
  5. Ibid July 7th 1910; May 14th 1911
  6. Ibid Sept 22nd 1910
  7. Ibid March 18th 1904
  8. Ibid Aug 30th 1907
  9. Official Census Returns 1891 and 1911
  10. Ibid

resorts had been retarded by the presence of a large and flourishing fishing industry. As population expanded rapidly in the mid-19th century, housing remained in short supply and great demand locally.<sup>1</sup> The three burghs were consequently neither able, nor particularly willing, to accommodate more than a comparatively small number of visitors. Even the decline of the Firth summer herring fishing after 1865 had not led to any large scale development of tourism in the fishing ports, or of any strong desire by the town councils of Anstruther, Pittenweem or St. Monance to encourage such a development. Visitors certainly frequented the burghs in steadily increasing numbers in the 1880's as more and more tourists came to the East Neuk; but active attempts to either attract or cater for them were not made until the closing years of the century, when it was finally accepted that the local fishing fleet was destined to remain itinerant in search of profitable catches.

A correspondent to the East of Fife Record captured this mood when he stated that 'clearly not in linoleum factories, steam fishing companies or such industries does the future prosperity lie',<sup>2</sup> when referring to the ill-fated attempts to revive the flagging economy of Anstruther. Accommodation was plentiful during the summer months due to the absence of the fisher families at the northern herring fishing.<sup>3</sup> The various town councils sought to improve facilities such as bathing<sup>4</sup> and golf.<sup>5</sup> Fishermen increasingly let their houses to visitors during the summer months.<sup>6</sup> Within a few years, the burghs were filled with holidaymakers during July and August. Once the fishing industry had declined there, the Dundee Advertiser was able to attribute to Anstruther all the charm of Crail.<sup>7</sup> By 1905, 600 visitors were present in Anstruther during the peak of the summer season;<sup>8</sup> by 1907, the number had risen to over a thousand.<sup>9</sup> Special trains were needed to cope with the influx of visitors into the district,<sup>10</sup> and the St. Andrews Citizen commented that 'Anstruther and district, far from remaining the rendezvous of one solitary holidaymaker, has become the Brighton, the Rothesay of hundreds. So now in hundreds we number them; but as the years go by

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1. East of Fife Record Feb 8th 1862
  2. Ibid Sept 14th 1900
  3. Ibid Sept 15th 1893
  4. St. Andrews Citizen June 12th 1897
  5. East of Fife Record Jan 3rd 1896
  6. Ibid Sept 12th 1902
  7. Ibid June 30th 1905
  8. Ibid July 21st 1905
  9. Ibid July 29th 1906
  10. Ibid July 19th 1907

it is evident and still more evident that our visitors must soon be reckoned in four figures'.<sup>1</sup>

By 1913, the number of visitors to Anstruther was as many as 1,500 during the peak weeks of late July and early August.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, by that date, councillors were becoming concerned that curing operations at the harbour might prove offensive to summer visitors - a clear indication of the shifting emphasis in the local economy.<sup>3</sup> Pittenweem and St. Monance, though less popular than Anstruther, enjoyed their share of the visitors too, particularly those from Glasgow. In 1909, Pittenweem had 400 visitors resident from Glasgow during the Trades Fair Week;<sup>4</sup> whilst there were sufficient at St. Monance to justify persistent agitation for the construction of a bathing pool.<sup>5</sup> The entire economy of the East Neuk was becoming increasingly dependent upon the money spent in the district by tourists. The single-tracked railway between Thornton and Crail was obsolete by 1909, since as many as 40 trains travelled along it on busy days during the summer.<sup>6</sup> But though each of the burghs had a mutual interest in improving travel facilities for the increasing number of visitors, each resort displayed basic differences of character.

Elie was very much the fashionable Fifeshire resort. The Glasgow Herald wrote in 1910 that 'Elie exudes tone, and is essentially the summer haunt of the best people'.<sup>7</sup> The North British Tourist Guide confided in 1909 that 'among the visitors in recent years, it is whispered that Royalty has figured incognito'.<sup>8</sup> Certainly the Duchess of Connaught and Princess Patricia were frequent residents at the Marine Hotel at this time.<sup>9</sup> Yet Elie's fashionable reputation did not arise from the amenities which it could offer to visitors since these were basically the same as those that were available at the other East Neuk resorts - namely golf, sea-bathing and picturesque surroundings. What rendered it the 'Queen of Fife Summer Resorts' or the 'Brighton of the North' as it was

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1. St. Andrews Citizen July 20th 1907
  2. East of Fife Record July 24th 1913
  3. Ibid March 29th 1907; Oct 19th 1911
  4. Ibid July 29th 1909
  5. Ibid Aug 18th 1905; Aug 4th 1910
  6. Ibid July 29th 1909
  7. Ibid July 7th 1910
  8. The Beauties of Scotland (The North British Railway Official Tourist Guide, Edinburgh 1909) p.133
  9. St. Andrews Citizen Sept 22nd 1906; East of Fife Record Sept 11th 1908.

variously labelled,<sup>1</sup> was its intense desire to remain first and foremost a 'genteel' resort, and avoid providing any amenity or attraction which might be considered vulgar.

Excursionists visited the town in large numbers,<sup>2</sup> as one would expect when considering its proximity to Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow; but the burgh never became a popular destination for the growing numbers of clerks, artisans etc. from the industrial towns who were now able to afford a week's holiday at the seaside. Their destination was more likely to be Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance, and the Town Council and inhabitants of Elie showed no desire to compete for such visitors. Instead, Elie remained predominantly the resort of the affluent middle classes, principally from Glasgow and Edinburgh, but with a regular contingent from England and the occasional aristocrat or celebrity who thus enabled the burgh to retain its pretence of being a fashionable resort.<sup>3</sup>

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By the early 20th century, the British seaside, no matter how select and genteel it might consider itself, was no longer the fashionable resort of the British upper-classes. The latter now congregated on the continent at such places as Biarritz, Monte Carlo or the south German spas.<sup>4</sup> The snobbishness and horror of vulgarity to be found in such resorts as Elie, Worthing and Cromer, were the hallmarks of the Edwardian middle classes. The motto of such resorts seems to have been that if anything disturbed the repose and quiet of the seaside, it must be vulgar. Pierrot troupes performing al fresco concerts were accordingly regarded as the height of vulgarity.

Having first made their appearance at Scarborough in 1896, pierrots had quickly surpassed the black-faced minstrel troupes in popularity at English seaside resorts.<sup>5</sup> The Leven Alfresco Troupe had held occasional concerts on the beach at Elie as early as 1901.<sup>6</sup> But it was not until 1905 that a troupe applied to both Earlsferry

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1. J. More Dall: Guide to Elie and Earlsferry (Cupar 1897) pp.1 and 1
  2. St. Andrews Citizen June 13th 1896; East of Fife Record July 3rd 1911
  3. See Visitors Lists in East of Fife Record
  4. See Sarah Howells: The Seaside (London 1974) for changing trends in resorts frequented by the upper classes.
  5. Ibid p.14
  6. East of Fife Record July 12th 1901

and Elie Town Councils for permission to hold twice weekly concerts in the two burghs.<sup>1</sup> Elie Town Council was, from the very beginning, wary of granting permission even though similar concerts took place at other watering places.<sup>2</sup> Large turnouts attended the performances at Earlsferry,<sup>3</sup> but there were those who thought that such concerts did not improve the tone of Earlsferry. The more realistic Provost considered that since the concerts were well attended they should be encouraged.<sup>4</sup>

By 1907, however, continual complaints led to their cessation at both Elie and Earlsferry. The East of Fife Record opined that Elie was 'in the fortunate position ..... of being able to do without the aid of these amusements in order to attract visitors', and condemned them as unedifying and a bad example to youth. The Clerk to the Earlsferry Council considered that such concerts were necessarily vulgar since otherwise they would attract nobody<sup>5</sup> - by which criterion the beach, the golf course, the tennis courts, and the bowling green were all examples of vulgarity! Roundabouts and side-shows, too, were thought to lower the tone of the resort,<sup>6</sup> and even a palmists tent was considered too offensive an edifice to be erected on the beach.<sup>7</sup>

The emphasis instead was placed upon the natural beauties of the district, and such healthy outdoor activities as croquet, tennis, cycling, walking, bowling and, of course, golf. The Links of Elie were invariably crowded, which was hardly surprising in the absence of any other form of entertainment. The Earlsferry Links had been extended to 18 holes in 1895,<sup>8</sup> and by the early 20th century as many as 600 people were leaving the first tee during the course of a day.<sup>9</sup> The prestige of Earlsferry Links was certainly high in the Edwardian era with the locally born golfer, James Braid, winning the Open Championship five times. Local club-makers and professionals regularly moved to take up appointments in England, Scotland and the United States.<sup>10</sup> A ladies 9 hole golf course was laid out in Recreation Park<sup>11</sup> and later extended;<sup>12</sup> but

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1. East of Fife Record July 14th 1905
  2. Ibid
  3. Ibid July 28th 1905
  4. Ibid Aug 11th 1905
  5. Ibid April 12th 1907
  6. Ibid Aug 15th 1912
  7. Ibid July 12th 1907
  8. Ibid Oct 11th 1895
  9. Ibid July 31st 1903
  10. Ibid April 8th 1909; July 11th 1912
  11. Thomas Chapman: Handbook to Elie and the East of Fife  
(Leven 1898) p.8
  12. East of Fife Record June 3rd 1909

Earlsferry never followed the example of St. Andrews by establishing a second golf course

This was partly because the Elie links never became a place of pilgrimage for golfers as did those at St. Andrews, despite the fame of James Braid. The course was of poor quality and a frequent source of complaint.<sup>1</sup> No major tournament or championship was ever held there, contests between visitors and residents or the occasional challenge match involving a local professional being the high spots in the Earlsferry golfing calendar.<sup>2</sup> Visitors were attracted to Elie as much by its reputation as a fashionable resort, as by its amenities. But that reputation had been acquired in the 1870's and 1880's, and the character of seaside resorts had changed considerably since that time. Though the number of visitors to Elie continued to rise until the Great War, the number content to 'have a jolly good time of it' by engaging in golf, cycling and athletic sports comprised a decreasing proportion of the total.<sup>3</sup> In 1900, a correspondent to the East of Fife Record complained of the lack of such amenities as a public hall to adjourn to during a shower, and a public promenade to Earlsferry.<sup>4</sup> Another, in 1904, pointed out that golf, in itself, was no longer enough to ensure the popularity of the resort.<sup>5</sup>

The Record itself considered that Elie's greatest need was for some form of evening entertainment;<sup>6</sup> by 1908, the burgh was bluntly accused of being out of date.<sup>7</sup> Elie had established its popularity upon the patronage of visitors who rented a house for the summer months at a seaside resort. It was in deference to such people that pierrot troupes and beach concerts were prohibited. But by the 20th century this type of visitor was rapidly disappearing in resorts throughout Britain,<sup>8</sup> to be replaced by holidaymakers who wanted and expected to be entertained when on holiday. By 1914, even Elie had accepted this change and Mr. Syd. Harman's 'Merrymakers' were giving twice daily performances in the burgh's recreation park.<sup>9</sup>

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1. East of Fife Record Oct 7th 1904

2. Ibid Aug 31st 1900

3. St. Andrews Citizen Aug 29th 1896

4. East of Fife Record Aug 31st 1900

5. Ibid Oct 7th 1904

6. Ibid Oct 27th 1905

7. Ibid March 27th 1908

8. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.100

9. East of Fife Record July 2nd 1914



In many respects Crail closely modelled itself upon Elie. The North British Guide described it as 'an old-fashioned place with an out of the world charm that is true enjoyment to jaded town dwellers'.<sup>1</sup> Again, the emphasis for visitors was upon outdoor activities - tennis, bowls, fishing and, inevitably, golf. The Balcomie Links were extended to 18 holes in 1899,<sup>2</sup> and a new clubhouse was opened there in 1904 at a cost of £700.<sup>3</sup> The Links were improved in 1910 when the course was expanded by a further 40 acres at a cost to the Club of £205.<sup>4</sup> Gentility was as important to the typical Crail visitor as it was to the typical visitor to Elie. One visitor was disgusted to witness half-a-dozen couples of young men and girls sleeping, or pretending to sleep, in each other's arms. 'So unseemly and immodest and disgusting an exhibition I have never seen, and hope never to see again in a public place', he wrote in outrage to the Record.<sup>5</sup> To another visitor, Crail's major defect was not a lack of entertainment, but of a well-run laundry.<sup>6</sup>

Professional entertainers were frowned upon. When a concert party offered to perform on the beach, the Council rejected the idea since Crail 'had plenty of musical talent among the visitors without going outside'.<sup>7</sup> Visitors' concerts and the occasional ball in the Town Hall remained the sole entertainments available to visitors;<sup>8</sup> it was not until 1913 that the Council permitted 'cinematic entertainments' to be given in the Town Hall three nights a week - provided the Hall was not required for a Visitors' Concert.<sup>9</sup>

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The holidaymakers who crowded into Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance during the summer were very different in character from the average visitor to Crail and Elie. The season was much shorter, extending for only six or seven weeks from mid-July until the end of August. Though artists continued to find inspiration in these burghs,<sup>10</sup> the majority of the visitors by the 20th century were the lower middle class and more prosperous working class families of shopkeepers, clerks and artisans who by that date were beginning to

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1. The Beauties of Scotland (the North Railway Official Tourist Guide, Edinburgh 1909) p.132
  2. St. Andrews Citizen March 11th 1899
  3. East of Fife Record July 29th 1904
  4. Ibid Aug 25th 1910
  5. Ibid Aug 21st 1903
  6. Ibid March 16th 1906
  7. Ibid Aug 11th 1905
  8. Ibid Aug 3rd 1906; Aug 31st 1911; Aug 25th 1905
  9. Ibid March 6th 1913
  10. Ibid Feb 8th 1901; July 9th 1904

constitute an increasingly significant proportion of all holiday-makers at British resorts.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the busiest weeks at Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance were during the summer Trades Holidays of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

Amenities were scanty and accommodation was often primitive. St. Monance was considered unique in the East Neuk in that it had no golf course;<sup>2</sup> Pittenweem and Anstruther shared a fourth-rate, nine-hole course at the Billowness, situated between the two towns.<sup>3</sup> Pittenweem alone of the three burghs possessed a bathing pond, and even this was constantly in a state of disrepair;<sup>4</sup> Anstruther had only a small, stone-covered beach at the Hynd from which bathing took place,<sup>5</sup> whilst St. Monance had neither a beach nor a bathing pool.<sup>6</sup> There were no hotels to cater for the visitors, and accommodation was invariably in the homes of absentee fishermen. Sanitary conditions were hardly ideal either. St. Monance had no main sewers,<sup>7</sup> whilst Pittenweem was reputedly notorious as far away as the West Coast for its lack of sanitation,<sup>8</sup> and was the scene of typhoid epidemics in 1900, 1901 and 1904.<sup>9</sup>

Conditions certainly shocked more refined visitors. A number of lady visitors, petitioning Pittenweem Town Council about the inadequacy of bathing facilities, complained that 'while some residents would be content with anything, visitors who had been to other resorts expected better accommodation'.<sup>10</sup> A Glaswegian visitor to Anstruther, who had come to seek lodgings, rapidly left, disgusted with the amenities of the town, and after a meeting with a local landlady who had told him 'my charge is £1 18s. a week and I canna gie ye muckle attendance, and wad ye wash yersel' in the sink'. His astonished comment was 'Good Lord!'<sup>11</sup>

Many others were less demanding, however, as the increasing numbers of visitors proved. Certainly, they were adaptable and easily pleased. At St. Monance, many of them camped on the braes outside the town.<sup>12</sup> In an attempt to appeal to a different class of visitor, some local residents proposed such improvements as an

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1. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.100-105
  2. East of Fife Record July 7th 1910
  3. Ibid July 5th 1902
  4. Ibid Apr 22nd 1904; Jun 6th 1912
  5. Ibid Sept 4th 1896
  6. Ibid Aug 18th 1905; Aug 4th 1910
  7. Ibid Feb 22nd 1895
  8. Ibid July 31st 1903
  9. Ibid March 17th 1905
  10. Ibid June 6th 1912
  11. Ibid July 15th 1909
  12. Ibid July 21st 1905

extension of the golf course,<sup>1</sup> or the elimination of the curing stances at the harbour in Anstruther;<sup>2</sup> for the existing holiday-makers, however, the sight of the women gutting the herrings, was a continued attraction and source of entertainment.<sup>3</sup> In Elie it would have been immediately prohibited, but then so too would the mixed bathing which was occurring in Pittenweem as early as 1901.<sup>4</sup> Neither did Visitors' Concerts have the same appeal in St. Monance as they did in Crail. After one poorly attended concert, a local inhabitant of St. Monance thought it was time to stop such entertainments which seemed to be organised for the benefit of the second-rate, amateur artistes taking part.<sup>5</sup> Refined opinion was outraged and thought that 'perhaps a black-faced comedian with plenty of vulgarity would suit the high class tastes of the natives'.<sup>6</sup> Certainly this would have been more welcome to holidaymakers whose idea of entertainment in the evenings was impromptu dances on the pier to the music of a concertina.<sup>7</sup>

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Of all the East Neuk resorts, St. Andrews showed the greatest variety among its visitors. Its popularity as a resort had been firmly based upon the visits of wealthy families for six weeks or two months during the summer. Particularly important in this respect was the presence of the golf course and of the select Royal and Ancient Golf Club. The Links certainly remained an enormous attraction, and overcrowding continued despite the opening of the New Course in 1895.<sup>8</sup> An 'Ordinary Golfer' complained in the Citizen that 'ladies, children and cripples' reduced progress to a snail's pace.<sup>9</sup> As a result the council laid out a new 12 hole course - the Jubilee - in 1897, primarily for the use of ladies;<sup>10</sup> further extensions in 1903 increased it in size to a full eighteen holes.<sup>11</sup> But the congestion on the Old Course continued unabated, with fierce competition for places in the ballot.<sup>12</sup>

Increasingly the idea of introducing a tariff for visitors playing on the Old Course was suggested.<sup>13</sup> By 1910, the congestion

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1. East of Fife Record Sept 21st 1900; June 17th 1909
  2. Ibid March 29th 1907; Oct 19th 1911
  3. Ibid Aug 21st 1908
  4. Ibid Aug 23rd 1901
  5. Ibid Aug 14th 1913
  6. Ibid Aug 21st 1913
  7. Ibid July 18th 1912
  8. St. Andrews Citizen April 6th 1895
  9. Ibid Sept 5th 1896
  10. Ibid March 13th 1897
  11. Ibid April 11th 1903
  12. Ibid Aug 26th 1899; July 30th 1910
  13. Ibid Feb 3rd 1906

was such that even the Jubilee Course was crowded.<sup>1</sup> In 1911 there were 21,000 applications for the ballot for places on the Old Course in July, August and the first three weeks in September.<sup>2</sup> The golf correspondent of 'World' commented that the popularity of St. Andrews was its major disadvantage since 'as golf becomes more popular, the rush to St. Andrews during the two holiday months tends to become greater every year, the confusion to become worse confounded, the rounds more tedious.'<sup>3</sup> Finally, in 1912, when the R. and A. were thinking of moving to London due to the inability of members to obtain a game on the Old Course during the summer,<sup>4</sup> proposals for a tariff on the Old Course were finally agreed upon between the Town Council and the R. and A. A subsequent plebiscite among St. Andrews ratepayers resulted in 1159 votes in favour of the scheme and 160 against.<sup>5</sup> Out of the expected income from the new tariff of £400 per annum, the Council proposed to lay out and maintain a fourth course, the Eden, which was finally opened in 1914.<sup>6</sup>

The visitors, who were the cause of this congestion at the Links, were by no means confined to the wealthy. Certainly, the latter still came to St. Andrews, and the burgh could claim more wealthy and famous visitors during the summer season than were to be found in 'fashionable' Elie. The Grand Hotel and Rusack's Marine Hotel were palatial edifices which dwarfed the Marine Hotel in Elie.<sup>7</sup> Men such as Asquith were to be found playing on the Links. Visitors were more cosmopolitan in their origins. A breakdown of the Visitors' Lists published in the St. Andrews Citizen shows that approximately 20% of all visitors - excluding excursionists - were English, and a further 10% came from overseas, particularly the United States.<sup>8</sup>

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1. St. Andrews Citizen July 30th 1910
  2. Ibid Sept 30th 1911
  3. Ibid Oct 1st 1910
  4. Ibid Aug 31st 1912
  5. Ibid Nov 30th 1912. It was finally agreed that R. and A. members should have a block booking on the Old Course between 10.00 and 11.15 a.m. and 2.00 till 3.15 p.m., for which £1,600 was to be paid annually to the Council; however they should not get a place in the ballot as a result. A tariff of 1s. per day was to be levied on players, from which local ratepayers and R. and A. members were exempt. The Old and New Courses were to be maintained, as before, by the R. and A.
  6. St. Andrews Citizen July 4th 1914
  7. G. Wilson: St. Andrews Illustrated as a Summer and Health Resort (Dundee 1904) p.98-107
  8. See Visitors' Lists published during the summer months in the St. Andrews Citizen

Indeed, the Grand and Rusack's contained only about 25% Scottish residents. In 1900, guests at these hotels included Lord and Lady Somerset, Lord and Lady Shand, Sir Edward and Lady Fry, Viscount and Viscountess Molesworth, Lady Nicholson, Sir Crawford and Lady Chamberlain, Lady Playfair, Sir John and Lady Cheyne and Sir John Gilmour.<sup>1</sup>

The older type of visitor who hired large, furnished houses and apartments was rapidly declining. Hotels and boarding houses became increasingly popular, partly due to the extortionate rents often charged for houses.<sup>2</sup> By the early 1900's, hotels were so busy that they were forced to find sleeping accommodation for a number of guests outside their premises.<sup>3</sup> But though the wealthy and famous still visited St. Andrews, they were increasingly joined by holiday-makers of less elevated status, with different needs and tastes. In 1901, the Citizen, acknowledged the importance of this new class of visitor by criticizing those who sought a return to the old elitist golfing days, with the Links kept 'solely as a preserve for members of the Royal and Ancient Club, for crack golfers and for duffers with a full purse'.<sup>4</sup>

The Citizen hailed the new era for St. Andrews as being that of the 'economising golfer', and that, far from being in decline as a golfing centre, was still progressing and had a great future before it.<sup>5</sup> The increase in the number of golf courses throughout Britain meant that the wealthy golfer now had more choice in his summer destination: Troon, Nairn and North Berwick, all rivalled the golfing popularity of St. Andrews in Scotland. But to compensate for this, by 1907 the smaller houses and rooms in St. Andrews, let by the working classes, were enjoying unparalleled popularity, and it was not unusual for visitors to seek this type of accommodation in vain during the summer.<sup>6</sup>

The result of this gradual change in the character of visitors to St. Andrews led to a continuous dispute between Councillors, inhabitants and visitors, concerning the sort of attractions and amenities which the burgh should provide for holidaymakers. Traditionalists thought that no concessions should be made to the newer type

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1. St. Andrews Citizen July-October 1900

2. Ibid Sept 14th 1901

4. Ibid Aug 24th 1901

6. Ibid Dec 28th 1907

3. Ibid Sept 10th 1904

5. Ibid

of visitor and displayed that same abhorrence of 'vulgarity', which was to be found in Elie, in case it drove away the more wealthy and fashionable visitors. One correspondent complained that the old-world charm and restful quiet of St. Andrews had given way to bustle and worry. 'The change has frightened away many and will frighten away more ..... St. Andrews has hitherto been the Queen of Scottish watering places; is it desired to reduce it to the rank of a second class Margate?'<sup>1</sup>

At first the council sided with the opinion that the burgh should retain its traditional image. A suggestion in 1899 that mixed bathing should be permitted at the Step Rock was regarded as ludicrous by councillors.<sup>2</sup> Roundabouts and side-shows were forbidden on the Bruce Embankment except during the Lammis Fair.<sup>3</sup> Pleasure sailings were forbidden on a Sunday since 'it made the Embankment a perfect pandemonium, and it was the duty of the Council to see that visitors who came for quietness should not be annoyed in this way'.<sup>4</sup> The major point of contention, however, was the presence of al fresco entertainments at the beach. The idea had been raised in the Town Council as early as 1895.<sup>5</sup> But it was not until 1902 that a troupe of coloured minstrels began to give performances on the sands, and at the Bruce Embankment.<sup>6</sup> The Town Council, however, abruptly withdrew their permit, despite numerous complaints and a petition organized to prevent their removal.<sup>7</sup> The Citizen was less despondent though since 'it should be sorry to see the good old city brought down to the level of a third-rate English watering place'.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly the burgh's development as a resort had reached a critical point. The Citizen exhorted its readers to 'seek to make St. Andrews ..... a first rank summer resort unmarred by the frivolities which, it may be, are in keeping with places differently circumstanced from St. Andrews'.<sup>9</sup> That open air concerts attracted large audiences carried little weight with their opponents. One claimed that the noise had been the means of hastening peoples' deaths;<sup>10</sup> another that the tone of the city was lowered by such music hall entertainments'.<sup>11</sup> A 'Lover of things as they are' went

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1. St. Andrews Citizen July 9th 1904
  2. Ibid Jan 14th 1899
  3. Ibid Feb 7th 1903
  4. Ibid May 9th 1903
  5. Ibid May 18th 1905
  6. Ibid Aug 23rd 1902
  7. Ibid Aug 30th 1902
  8. Ibid
  9. Ibid Aug 27th 1904
  10. Ibid May 7th 1904
  11. Ibid July 23rd 1904

so far as to paint a picture of the old ruins decked with coloured lights and chinese lanterns, whilst Hungarian and Japanese bands imported from Dundee performed music hall songs on top of West Port.<sup>1</sup>

The tide of public opinion, however, both among residents and visitors, was turning against such points of view. One correspondent wrote that 'the great majority of holiday people nowadays want some gaiety, and if something be not done ..... the town's prosperity as a summer resort will undoubtedly be on the wane'.<sup>2</sup> The Town Council attempted to make some provision for such opinions by the erection of a bandstand;<sup>3</sup> however, the choice of programme was not to the taste of the paying public, for 'Mr. Loseby's Red Alsatian Band' which was allowed to give performances there proved 'a musical success but a financial failure'.<sup>4</sup> Much against its will, the Town Council, was finally forced to accept the necessity of having a concert party in the summer; the Citizen dolefully agreed that

'Whatever has been said in favour or against the Pierrots here, it now seems to be a foregone conclusion that they are just what was wanted, from the fact that both pleasure and amusement can be derived from their performances by numbers of people who would otherwise have found our grey old city on the quiet side at times'.<sup>5</sup>

From 1906, beach concert parties were a regular feature of the summer season at St. Andrews. Outraged opponents still considered them derogatory to the dignity of the city and a hindrance to its prosperity,<sup>6</sup> and even temporarily succeeded in having them removed from the Links and the Bruce Embankment to the Ladies' Bathing Pool at the less fashionable end of the Scores.<sup>7</sup> But the demand for such entertainments was too great to be overcome by a conservative minority; and despite claims that St. Andrews had declined to the level of Portobello,<sup>8</sup> the town still remained a comparatively conservative resort. Portobello, at the same period, could offer its visitors 10 bands and orchestras, bioscope and vaudeville performances, a skating rink, 'and a host of sensational devices and laughter compellers' including undercover amusement for 12,000 people in the Marine Gardens.<sup>9</sup> Even fashionable North Berwick had a troupe of pierrots as well as an instrumental band.<sup>10</sup>

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The character of the British holidaymaker, and the British

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1. St. Andrews Citizen July 15th 1905
  2. Ibid Aug 15th 1903
  3. Ibid April 9th 1904
  4. Ibid Sept 9th 1905
  5. Ibid Aug 11th 1906
  6. Ibid Feb 9th 1907
  7. Ibid April 11th 1908
  8. Ibid Jan 4th 1908
  9. Ibid July 17th 1909
  10. Ibid Apl 4th 1908

holiday, had changed radically since the 1880's. Resorts such as Elie and Crail were increasingly becoming anachronisms by 1910, catering for an ever-dwindling minority of visitors. When St. Andrews permitted mixed bathing in 1914, objectors who thought that those who wanted pierrots and mixed bathing should hie themselves to Margate found scant support amongst the Town Council.<sup>1</sup> Mixed bathing had been permitted in most English resorts since 1901;<sup>2</sup> and even the pierrot concerts in the Town Hall of St. Andrews were attended by 'very fashionable audiences' by 1914.<sup>3</sup>

If the character of the visitors to the East Neuk had changed since 1890, so too had the character of the East Neuk burghs. Tourism was on the point of becoming the basis of the economy of the area. In St. Andrews, Elie and Crail where the tourist industry existed to the virtual exclusion of any other form of trade, this was hardly surprising. But in Pittenweem, Anstruther and St. Monance, the fisheries, which had always been the staple of the burghal economies, had declined in significance whilst tourism had increased in importance. Nowhere is this more clearly highlighted than in the growing involvement of fishermen in the tourist trade.

In Elie, fishermen had long organised sailing trips and hired out boats to summer visitors;<sup>4</sup> in Crail, fishermen organised crab and lobster fishing trips for holidaymakers.<sup>5</sup> In St. Andrews, the number of resident fishermen declined by 66% between 1886 and 1914.<sup>6</sup> Younger men preferred to seek employment at the Links. Thus, in 1894, eight of the ten male members of the Gourlay family were fishermen;<sup>7</sup> by 1914, only five of the twelve Gourlay males were fishermen, two were cleekmakers, one was a clubmaker, one a caddie and one a professional golfer.<sup>8</sup> The same trend could be discerned in other families which were traditionally fisherfolk such as the Walters; and the local Fishery Officer commented on this development

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1. St. Andrews Citizen March 7th 1914; March 14th 1914
  2. Sarah Howell: The Seaside (London 1974) p.119
  3. St. Andrews Citizen Aug 20th 1910
  4. East of Fife Record May 11th 1888
  5. The Beauties of Scotland (the North British Railways Official Tourist Guide, Edinburgh 1909) p.132
  6. Fishery Board Reports 1886 and 1914
  7. Wilson's Directory of St. Andrews 1894 (St. Andrews 1894)
  8. Ibid 1913 (St. Andrews 1913)



in his reports.<sup>1</sup> In St. Monance, too, the young men were increasingly to be found caddying at Earlsferry Links,<sup>2</sup> whilst the older men managed rowing and sailing boats in the harbour.<sup>3</sup>

Though there was no large scale exodus from the fisheries into the tourist trade in the major fishing burghs, by 1914 the local Town Councils had realised what a stimulant visitors could prove to the local economy during the summer when the towns were normally deserted due to the absence of the fishing fleet. Plans were being made in Anstruther to build a visitors' shelter and tea rooms at the Billowness,<sup>4</sup> whilst a permanent bathing shelter had been erected at Pittenweem.<sup>5</sup> The fishermen themselves enjoyed the profits renting their homes as summer apartments. That the curing industry should be inconvenienced to accommodate tourists would have been unthinkable in 1860; but by the 20th century it was indicative of the changing emphasis in the economy of even the larger East Neuk fishing ports.

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1. Anstruther District Letter Books May 26th 1893; June 20th 1911;  
AF19/4/1,3
  2. East of Fife Record April 13th 1906
  3. Ibid July 10th 1913
  4. Ibid Aug 8th 1912
  5. Ibid June 5th 1913

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CHAPTER VIII.

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The enormous expansion of the fishing industry in the East Neuk, particularly after 1840, naturally led to a corresponding increase in the number of people employed in the industry - not only fishermen, but also gutters, packers, carters, coopers, curers etc. Moreover, even after the decline of the Lammas drave and the depression in the local curing industry which this entailed, fishing continued to remain the principle source of employment and income in the East Neuk - though tourism was a close rival by the early 20th century - due to the enterprise of the local fishermen, who, deprived of local fishing grounds, were willing to travel to Yarmouth, the Shetlands, Ireland and the deep-sea fishing grounds of the North Sea for their catches.

The pursuit of what was both a demanding and dangerous occupation developed among fisherfolk a sense of community which is found for similar reasons in mining villages. Seldom did a year pass without the loss of at least one boat's crew; and in bad years, the death toll could be enormous. On November 19th 1875, known locally as Black Friday, five of the East Neuk fleet were caught in a gale off the Norfolk coast while returning home from the Yarmouth fishing. Fifteen Cellardyke men were drowned and twenty-one from St. Monance, leaving 19 widows and 72 orphans; one St. Monance woman lost her husband, a son, two brothers, three nephews and a cousin.<sup>1</sup> In Lynn, Norfolk, a stone monument in the shape of a 'fifie' marks the grave of eight of the drowned men<sup>2</sup>. A fund for dependents of the dead raised £7,206, of which, £400 was the proceeds of a sale of works of art by the Royal Academy in Edinburgh.<sup>3</sup>

But it required a disaster of this magnitude, or the even greater one in October 1881 at Eyemouth,<sup>4</sup> to bring before the public the hazardous nature of the fishermen's work. However, major disasters were infrequent, and normally the loss of life was less calamitous and therefore made little impact. But there were few homes in the East Neuk fishing villages with a black-edged In Memoriam card containing some valedictory verses to mark the loss of a fisherman

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1. George Gourlay: Memorials of Cellardyke (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.115-138
2. Ibid p.139-140
3. Ibid p.139
4. St. Andrews Gazette Feb 4th 1882

washed overboard in heavy seas,<sup>1</sup> or drowned when a boat capsized.<sup>2</sup> Such losses were a bond which united the families of fishermen with a sense of community dependent not on their common economic interests, but upon the common dangers and anxieties which they all experienced.

When a heavy storm set in, the scenes at the harbour were similar to those at a pithead when a mineshaft collapsed. The piers would be crowded with anxious wives and mothers;<sup>3</sup> and if the fleet was forced to run for shelter to other ports, the telegraph office would be filled with the wives and female relatives of the absent fishermen until telegrams had arrived announcing the safety of the missing boats.<sup>4</sup> Such shared anxieties gave the East Neuk fishing communities a sense of identity which they shared with all the fishing communities of Scotland and, indeed, Britain. In troubled seas, fishermen could expect and rely upon the help of stranger crews. Thus during the terrible storm of November, 1875, Pittenweem fishermen saved the crew of an Arbroath yawl and even opened a subscription for a crew member of the latter boat;<sup>5</sup> at the same time, other East Neuk boats were conducted to places of shelter, and given accommodation at Scarborough and at Holy Island.<sup>6</sup> Whenever other fishing ports experienced a heavy loss of life, subscription lists were always quickly opened in the East Neuk, and readily subscribed to; and whenever it was the East Neuk fleet which sustained losses, contributions from all the major Scottish fishing ports were always prominent on any subscription list which was opened.<sup>7</sup>

In the East Neuk burghs in which fishing was of secondary importance, the fishermen and their families formed a very distinct community within the town. In the larger fishing ports such as St. Monance or Pittenweem, they were the community for all intents and purposes. A very informative picture of the fisher communities may be obtained from an analysis of the Enumerator's Schedules for the various burghs, in connection with the census between 1841 and 1891. This period covers the half century during which the East Neuk

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1. Safety rails were not a common feature of fishing boats until the 1890's.
  2. George Gourlay: Memorials of Cellardyke (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.143
  3. St. Andrews Gazette May 15th 1867
  4. Ibid Dec 21st 1872
  5. George Gourlay: Memorials of Cellardyke (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.116
  6. Ibid p.123-134
  7. e.g. East of Fife Record Oct-Nov 1881, for subscriptions to the Eyemouth disaster fund.

fishing industry developed to such an extent that the area became the centre for one of the largest and most valuable fishing fleets in Scotland. The sociological picture which can be pieced together is that of the fishing community at the period of its optimum growth.

The figures in Table VIII.1 clearly illustrate the importance of the fishing community in the various East Neuk burghs. In all the burghs, the size of the fishing community expanded both absolutely and relatively as a result of the great expansion in the local fishing industry during this period, and particularly as a result of the stimulus provided by the revival of the Lammas drave. But though the largest percentage increase was experienced in Pittenweem, by far the largest and most important of the East Neuk fishing communities was that of Cellardyke. Between 1840 and 1870, Cellardyke was transformed from a fishing village with a history dating back to the 15th century,<sup>1</sup> into the fishing quarter for the contiguous townships of Anstruther Wester, Anstruther Easter and Cellardyke. Though in fact a part of the burgh of Kilrenny, Cellardyke combined with the two Anstruthers to form an economic entity which was divided into two distinct parts. Anstruther was the commercial centre, with the major harbour for the district, the most important curing industry, the banks and insurance agencies, and the majority of business and professional men;<sup>2</sup> Cellardyke provided the labour force upon which the harbour's fishing industry was based, being the home of almost all the fishermen, as well as most of the gutters, packers, net makers etc. When the populations of Anstruther and Cellardyke were at their peak in 1881, 70% of the population of Cellardyke were fishermen and their dependents;<sup>3</sup> while in Anstruther, there were only seven fishermen who with their families accounted for only 1.7% of the burgh's population.<sup>4</sup>

This distinct division between the fishing district and the remainder of the town was to be found in all East Neuk ports. Even in Elie, where the fishing community numbered only 35 to 45 people throughout the 19th century, the fisher families were to be found clustered together in that part of the town known as the Toft.<sup>5</sup> In Cellardyke and St. Monance, the fishing community was so large that,

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1. George Gourlay: Memorials of Cellardyke (Cupar and Anstruther 1879) p.4-5.
  2. Westwood's Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross (Cupar 1862)
  3. Enumerator's Schedule Kilrenny 1881; CEN 1881/438
  4. Ibid Anstruther Easter and Anstruther Wester 1881; CEN 1881/402,403.
  5. St. Andrews Gazette June 27th 1874

	Pop. 1841	fishermen & dependents	Pop. 1891	fishermen & dependents
Cellardyke	1,502	61.6%	2,429	70.6%
Cellardyke/Anstruther	2,936	31.5%	4,000	42.9%
St. Monance	1,150	49.0%	1,998	61.7%
Pittenweem	1,329	18.9%	1,962	48%
Craik	1,091	10.4%	1,119	22.2%
St. Andrews	4,441	3.4%	6,863	4.9%
Elie/Barlsferry	1,453	2.2%	1,068	5.7%

Table VIII.1. Relative Importance of the Fishing Community in the Various East Neuk Burghs.

(Figures derived from Enumerator's Schedules 1841 and 1891. Both Cellardyke and St. Monance fishing communities reached their peak in 1881, when the percentages were 71.8 and 66.1 respectively.)

in practice, it constituted the entire village. In Pittenweem, Crail and St. Andrews where the fishing community was proportionally smaller the fishermen occupied a distinct portion of the town, invariably near the harbour, for obvious practical reasons. In St. Andrews, the fishing community, which numbered about 400 people in 1881 at the time of its optimum growth,<sup>1</sup> was crowded into a small area which covered the eastern ends of Market Street and North Street, Castle Street and the Shore - the area leading down to the harbour and furthest away from the fashionable quarter of the town next to the Links.<sup>2</sup> In Pittenweem, the fishing community was likewise to be found along the seafront at East and West Shore and in the adjoining streets and wynds.<sup>3</sup> In Crail, too, the harbour was the focal point for the fishing community - the majority of fishermen being resident along Shoregate, the road winding down to the harbour.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the rapid growth of the fishing industry after 1840, the East Neuk fishing communities were still able to provide most of the additional labour force required without recourse being necessary to immigration into the district. In 1841, the roots of the fishing community were very much local, with almost every fisherman in the East Neuk having been born in the burgh in which he lived and worked. In Pittenweem, for example, only one fisherman had been born outside the burgh;<sup>5</sup> in Crail there were only two;<sup>6</sup> and in St. Monance every single fisherman had been born in the town.<sup>7</sup>

But between 1841 and 1891, the number of fishermen in the district expanded by almost 130% from 553 to 1,268.<sup>8</sup> Yet the local fishing communities were largely able to meet this expansion from within themselves. Only 10.6% of all the fishermen in the East Neuk ports between 1841 and 1891 were born outside the burghs in which they lived, and only 4% were born outside the East Neuk.<sup>9</sup> Thus there was

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1. Enumerator's Schedule St. Andrews 1881; CEN 1881/453
  2. Ibid 1841-91; CEN 1841, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891/453; CEN 1851/313-315
  3. Ibid Pittenweem 1841-19; CEN 1841/452; CEN 1851/310; CEN 1861-91/452
  4. Ibid Crail 1841-19; CEN 1841/417; CEN 1851/311; CEN 1861-91/417
  5. Ibid Pittenweem 1841; CEN 1841/452
  6. Ibid Crail 1841; CEN 1841/417
  7. Ibid St. Monance; CEN 1841/454
  8. Ibid Anstruther Easter, Anstruther Wester, Kilrenny, Crail, St. Andrews, Pittenweem, St. Monance, Elie and Killoonquhar 1841-91; CEN 1841/402, 403, 438, 417, 453, 452, 454, 427, 436; CEN 1851/308-311, 313-315; CEN 1861-91/402, 403, 438, 417, 453, 452, 454, 427, 436.
  9. Ibid

no large scale immigration into the district as a result of the fishing boom; and most of the movement between parishes within the district was primarily the result of social and not economic factors, principally marriage.<sup>1</sup> Thus 96% of East Neuk fishermen were either born in the burgh in which they lived, or had married a woman from that burgh.

Fishermen's wives were invariably drawn from within the immediate fishing community or from one of the neighbouring East Neuk fishing ports. Between 1841 and 1891, 21% of East Neuk fishermen's wives were born outside the burgh in which their husbands lived, but only 8.5% were born outside the East Neuk.<sup>2</sup> A few came from the rural parishes of East Fife - Carnbee, Cameron, Flisk etc.; but the majority, of necessity, came from fishing ports and fishing backgrounds since a fisherman took a wife 'for a helpmate in every deed'.<sup>3</sup> Thus even those wives born outside the East Neuk came predominantly from other Scottish fishing ports, and it is indicative of the pattern of fisheries' development in the district after 1871 that an increasing proportion of fishermen's wives came from the northern ports to which the local fleet went to fish during the summer. In Pittenweem, for example, wives from Aberdeen, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Stonehaven etc. accounted for only 1% of the total in 1861,<sup>4</sup> but by 1891 the figure was 5%.<sup>5</sup> Even this latter figure, however, is a comparatively small number, and East Neuk fishermen continued to seek their wives locally throughout the period under review.

But even within the East Neuk certain of the fishing communities remained more introverted than others. St. Monance, for example, was well known for the high degree of inter-marriage that took place within the burgh.<sup>6</sup> In 1891, only 6½% of the St. Monance fishermen were born outside the burgh;<sup>7</sup> in Cellardyke, at the same time, the

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1. Enumerator's Schedule, Anstruther Easter, Anstruther Wester, Kilrenny, Crail, St. Andrews, Pittenweem, St. Monance, Elie and Kilconquhar 1841-91; CEN 1841/402, 403, 438, 417, 453, 452, 454, 427, 436; CEN 1851/308-311, 313-315; CEN 1861-91/402, 403, 438, 417, 453, 452, 454, 427, 436.
  2. Ibid
  3. East of Fife Record Dec 10th 1869
  4. Enumerator's Schedule, Pittenweem 1861; CEN 1861/452
  5. Ibid 1891; CEN 1891/452
  6. Henry Farnie: Handybook of the Fife Coast from Queensferry to Fifeness (Cupar c.1860) p.156
  7. Enumerator's Schedule, St. Monance 1891; CEN 1891/454



figure was only 3.8%.<sup>1</sup> The essentially self-perpetuating nature of the fishing community was clearly shown by the predominance of certain names. Each burgh had its own particular surnames associated with it. In St. Monance they were Reekie, Allan, Mathers, Kutt and Fyall; in Pittenweem it was Hughes, Gay, Anderson, Bowman and Horsburgh; and in Cellardyke they were Boyter, Moncrieff, Gardner, Murray, Keay, Watson, Doig and Smith.

Thus in 1891, 35% of the population of St. Monance shared ten surnames, a total of 8% being Reekies;<sup>2</sup> in Pittenweem, 25% of the population shared five surnames, with nearly 10% being Hughes;<sup>3</sup> and in Cellardyke 43% of the population shared a dozen surnames, with 15% named either Watson or Smith.<sup>4</sup> Obviously such a proliferation of Watsons or Smiths or Reekies was capable of causing great confusion, and it was a characteristic of the East Neuk that most fishermen possessed a nickname which they were referred to by even in newspaper articles and court appearances, in order to avoid confusion.<sup>5</sup> Thus a fisherman called James Brown would be known as Duff.<sup>6</sup> Such nicknames were not derived from any fanciful cause or from the physical appearance of the possessor, the normal custom being to adopt the maiden name of one's wife or mother;<sup>7</sup> the extensive use of such nicknames was certainly a distinctive feature of the fishing community in the East Neuk.

Equally distinctive were the multiplicity of superstitions which abounded among the fisher folk. Fishermen throughout Scotland were invariably superstitious due to the unpredictable nature of their income,<sup>8</sup> and those of the East Neuk were no exception. Local newspapers delighted in recounting instances of what was considered ridiculous ignorance; and though such superstitions were most widespread in the first half of the 19th century, some continued to survive in the 20th century. Most superstitions were inevitably connected with the prospect of success or failure at the fishing;

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1. Enumerator's Schedule, Kilrenny 1891; GEN 1891/438
  2. Ibid, St. Monance 1891; GEN 1891/454
  3. Ibid, Pittenweem 1891; GEN 1891/452
  4. Ibid, Kilrenny 1891; GEN 1891/438
  5. St. Andrews Gazette Oct 21st 1865
  6. Ibid Oct 26th 1867
  7. John Jack: Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.164, thinks that nicknames were adopted in such a manner because certain names were considered unlucky.
  8. See Peter F. Anson: Scots Fisherfolk (Banffshire Journal 1950) for best account of superstitions in Scotland.

some omens were said to sugar the former, some the latter. By far the most celebrated East Neuk superstition was an intense antipathy towards pigs. Their very name was taboo, a pig merely being called 'the beast' or the 'the brute'. The superstition was thought to date back to the 16th century and was still very much alive in the mid-19th century.<sup>1</sup> The very mention of their name would inspire terror among fishermen, who would immediately try to counter the effect by uttering the magic words 'cauld iron'. If any part of a pig came into contact with their fishing gear, it was capable of 'inspiring all the terrors of a raging hurricane or impending water spout'. Indeed in May 1841, the town crier of St. Monance walked the streets of the burgh to announce that

'during the course of last night some malicious, ill-disposed person did put a beast's tail into one of the line sculls to the great hurt and damage of the boat and crew, and if any such wanton mischief be again committed after this intimation, the offender<sup>2</sup> will be prosecuted according to the utmost vigours of the law'.

It was considered equally unlucky to ask a fisherman, on his way to sea, where he was going,<sup>3</sup> and even particular people were considered unlucky - one unfortunate local hawkker being driven out of town by the local fishermen under a barrage of stones since his arrival had so frequently been accompanied by bad weather.<sup>4</sup>

If the fishing was poor, innumerable reasons were forwarded to account for it. Failures of fishing were variously accounted for by such things as the thud of steamboats in the Firth of Forth, the ringing of church bells,<sup>5</sup> and even the firing of cannon balls, as late as the 20th century.<sup>6</sup> Steps were accordingly taken to ensure as successful a day's fishing as possible. A shoe, for example, was always thrown after a fisherman by his wife to ensure good luck when setting off for the drave for the first time.<sup>7</sup> The inevitable horseshoe was either carried or attached to the boat.<sup>8</sup> Witchcraft was unquestionably accepted as being in existence. In the mid-19th century, hooks were normally fastened to the line with scarlet thread, which was considered to be an infallible preventative of

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1. John Jack: Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.160; Fife Herald April 19th 1855
  2. John Jack: Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.163
  3. Ibid p.164
  4. Fife Herald Sept 16th 1858
  5. George Gourlay: Anstruther (Cupar and Anstruther 1888) p.131
  6. East of Fife Record Sept 18th 1908
  7. Pittenweem Register May 27th 1847
  8. John Jack: An Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.165

witchcraft;<sup>1</sup> a tithe was paid in Anstruther to a certain Betty Nicoll to prevent her from putting the evil eye on crews.<sup>2</sup> Nor did local crews scorn the advice of fortune-tellers in the pursuit of their occupation.<sup>3</sup>

This is not to say that fishermen were either godless or pagan. Throughout the 19th century, the Sabbath was strictly observed as a day of rest. Disregard was very infrequent and liable to incur locally 'a strong feeling of indignation at the parties implicated'.<sup>4</sup> Non-observers of the Sabbath were said to be distinguishable by their squalid, ill-clad appearance.<sup>5</sup> The custom was not confined to the East Neuk but was generally prevalent among Scottish fishermen, doubtless reflecting the Calvinist influence upon 19th century Scotland; and fishermen continue to observe the Sabbath, in many parts of Scotland even today.

Religious feeling was not confined to the observance of the Sabbath. The East Neuk fishing communities seem to have been particularly susceptible to revivalist movements. The major religious revival in the district occurred in 1860 when a veritable tide of physical 'striking' and 'prostrations' swept down upon the town of Cellardyke. The Record reported that 1,000 individuals, old and young, were in nightly attendance at the various prayer meetings and that 'a great proportion of the population in Cellardyke are more or less under the influence of the revival power, some in bed moaning under the weight of the affection, some rejoicing under a sense of relief, and some under medical treatment from the shock upon their nervous system'.<sup>6</sup> Though the revival spread into Pittenweem and St. Monance, in Anstruther similar meetings had only a scanty attendance.<sup>7</sup> Fishermen took Bibles to sea with them;<sup>8</sup> young boys offered up prayers behind dykes;<sup>9</sup> and women whose clothes were dirty and in need of repair were transformed by the revival into neatness and cleanliness.<sup>10</sup>

A second major revival occurred in St. Monance in 1869; the Lammas drave was said to be no longer 'a kind of Saturnalia' but

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1. John Jack: An Historical Account of St. Monance (Cupar 1844) p.165
  2. East of Fife Record June 15th 1900
  3. Fife Herald March 6th 1856
  4. St. Andrews Gazette Sept 3rd 1864
  5. Fife Herald Feb 18th 1862
  6. East of Fife Record March 24th 1860
  7. Ibid March 31st 1860
  8. Ibid May 5th 1860
  9. Ibid March 24th 1860
  10. Ibid April 14th 1860

more akin to some form of religious festival.<sup>1</sup> A further revival was taking place in Cellardyke in 1874,<sup>2</sup> and religion again visited the East Neuk in 1883 in the form of the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance movement, which recruited 318 members in Cellardyke in under a month.<sup>3</sup> But perhaps the frequency of the revivals is the best indication of their temporary nature. Even at the height of the major revival of 1860, scenes occurred in the various burghs 'which reflect anything but credit on those concerned, such as fighting, quarreling and swearing, and that by more than one whose recent religious convictions enabled to detail to public audience their awakening from darkness to light'.<sup>4</sup>

This only confirmed the previous middle class opinion that fishermen were incapable of leading a temperate and civilized existence. Well-meaning denizens of local society made continuous efforts 'to rescue them from their state of filth, misery and degradation'.<sup>5</sup> Fishing communities were considered so abandoned that Mission Halls were established, and missionaries sent among them.<sup>6</sup> Bands of Hope were established among the children of fishermen<sup>7</sup> and Good Templar Lodges among the fishermen themselves.<sup>8</sup> Temperance was the aim, and temperance soirees were regularly organized among the fisher folk by local worthies.<sup>9</sup> But the permanent effects of the temperance campaigns, were as insubstantial as those of the various religious revivals. Indeed, a poor turnout at a Liberal meeting in St. Andrews in 1900 was accounted for by the fact that it was almost impossible to get any fishermen to turn out at a political meeting held in a hall in any way connected with the Templars.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly, alcohol seemed to take second place only to fishing in the lives of most fishermen. To some observers, the somewhat exuberant behaviour of the fishermen while under the influence of alcohol was harmless and understandable. One wrote,

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1. East of Fife Record Sept 10th 1869
  2. Ibid Dec 4th 1874
  3. Ibid May 25th 1883
  4. Ibid Sept 8th 1860
  5. Charles Roger: History of St. Andrews (Edinburgh 1849) p.170
  6. Ibid p.170; St. Andrews Gazette Oct 18th 1879
  7. St. Andrews Gazette Feb 29th 1868
  8. Ibid Jan 6th 1883
  9. Ibid Oct 18th 1879; April 29th 1882; Jan 6th 1883
  10. St. Andrews Citizen April 28th 1900

'A successful week's fishing caused a regular treat of Saturday night skirmishing under the spirited command of old valorous Sir John;<sup>1</sup> and Monday discovers the pugilistic combatants arrayed in their blushing honours such as peeled noses, blackened eyes, swollen lips, carrying their brains in napkins and their hands in slings'.<sup>2</sup>

For 'a detachment of Neptune's heroes'<sup>3</sup> to be fighting each other,<sup>4</sup> their wives and sweethearts,<sup>5</sup> or the local forces of law and order<sup>6</sup> seemed a trivial enough occurrence - a natural release from their demanding work. But for most local dignitaries and people of consequence, it was considered that fishermen should drink temperance beverages 'in preference to those drinks which are so demoralizing in their effects, debasing the manhood and brutalizing the nation'.<sup>7</sup>

The entire working life of the fisherman seemed to revolve around drink. The herring boats were launched to the accompaniment of large amounts of free whisky provided by the skipper;<sup>8</sup> almost all forms of engagements whether between fishermen, or curers and fishermen, were sealed with a glass of whisky;<sup>9</sup> and most trips to sea were not considered complete without taking 'an allowance of spirits before going home'.<sup>10</sup> Nor was drunkenness and fighting confined to the menfolk. Wives and daughters made frequent court appearances on charges of disorderly behaviour or breach of the peace.<sup>11</sup> The Record even noted a child 'not more than seven or eight, but full grown in iniquity ..... crawling along the street drunk, venting oaths and imprecations as he stumbled along enough to shock the most voluble in that language'.<sup>12</sup> What outraged magistrates still further, was the fact that fisher folk rarely shewed the contrition and respect thought appropriate when appearing in court. Fishermen, it was thought, ought to be teaching their families and instructing them in the paths of the

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1. i.e. Sir John Barleycorn.
  2. Fife Herald Aug 17th 1854
  3. Ibid May 25th 1854
  4. Fife Journal Oct 14th 1841; East of Fife Record March 7th 1857; St. Andrews Citizen March 24th 1894.
  5. East of Fife Record Dec 6th 1856; Jan 17th 1857; April 27th 1900.
  6. Ibid Oct 25th 1856; Fife Herald May 25th 1854
  7. East of Fife Record May 1st 1858
  8. Ibid June 25th 1859
  9. Fife Herald July 30th 1850. As much as 10 gallons of whisky were often part of an agreement between crew and curer.
  10. East of Fife Record March 31st 1859.
  11. Pittenweem Register April 6th 1850; East of Fife Record Nov 8th 1856; St. Andrews Gazette July 8th 1876
  12. East of Fife Record Sept 25th 1858

Lord'.<sup>1</sup> An appearance in court, though, was treated as a good joke,<sup>2</sup> and it was not uncommon for amazing scenes to occur as defendants, often drunk, shouted, argued and abused witnesses.<sup>3</sup>

If their behaviour was picturesque, then so, too, was the appearance of the fishing community which remained virtually unaltered for much of the 19th century. Whilst the fishing remained predominantly inshore, the typical fisherman's dress was a blue jacket, loose flowing trousers, and a glazed hat or Kilmarnock bonnet.<sup>4</sup> In the smaller fishing centres such as Crail and St. Andrews, this garb remained the norm even in the early 20th century, with only the head-gear changing according to the dictates of fashion.<sup>5</sup> But by that time, the deep-sea fishermen had changed to an outfit of thigh-high sea boots, oilskin suits, sou'westers and knitted gloves - the whole of which cost £5; on shore his casual clothes were more likely to be tweed.<sup>6</sup>

For the women, the traditional dress in the 19th century was blue duffle petticoats, short gowns, white aprons, a tartan kerchief over their shoulders and Lorne shoes.<sup>7</sup> As late as 1901, fisherwomen in St. Andrews were described as wearing short skirts, white stockings, and a scarlet kerchief.<sup>8</sup> The children, particularly the boys, looked like replicas of their parents.<sup>9</sup> One observer described the boys in St. Monance, standing at the corners of streets, 'all furnished with tobacco pipes, like so many monkeys equipped for an exhibition, puffing and spitting and discussing the affairs of the day'.<sup>10</sup> It was such sights that artistic visitors to the East Neuk eagerly sought for their pictures.<sup>11</sup>

Life within the community, however, was less picturesque. Both women and children were expected to participate in the work involved in fishing. Indeed, a wife was regarded as essential to any fisherman. One writer commented that 'on the expiry of their short honeymoon, which generally extends from Friday to Monday, she must buckle herself to a

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1. East of Fife Record Feb 19th 1859
  2. Fife Herald April 7th 1859
  3. St. Andrews Gazette April 8th 1871; May 10th 1873.
  4. Fife Herald Sept 25th 1851
  5. St. Andrews Citizen Aug 31st 1912
  6. East of Fife Record Oct 18th 1906
  7. Ibid
  8. St. Andrews Citizen Nov 23rd 1901
  9. Ibid
  10. Fife Herald Dec 8th 1853
  11. East of Fife Record July 17th 1891

life of unceasing drudgery, or what would be thought so at any rate by her sister who marries a tradesman'.<sup>1</sup> The marriages themselves were normally termed 'penny-weddings'. The custom was for the bridegroom to be sent for to the house of the bride, which was done by means of a small deputation of equal numbers of men and women, arm in arm, which escorted him to the house in which the marriage was to take place.<sup>2</sup> After the ceremony, the whole marriage party would proceed to a house or a hall for the wedding feast and dancing. The public could gain admission by paying a small sum - normally not 1d. but in the region of 1s. 6d. - in order to cover the cost of music and refreshments, the latter normally including a large supply of strong liquors.<sup>3</sup> A wedding procession might often have to wend its way between neighbouring villages if the bride and groom resided in different burghs;<sup>4</sup> all such processions were normally accompanied by musicians, flags, the firing of guns and huge crowds of young children.<sup>5</sup> Sedate St. Andrews was quite taken aback by one such festive occurrence, which was described as 'one of the most disgraceful scenes ever witnessed'.<sup>6</sup>

Marriages invariably occurred at the close of the herring fishing. Prior to 1869 this meant that most marriages took place after the close of the Lamma drave. After a good fishing in 1846, 52 marriages took place in Pittenweem, St. Monance and Cellardyke in the month after the close of the fishing;<sup>7</sup> a poor drave such as that of 1851, meant the postponement of numerous marriages.<sup>8</sup> By the 20th century, though successful fishings were still a necessity for most marriages, most weddings took place after the return from the English herring fishing.<sup>9</sup> However, the penny weddings had been succeeded by that time by more conventional ceremonies,<sup>10</sup> although the habit of boats, whose owners or crew members were about to enter matrimony, flying red and white flags continued.<sup>11</sup>

A fisherman's wife invariably came from a fishing background. 'As

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1. East of Fife Record Dec 10th 1869
  2. Pittenweem Register June 14th 1845
  3. Fife Herald Oct 11th 1855
  4. Pittenweem Register Sept 21st 1850
  5. St. Andrews Gazette Aug 28th 1869; Nov 28th 1863; Pittenweem Register Oct 2nd 1852; Fife Herald June 10th 1852
  6. Fife Herald June 3rd 1850
  7. Pittenweem Register Oct 2nd 1852
  8. Ibid Sept 27th 1851
  9. St. Andrews Citizen Dec 20th 1902; Dec 24th 1910.
  10. East of Fife Record Oct 18th 1906
  11. Ibid Sept 24th 1869

one writer commented,

'the wife of a fisherman must be born amongst the remains of cod, herring and lobsters; her first drawn breath must be largely composed of odour of tar and herring pickle; she must understand from girlhood the meshing of nets, the oiling of monstrous boots, the baiting of lines, the mending thereof, and in fact all the ins and outs of fisher life'.<sup>1</sup>

Baiting a line was considered a great art and a considerable advantage when seeking a husband.<sup>2</sup> During the summer the younger women obtained employment as gutters in the local curing yards; and when the drave declined locally, many of them joined their fathers, brothers and sweethearts in the annual migrations to the northern ports,<sup>3</sup> and to Yarmouth and Lowestoft.<sup>4</sup> By the early 20th century, as many as 280 girls annually left the district in this way.<sup>5</sup>

Conditions in which they lived at the major curing ports were atrocious. Between 12 and 20 gutters were crammed into one room in sheds, lofts, granaries and stables.<sup>6</sup> Societies were formed to obtain some improvement of conditions.<sup>7</sup> Wages, however, could be very good, most girls earning between £1 and £2 a week, and some as much as £3 a week. Gutters worked in crews of three, often from six in the morning till seven at night.<sup>8</sup> But their cheerful disposition and picturesque appearance made them a popular sight at the English herring ports; and by 1914 there were 6,000 Scottish fisher girls at Yarmouth and Lowestoft.<sup>9</sup>

In the East Neuk, too, the female fish workers were a popular tourist attraction by the 20th century.<sup>10</sup> But conditions within the fishing quarters were normally far from being picturesque. Sanitary conditions were often disgusting; small pox, cholera, scarletina and typhoid epidemics were rife in the fishing burghs until the early 20th century.<sup>11</sup> 'Wherever a person has convenient premises' complained the Fife Herald, 'there may be found a heap of mussel shells and other piscatory nuisances'.<sup>12</sup> In St. Andrews the fishing quarter was

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1. Henry Farnie: Handybook of the Fife Coast from Queensferry to Fifeness (Cupar c,1860)
  2. East of Fife Record Dec 10th 1869
  3. Ibid May 39th 1884; St. Andrews Citizen June 10th 1905
  4. St. Andrews Citizen Dec 6th 1902; East of Fife Record Dec 18th 1907
  5. Anstruther District Letter Books Feb 14th 1913; AF19/4/3
  6. W. S. Miln: An Exposure of the Position of the Scotch Herring Trade in 1885 (London 1886) p.31
  7. East of Fife Record Sept 26th 1902
  8. Ibid Oct 30th 1913
  9. Observer Magazine Aug 18th 1974
  10. East of Fife Record Aug 21st 1908; St. Andrews Citizen Nov 23rd 1901
  11. East of Fife Record March 17th 1905
  12. Fife Herald Nov 1st 1849



'exposed to the most unwholesome effluvia arising from the putrefaction of animal and vegetable substances'.<sup>1</sup> In St. Monance the streets were so dirty and impassable that 'any experienced wingmaker who is slack of employment might have a good opening in this quarter'.<sup>2</sup> Twenty years later, in 1870, the burgh still lacked any form of drainage system apart from that, whereby the sewage water meandered through and across the streets.<sup>3</sup> As late as 1895 the town still lacked main sewers.<sup>4</sup> Commenting on such conditions the St. Andrews Gazette wrote that 'there is no theory of existence, feudal, municipal, parochial or otherwise which can at all excuse a condition of affairs like that of St. Monance'.<sup>5</sup>

Housing conditions rivalled sanitary conditions in terms of inadequacy. In 1800 the typical fisherman's house was 'little other than a narrow smoke-begrimed cot'; the walls were rough and unplastered, the roof low and the floor made of earth. The total accommodation consisted of two rooms, and the furniture was sparse.<sup>6</sup> The expansion of the fishing industry only served to render conditions even worse. By 1862, the majority of fishermen in the East Neuk were compelled to live in a single room, many of which were unfit for human habitation.<sup>7</sup> A visitor to St. Andrews was shocked when he saw 'the horrid hovels which these hardworking men had to inhabit - hovels in which he would not keep a beast'.<sup>8</sup> Correspondents to the St. Andrews Gazette disagreed, claiming that 'the fishermen, in proportion to their numbers, are the best situated for house accommodation' in St. Andrews.<sup>9</sup> At that time, however, 48.5% of fisher families lived in only one room, and only 2.9% lived in more than two rooms. The corresponding figures for the burgh as a whole were 31% and 39% respectively.<sup>10</sup> Provost Playfair had been widely praised for his efforts to rescue the fishing community of St. Andrews from their state of misery and filth;<sup>11</sup> yet paradoxically Playfair, himself, was the owner of six

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1. St. Andrews Town Council Minutes Nov 30th 1842
  2. Fife Herald Feb 8th 1849
  3. East of Fife Record April 1st 1870
  4. Ibid Feb 22nd 1895
  5. St. Andrews Gazette April 7th 1877
  6. Peter F. Anson: Scots Fisherfolk (Banffshire Journal 1950)p.150-151
  7. East of Fife Record Feb 8th 1862
  8. St. Andrews Gazette Dec 12th 1863
  9. Ibid Dec 19th 1863
  10. Enumerator's Schedule, St. Andrews 1871; CEN 1871/453
  11. Charles Roger: History of St. Andrews (Edinburgh 1849) p.170

	<u>Fishing Community</u>		<u>Burgh as whole</u>	
	1 room	More than 2 rooms	1 room	More than 2 rooms
St. Monance	53.3%	6.5%	49%	15.5%
Cellardyke	52%	2.9%	44.6%	14.3%
St. Andrews	48.5%	2.9%	31%	39%
Pittenweem	30.1%	8.3%	26.6%	37%
Crail	16.6%	30%	20%	38.5%
Anstruther	-	-	21.4%	38.5%
Scotland	-	-	32.18%	30.6%

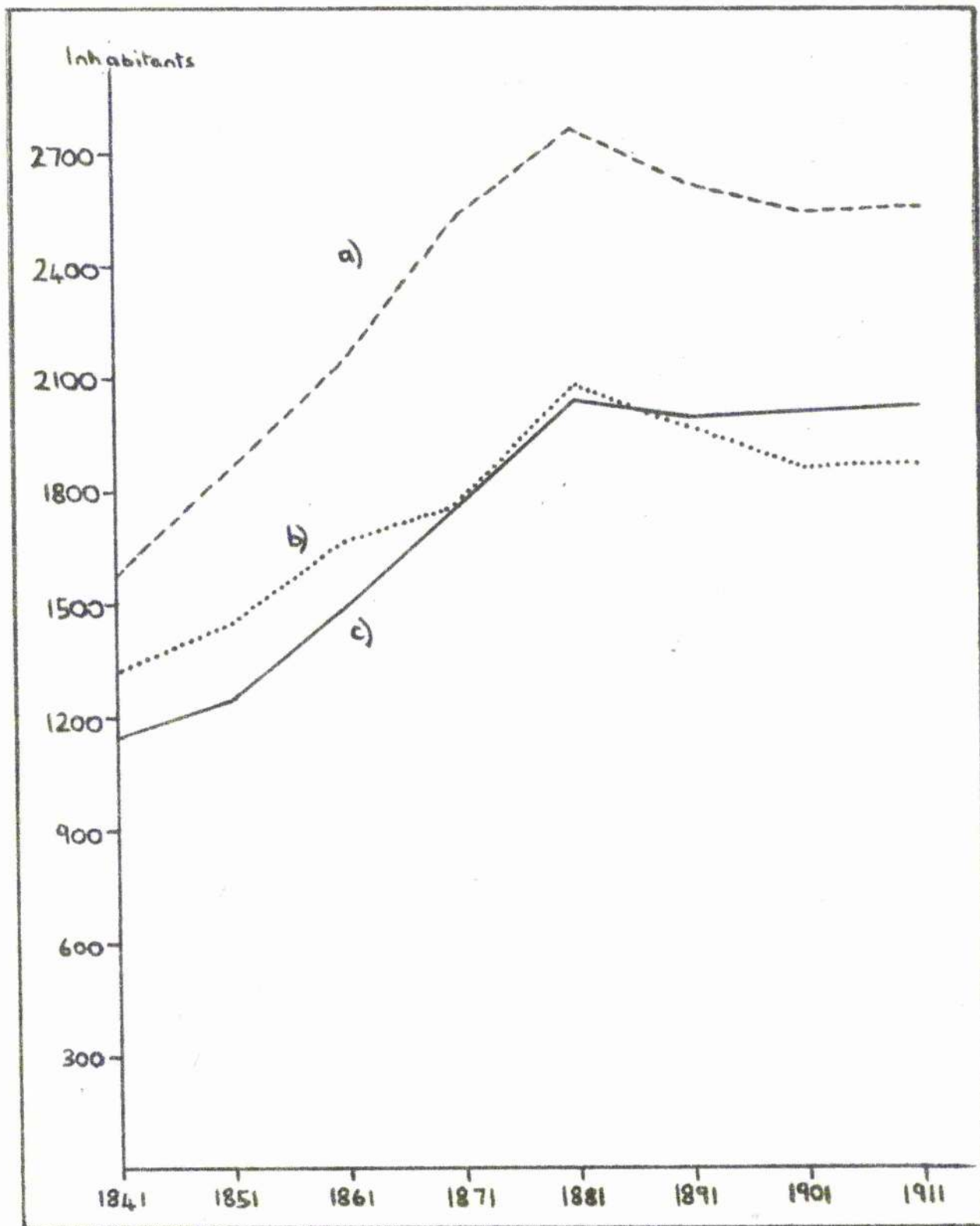
Table VIII.2. Housing Conditions in the East Neuk Fishing Villages 1871.  
 (from Enumerator's Schedules; figures for windowed  
 rooms only).

of the most over-crowded houses in North Castle Street tenanted by fisher families.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was St. Andrews unique in this respect; as Table VIII.2 shows, in St. Monance and Cellardyke more than 50% of the families in the fishing quarter inhabited only one room, and in all the fishing communities - with the exception of Crail - only the smallest minority of families occupied more than two rooms. This was because Crail's declining population in the 19th century<sup>2</sup> meant that the pressure upon the available supply of accommodation was never as great as it was in St. Monance for example; there the population expanded by 42% between 1851 and 1871, but the number of houses by only 32%.<sup>3</sup> In Cellardyke during the same period, the population expanded by 36% and the number of houses by only 18%.<sup>4</sup> Thus it was that a number of East Neuk fishermen moved to Crail where housing could be more easily obtained,<sup>5</sup> as indeed did fishermen from more distant ports. In 1851, only 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ % of the fishermen of Crail were born outside the burgh;<sup>6</sup> but by 1891, 40% of the fishermen living in Crail were born outside the town, half of whom were from other East Neuk ports.<sup>7</sup>

But Crail could only provide a small proportion of the housing needs of the fishing communities of the district. By the late 1860's conditions reached an absolute nadir. The rooms inhabited by the fishermen were so small that, 'you could poke the fire, open the window and shut the door without getting out of bed';<sup>8</sup> while the drinking water in most houses contained sufficient filth to prevent one from washing in it.<sup>8</sup> In 1871, 54% of the houses occupied by the fishing population in Cellardyke contained over 10 inhabitants, and 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ % contained over 20; one five-roomed house was home to 32 people.<sup>9</sup> In Pittenweem 49% of the houses occupied by fishing families contained over 10 people,<sup>10</sup> whilst in St. Monance the figure was 40%.<sup>11</sup> In all, a total of 31% of the houses in the various fishing communities of

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1. St. Andrews Burgh Valuation Roll 1859-60
  2. Population declined by 8.5% between 1851 and 1871, and the number of houses by 1.9%. Official Census Returns 1851 and 1871.
  3. Ibid
  4. Enumerator's Schedule Kilrenny 1851, 1871; CEN 1851/311; CEN 1871/438
  5. East of Fife Record Feb 8th 1862
  6. Enumerator's Schedule Crail 1851; CEN 1851/311
  7. Ibid 1871; CEN 1871/417
  8. East of Fife Record Feb 8th 1862
  9. Enumerator's Schedule Kilrenny 1871; CEN 1871/438
  10. Ibid Pittenweem 1871; CEN 1871/452
  11. Ibid St. Monance 1871; CEN 1871/454



Graph VIII.1. Population of the Major East Neuk Fishing Ports 1841-1911.  
(from Official Census Returns)

- a). Cellardyke
- b). Pittenweem
- c). St. Monance

the East Neuk were inhabited by three or more families, in some cases as many as seven families sharing a house.<sup>1</sup>

It was not poverty which prevented fishermen from living in better conditions, merely the lack of appropriate housing. Though local builders and traders<sup>2</sup> built large numbers of new houses during the 1860's, the scarcity remained<sup>3</sup> and was only alleviated by the decline in the population of the fishing communities in the late 19th century. By 1891, only 23% of fishing families of Cellardyke,<sup>4</sup> 38% of those of St. Monance,<sup>5</sup> 24% of those of St. Andrews<sup>6</sup> and 19% of those of Pittenweem<sup>7</sup> inhabited only one room, a significant decrease in the two decades since 1871. Acute housing shortages were complained of until well into the first decade of the 20th century<sup>8</sup> when declining population and continued new building combined to alleviate conditions. In St. Monance, for example, population declined by 1.6% between 1881 and 1911, while the number of houses increased by nearly 20%.<sup>9</sup> In Cellardyke population declined by 7% and in Pittenweem by 10% during the same period.<sup>10</sup> (See Graph VIII.1.) As a result, housing conditions inevitably improved, so that by 1911 only 20% of the population of St. Monance lived in one room, 17% of the population of Cellardyke, and 11% of the population of Pittenweem.<sup>11</sup>

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To complete this picture of the fishing community in the East Neuk, it is necessary to consider the difficult question of the fishermen's earnings. Numerous problems face the investigator, particularly since at no time during the period under consideration were fishermen employed at a fixed wage. Even when working for the steam fishing companies in the 1890's, East Neuk fishermen were still paid by the share system, which had been the basis of the economic organization of the fishing industry in the district throughout the 19th century.<sup>12</sup>

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1. Enumerator's Schedule Kilrenny, St. Monance, Pittenweem, St. Andrews, Crail, 1871; GEN 1871/438, 454, 452, 453, 417.
  2. e.g. Andrew Tod, a Pittenweem baker and Bailie Williamson of Anstruth
  3. East of Fife Record May 3rd 1862; June 4th 1869; March 11th 1870
  4. Enumerator's Schedule Kilrenny, 1891; GEN 1891/438
  5. Ibid St. Monance 1891; GEN 1891/454
  6. Ibid St. Andrews 1891; GEN 1891/453
  7. Ibid Pittenweem 1891; GEN 1891/452
  8. East of Fife Record Oct 24th 1902; April 6th 1906
  9. Official Census Returns 1881 and 1911.
  10. Ibid
  11. Ibid 1911
  12. Fishery Board Reports 1895

Each crew member was paid a share of the net earnings of the boat according to his financial contribution towards that boat or its gear. This was the basis of the 'deal' system, whereby landsmen employed as temporary fishermen during the Lamma drave, who did not provide their own nets, received only half the share of the earnings received by a full-time fisherman who did provide his own nets.

Earnings could vary considerably from one season to the next. In 1855, for example, the Lamma herring catch in the East Neuk was valued at £43,327; but in 1856, the drave was worth only £21,390.<sup>1</sup> Average earnings for the 338 boats engaged in 1855 was therefore £128, while in 1856, 366 boats averaged only £58 10s.<sup>2</sup> In the same season catches could vary considerably from one boat to another. Thus in 1854, when average earnings during the Lamma drave were £102 per crew, some boats grossed as much as £200.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, any figure representing the average earnings of fishermen over a period of years, is only an approximate guide to the economic status of fishermen, since it takes no account of the fluctuations that could occur in earnings from one year to the next.

The income of a fisherman's family was always erratic. Earnings were not dispersed equally throughout the course of the year, but varied from week to week. Most families were therefore dependent for much of the time upon the credit system both for household necessities and fishing equipment. Great reliance was therefore placed upon a successful Lamma drave to eliminate debts accumulated during the rest of the year.<sup>4</sup> This was why a continued failure of the drave invariably led to a decline in the number of fishermen in the district. In the late 18th century, for example, many fishermen signed on for whaling voyages to Greenland, or on merchant vessels engaged in the Baltic and coastal trades.<sup>5</sup> Since merchant seamen at that time earned £2 to £2 10s. per month,<sup>6</sup> this is an indication that fishermen were probably earning less than 10s. per week. Certainly when Cathcart Dempster brought fishermen from the Shetlands to St. Andrews in 1803, it was upon a guarantee of paying each man 10s. per week whenever the

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1. Letters and Reports Dec 31st 1855; Dec 31st 1856; AF19/3/4

2. Fishery Board Reports 1855, 1856

3. Letters and Reports Dec 21st 1854; AF19/3/4

4. East of Fife Record Sept 10th 1869

5. Rev. Andrew Bell: O.S.A. vol. xxi p.439; Rev. Archibald Gillies: O.S.A. vol. ix p.338n.

6. Rev. Robert Wilson: N.S.A. vol. ix p.298

weather prevented them from going to sea.<sup>1</sup>

The return of the herring shoals in the early 19th century led to a modest improvement in the earnings of fishermen, which continued even during the period from 1822 to 1837, when poor local catches necessitated fishing from the northern ports during the summer months. Evidence of this modest prosperity was clearly shown by the increase in the number of large boats in the district in the years before 1840.<sup>2</sup> Certainly some fishermen experienced great hardship in the 1820's and 1830's, and between 1828 and 1836, 50 East Neuk boat owners petitioned the Fishery Board for assistance in repairing damage done to their boats.<sup>3</sup> But at the other end of the scale, there were such fishermen as one Cellardyke skipper who owned houses and property valued at between £200 and £250, as well as a new herring boat, complete with gear.

The fishing families of St. Monance in the 1830's, were described as having 'a striking air of comfort',<sup>4</sup> and the Cellardyke fishermen at the same period, were said to be generally in respectable circumstances 'but it is a matter of deep regret that the same cannot be said of all of them',<sup>5</sup> An average summer fishing at that time was considered as being 125 crans,<sup>6</sup> which at 10s. per cran<sup>7</sup> represented gross earnings of £62 10s. for a five man herring crew. This meant earnings of £11 for each share fisherman, £5 10s. for each half-dealsman and as much as £25 to £30 for a skipper owning his own boat and providing nets for the half-dealsman. From these payments, expenses would normally have to be deducted, but earnings would nevertheless still average comfortably over £1 per week for the six to eight weeks of the summer fishing - and share fishermen on the most successful boats could earn twice as much, and more.<sup>8</sup>

By the 1830's, too, the winter herring fishing in the East Neuk was becoming a profitable, additional source of income, producing average earnings of £8 per man;<sup>9</sup> whilst during the remainder of the

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1. George Bruce: Wrecks and Reminiscences of St. Andrews Bay (Dundee 1887) p.57

2. See above Chapter II

3. Fishery Board Reports 1828-1836

4. Rev. Robert Swan: N.S.A. vol. ix p.344

5. Rev. George Dickson: N.S.A. vol. ix p.973

6. Michael Gray: East Coast Fisheries p.202

7. Rev. George Dickson: N.S.A. vol. ix p.973

8. Fife Herald Aug 29th 1837; Sept 9th 1830

9. Letters and Reports April 16th 1829; Feb 7th 1835; Feb 14th 1838; AF19/3/2,3.

year the fishermen could rely upon regular earnings from line-fishing for which the last haul was one of the major centres in Scotland in the first decades of the 19th century. Catches of cod ranged between 14 and 30 score, worth between £15 and £32, or between 30s. and £3 10s. per man for a crew of eight.<sup>1</sup> Such catches were obviously exceptional, and unfortunately there are no figures for the total annual catches of cod in Scotland at this period. However, from the figures for cod cured annually it can be calculated that average earnings from cod fishing would have been at least £10 annually.<sup>2</sup> This means that fishermen in the 1830's would have a minimum average income of approximately £30 a year, without account being taken of takes of haddock, flat fish etc.

After the revival of the Lamma Drive in 1837, earnings can be calculated with a greater degree of accuracy. The prosperity of the fishing community is clearly demonstrated by the expansion of the fishing fleet, both in numbers and in value, in the mid 19th century.<sup>3</sup> This is hardly surprising, when one considers that during the peak years of the Lamma drive, share fishermen earned an average of between £25 and £30 during the summer fishing alone, and sometimes more.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the winter drive between 1855 and 1860 was worth, on average, approximately £10 per man.<sup>5</sup> For the line fishermen, too, the 1850's were a period of increased prosperity, with cod fishermen earning from 20s. to 50s. per week,<sup>6</sup> and haddock fishermen averaging 12 per week.<sup>7</sup> The District Fishery Officer placed the average earnings for fishermen in the late 1850's at 35s. per week,<sup>8</sup> though for many it was considerably more. Some fishermen, it is true, were sufficiently dissatisfied with their earnings and prospects to emigrate during the 1840's and 1850's;<sup>9</sup> but for most fishermen it was

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1. Letters and Reports March 10th 1826; AF19/3/2
  2. The amount of cod cured in the 1830's averaged £4230 in value annually, which divided between the 560 full-time line fishermen would mean average earnings at the cod fishing of £7 10s. per year, even without taking into account, earnings from the fresh cod market. See Reports of the Commissioners for the Herring Fishery 1830-39
  3. See above p.79
  4. Value of fishings calculated on average prices to be found in the Life Herald and East of Fife Record during this period.
  5. Weekly Reports of Fishing 1856-1860; AF19/12/2
  6. Letters and Reports Oct 25th 1856
  7. Life July 11th 1857
  8. Life Dec 1st 1857
  9. Fifeevening Register May 15th 1852; East of Fife Record Sept 12th 1857



a period of modest prosperity. There was a great demand for new houses,<sup>1</sup> and successful fishermen were able to pay as much as £200 for a new home.<sup>2</sup>

The latter half of the 19th century did not witness any substantial decline in the earnings of fishermen. Certainly those fishermen who elected to stay and fish in the district, rather than travel to Aberdeenshire or England for the herring fishings at those places, fared the worst as a result of the decline of the local Lammas drave in the late 1860's. Line fishermen in St. Andrews in the 1870's earned only 10s. per week.<sup>3</sup> Hand-line fishing declined throughout the East Neuk, and, by the 20th century, haddock fishermen earned barely £50 a year - or one half of what they had earned during the peak years of the 1850's.<sup>4</sup> In St. Andrews, fishermen began to find the money earned by caddying more attractive than that gained by attending their lines and nets.<sup>5</sup>

But these are examples taken from the lower end of the scale of earnings among fishermen. Fergus Hughes, one of the pioneers of the English herring fishing, died in 1900 in 'an excellent position financially, being the owner of properties and boats', who had been able to retire to South Africa in 1896 at the age of 50.<sup>6</sup> By the 1880's the more successful fishermen were buying houses for over £300 each;<sup>7</sup> whilst a Pittenweem fisherman in 1905, was reported as buying several shops, houses and offices for £431.<sup>8</sup>

Nor was investment confined merely to property. After the depression which followed the collapse of many curing firms in 1885, during which the number of boats in the district dropped to 680, and their value with gear to £149,222 in 1895,<sup>9</sup> investment in the fishing fleet steadily increased to all time peaks for the district of £267,020 by 1914.<sup>10</sup> This prosperity was only achieved by a rationalisation of the industry upon a more economic basis. Between 1895 and 1914, the number of boats was reduced by 24½% and the number

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1. See above p.215 et seq.
  2. East of Fife Record Sept 27th 1878
  3. St. Andrews Gazette June 10th 1871
  4. East of Fife Record Sept 29th 1910
  5. Letter Books May 26th 1893; June 20th 1911; AF19/4/1,3
  6. St. Andrews Gazette Jan 6th 1900
  7. East of Fife Record Sept 5th 1884; Oct 30th 1885
  8. St. Andrews Gazette Feb 25th 1905
  9. Fishery Board Reports 1895
  10. Ibid 1914

of fishermen by 34%, though the value of the fleet had increased by 79% and its tonnage by 29%.<sup>1</sup> The prosperity of many of the fishermen who remained in the industry was clearly indicated by the fact that the district fleet contained 64 steam drifters which were wholly or partly owned by local fishermen.<sup>2</sup> Such boats cost between £2,800 and £3,000 and some had been bought entirely out of savings; whilst even the remainder mortgaged to local banks as security for loans had entailed cash deposits of between  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their value.<sup>3</sup>

Ordinary share fishermen were obviously less prosperous than boat-owning skippers. But for a share fisherman in a sailing boat at the northern, English and winter herring fishings, earnings averaged £70 10s. per annum between 1895 and 1899, exclusive of earnings at the line-fishing.<sup>4</sup> For crew members of the steam liners, earnings were £103 in 1894<sup>5</sup> and £90 in 1899.<sup>6</sup> By 1914, the income of a share fisherman in the East Neuk was estimated at £125 a year.<sup>7</sup> Such wages were high when compared with the 16s. to 20s. a week earned by Grimsby fishermen working for joint stock companies in the 1890's,<sup>8</sup> or the 20s. a week earned by East Neuk coopers at the same time.<sup>9</sup> Out of his earnings a share fisherman would have to provide his own nets and lines.<sup>10</sup> Few ordinary fishermen left much property, houses being invariably occupied by lease.<sup>11</sup> Most tried to provide for their families in the event of death, by membership of the local Fishermen's Union and Benefit Societies, or one of the various other Friendly Societies which provided a small dole for widows and children in the event of the death of a member, and sometimes even sickness or unemployment payments, in return for a small weekly contribution.<sup>12</sup>

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1895 and 1914
  2. Anstruther District Letter Books Nov 16th 1911; AF19/4/3
  3. Ibid
  4. Figures based on earnings at these fisheries listed in Anstruther District Letter Books 1895-99,; AF19/4/1 and in the East of Fife Record
  5. Fishery Board Reports 1894
  6. East of Fife Record Feb 24th 1899
  7. Anstruther District Letter Books Jan 15th 1914; AF19/4/3
  8. East of Fife Record June 22nd 1894
  9. Ibid Sept 29th 1893
  10. In 1911, a fleet of ten nets cost £30, each net having an average life of five to six years, and costing 7s. a year in repair costs. Great lines cost 30s. each and needed to be replaced every 3 years. See Anstruther District Letter Books April 17th 1911; AF19/4/3
  11. Ibid Feb 24th 1904; AF19/4/2
  12. Contributions varied from 6d. a month to 5d. a week; see Anstruther District Letter Books Feb 24th 1910; AF19/4/2

Indeed, when one balances the rewards of fishing against its demands and dangers, one is forced to agree with an observer who wrote in 1912 that 'when one considers the hardships and uncertainties of a fisherman's life and the extremely scanty remuneration for their arduous toil on the raging seas, the marvel is how they are able to maintain a small, but comfortable home on their meagre earnings'.<sup>1</sup>

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1. St. Andrews Citizen Aug 31st 1912

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C O N C L U S I O N

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CONCLUSION.

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The tourist industry in the East Neuk had undergone rapid expansion in the latter decades of the 19th century, but to attribute the growth of tourism in the region to the decline of the Firth of Forth fisheries, would be largely incorrect. Certainly Crail, Pittenweem, Anstruther and St. Monance all developed as resorts, to some degree, after the Forth Lammas drave had become unproductive; however, the two burghs which most assiduously cultivated their reputations as resorts in order to encourage visitors, were those in which the fishing industry was never of more than marginal importance. Though both St. Andrews and Elie had small resident fishing communities in the late 18th century, neither had ever enjoyed more than peripheral significance in the Fife fisheries - Crail, Cellardyke, Pittenweem and St. Monance had been the principal fishing ports of the East Neuk since the 16th century. St. Andrews had been a religious, educational and political centre of national importance prior to the Scottish Reformation, but had been in steady decline since that time; Elie, without being a major fishing port, had enjoyed a brief period of commercial prosperity as a result of the trade - largely based upon exports of fish - which temporarily flourished between the East Neuk and northern Europe in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Both burghs were, in fact, in a sort of limbo in the late 18th century. There were those who suggested that a renewed, if modest, prosperity could be achieved by the introduction of a limited amount of commercial and manufacturing activity, but the majority of influential residents considered that this would detract from the 'genteel' character of the two burghs. Instead, both burghs sought to benefit from the increasing popularity of the seaside both as a place of retirement and as a watering-place. Accordingly both St. Andrews and Elie were already established as retirement centres and embryo resorts by the 1840's when the practice of taking seaside holidays rapidly became fashionable among wealthy mid-Victorians and particularly those from the large cities. The fishing burghs of the East Neuk had neither the housing accommodation nor the gentility of character considered so essential to a resort at that time, to be able to cater for the increasing number of tourists. The latter were content to flock to Elie and St. Andrews instead, and later to Crail, which had the requisite blend of a golf course, a good beach and a marked lack of industrial activity.

This would all seem to support the fact that tourism and the fishing industry were incompatible; why otherwise did tourism only develop in Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance after the decline of the local fisheries? The answer is, that the development of tourism in the fishing ports and the decline in the functional use of the latter, was largely a matter of coincidence. The essential point to be aware of is the fact that the visitors who stayed in Anstruther, for example, in the early 20th century were vastly different in character from those who had stayed in St. Andrews and Elie three decades before.

The late 19th century had witnessed a large increase in the number of people able to afford a holiday by the sea. St. Andrews and Elie had established their prosperity as resorts upon the visits of the wealthy upper middle classes - professional and business men, officers on leave from the services, colonial administrators, churchmen and their families, and the lesser gentry. By the 1890's, however, the lower middle classes and more prosperous working classes were able to afford a week at the seaside. Clerks and artisans, with their families thus joined the annual trek to the East Neuk coast in the summer months, not merely on day excursion trips but to seek accommodation for a few days or for a week, particularly during the annual trades holiday in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. This new class of visitors required cheaper and less grandiose quarters than the houses and apartments which were the basis of the accommodation offered in St. Andrews and Elie. Even if St. Andrews and Elie had really wanted to attract this sort of visitor, they were unable to provide sufficient accommodation to cater for them all. St. Andrews, with its numerous hotels, boarding houses and apartments, and houses to let, continued to concentrate upon attracting the wealthy golfer, but there was always a great demand for lodgings in working class homes;<sup>1</sup> and those who could not find cheap lodgings in Elie, Crail or St. Andrews, overflowed into the neighbouring burghs of Pittenweem, St. Monance and Anstruther.

It was this changing character of the visitor to the East Neuk and his different holiday requirements, which caused the tourist industry to develop in the fishing burghs. If the decline of the local fisheries was the most important consideration, then one would

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1. St. Andrews Citizen Dec 28th 1907.

have expected a greater number of visitors to Anstruther or Pittenweem as early as the 1870's; but visitors did not begin to arrive in large numbers until the very last years of the 19th century, and in ever-increasing numbers thereafter.<sup>1</sup> Earlier visitors to the East Neuk, while recognising the picturesque qualities of the fishing ports, paled at the spartan accommodation offered and at the insanitary conditions<sup>2</sup> which prevailed until the 20th century. The new character of visitor was less particular about the quality of his lodgings; some were even willing to sleep in tents. The holiday itself was as important as the surroundings in which it was spent, and as long as a burgh was next to the sea, such visitors were willing to accept poor beaches and inadequate amenities in general.

Far from being incompatible with a fishing industry, tourism dependent upon such visitors, could flourish side by side with curing stances and boat-filled harbours as at Scarborough, Yarmouth, Whitby and Lowestoft in England. The smell of fish was no inconvenience to the type of visitors attracted to Anstruther, St. Monance and Pittenweem; and it is still this lower end of the tourist market which these burghs cater for today. No hotels or boarding houses stretch along the sea front in these resorts; their visitors still prefer the cheapest accommodation available, which is today provided by the caravan parks situated on the braes outside the burghs. Amenities are still scanty and fishing boats still sail from the harbours. On the other hand St. Andrews still caters for the more wealthy visitors attracted by the famous golf course - which played such an important part in establishing the burgh's popularity as a resort - as well as the more modest holidaymaker attracted by the beaches, the sights and the golf. The divergence in the character of St. Andrews and, for example, Anstruther as resorts is as pronounced now as it was in 1900. Tourism extended into the East Neuk fishing burghs not because of the decline of the fisheries, but because of the need for a different type of resort to suit the requirements of a new type of holidaymaker.

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That the fishing industry did decline in the East Neuk in the latter half of the 19th century is incontestable. The basis of the Scottish fishing industry in the period from 1810 to 1914 was indubitably the herring. The number of barrels of herring cured in

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1. See above p.186 et seq.  
2. See above p.130-131

Scotland increased from 8,638 barrels in 1810 to 1,066,750 barrels in 1900.<sup>1</sup> Yet in the East Neuk, the herring catch declined from 105,805 crans in 1860 to 18,000 crans in 1913.<sup>2</sup> By the latter date only 1.87% of the value of all fish landed in Scotland came from the East Neuk, whilst 47.47% of all the fish were landed in Aberdeen.<sup>3</sup> Yet in the late 1850's, Anstruther had been second only to Wick, as a herring fishing centre.

The reason for the decline in importance of Anstruther as a fishing centre is not difficult to determine. Its brief golden age spanned the 25 years when the Firth of Forth was a prolific fishing ground, and the proximity of the East Neuk ports to this fishing ground guaranteed that the fishing industry expanded rapidly in Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance. By the mid 1860's, the productivity of the Forth herring fishing grounds was already in decline,<sup>4</sup> particularly in the summer months, and it was therefore inevitable that catches of fish landed in the district should decline, since the herring was the staple of the industry in the East Neuk as it was in all the other major fishing districts of Scotland.

Anstruther was not alone in experiencing a decline in its local herring fishery in the latter decades of the 19th century. Inshore fishing grounds all along the Scottish coast were declining in importance during the same period as the more productive deep sea fishing grounds became increasingly accessible as a result of the improved design of fishing craft. Thus Wick, too, which had dominated the herring curing industry in the first half of the 19th century, declined in importance after 1850, as the Aberdeenshire ports, which were more conveniently situated for the new fishing grounds, increased in importance.<sup>5</sup>

Nor was this change in the location of fishing grounds confined to the herring fishery. Cod fishing grounds, too, were up to 200 miles off the coast by the 1870's. Bigger boats were needed to render the long journey safer, more comfortable and more economical. It was for this reason that steam powered vessels began to be used for the white-fishing in the 1880's; and it was this, which guaranteed the eclipse of the East Neuk as a fishing centre. Aberdeen was the

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1. Fishery Board Reports 1810 and 1900
  2. Ibid 1860 and 1913
  3. Ibid 1911
  4. See above p.147 et seq.
  5. See above p.152



only East Scottish fishing port capable of safely harbouring the large steam vessels. As the importance of the steam vessels increased, so too did Aberdeen's importance as the centre for Scotland's white fishing industry. Other smaller harbours inevitably declined, since they were unable to compete with Aberdeen as a market for catches of cod, haddock, flat fish etc.

Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance were three ports to suffer in this way. Already having lost a significant amount of their fishing trade as a result of the decline in the herring drave, the harbours were now unable to compete with the prices offered at Aberdeen for catches of white fish and therefore landings of fish in the district declined still further. An attempt to counter the effect in the 1890's, by the formation locally of steam fishing companies was doomed to failure in the light of the independence of local fishermen and the inadequacy of East Neuk harbours to accommodate large steam fishing boats.

In short then, the East Neuk fishing industry declined for two reasons: firstly, the changed emphasis of the fisheries from inshore to deep-sea fishing grounds; and secondly, the inadequacy of the local harbours to accommodate the larger fishing boats of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. That the fishing industry survived was due to the independence and enterprise of the local fishermen who in their determination to adhere to their traditional way of life, were willing to travel to fishing grounds all around the British coast,<sup>1</sup> when they might perhaps, have been expected to emigrate to Aberdeen, Peterhead or Fraserburgh.

This same strong sense of tradition and independence has ensured the survival of the fishing industry in the East Neuk to this day. Anstruther, Pittenweem and St. Monance have never given themselves over wholeheartedly to the tourist industry, and a fishing fleet still operates from the district, albeit on a limited scale. Though neither Pittenweem nor Anstruther would any more claim to be a second Aberdeen, than St. Andrews would claim to be a second Blackpool, there is nevertheless a healthy bustle around the covered market at Pittenweem, when the catch is landed and shipped to market by the local fishermen's co-operative association, and perhaps it is fitting that here in the East Neuk, as a reminder of a more auspicious past, should there be found at Anstruther the Scottish Fisheries Museum.

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1. See above p.155 et seq.

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Ness Steam Fishing Co. BT2/2804  
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