

THE SCHOOLHOUSE, LOGIE by Craigo, Parish Logie Pert, Angus

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Introduction

The small house with clay-built walls, situated in the village of Logie in the parish of Logie Pert, Angus, seems to have had a long history of use, but as with many of these inconspicuous buildings, they are so commonly placed in the lives and histories of people, that no particular reference to them seemed necessary. It is only when more and more of these little houses are lost to decay and demolition that their value and the stories they inherit are suddenly appreciated. To tell the story of this little clay house in Logie then becomes a difficulty, because in the lack of historical documentation, a lot of the narrative has to be based on general assumptions. Nevertheless, what we know by now provides an interesting glimpse on the history of the Old Schoolhouse, its role in the community and the connections within the history of the parish.

The site and the house today

The house concerned is situated at the edge of the row of cottages that form the heart of the village of Logie. The building sits right on the edge of a steep ravine formed by the small burn that joins the North Esk River about 500 yards further north, at the site of the former Mills of Logie. The elevated ground provides a relatively dry situation in comparison to the lower ground right down by the river. To the south of the small building, the foundation remains of a bigger house are visible above ground, suggesting the site of an old Manse. A stone-carved *piscina* had been recovered from this site and is believed to have some connection with the old parish church of Logie.

The school building itself is a long, low-walled rectilinear structure aligned northeast-southwest and consists of three rooms. The main space is taken up by the classroom with two smaller rooms added at the back, most likely to have accommodated the teacher. The main entrance is on the gable side facing east-northeast and a backdoor leads out from the small room in the west. The hipped roof now covered with modern slates seems to re-evoked the shape of the old thatched roof; the stack for the thatch

still visible at the chimney. A porch and two small annexed rooms have been added in front of the main entrance at a later stage, proving of poor construction and architectural detailing. The connection of the porch roof with the main roof proved to be fatal for the north-eastern clay wall because it allowed water to percolate between old house and new extension.

The walls of the house are mainly built of dark red clay, apart from later repair in brick and cement. The clay must have come from the immediate area, providing a very moist and clay-rich mixture that was not mixed with sand for better load-bearing capacities but with small pebbles, best visible on the north-western façade. Straw was added to the clay mixture to improve elasticity and insulation properties. The clay walls were founded on boulder masonry, probably built with lime mortar, for stability and to stop rising dampness.

The building was abandoned at least fourteen years ago and the neglect is obvious by the damages in the walls and wooden floors. However, since the relatively modern roofs still provides an effective cover, the overall fabric of the house seems in reasonable state.

Beside the rather crumble and humble impression the house gives today, the history of it and the village it was built in gives a little insight into life in post-medieval Angus.

The parish of Logie – the Old Church and Old Manse

The parish of Logie-Pert did not genuinely grow together as such, but was formed by a union of parishes, proposed in 1645, but not ratified by parliament until 1661 (3rd Stat. Acc. 1977, 253). The old parish of Logie seems to date back at least to the 13th century, with the church at Logie being dedicated to St. Martin in 1243 (ibid). A register of ministers from 1574 called it Logie-Montrose (ibid) and the position of the church on the southern banks of the North Esk River is depicted on one of the earliest maps of this region (Edward 1678).

The eastern gable wall of this small sacred building still features three lancet windows, which are apparently typical for the 13th century marking the beginning of the first pointed period in Scottish church architecture (Muir 1861, 47). The Old Church at Logie represents the type of a long unequal triplet of detached lancets, each with a separate rear-arch and was mentioned as a primary example in Muir's standard work on the characteristics of Scottish church architecture (ibid). However, these

windows have been assigned as of 15th/16th century date by different research (information Historic Scotland). The church had been altered in late-medieval times, probably in the 15th/16th century, by the insertion of windows on the southern side and an aumbry of a sacrament house near the NW corner and was further changed by rebuilding of the west wall and portal in 1857 (Salter 1994, 114). Despite these alterations it was listed as a category B building (HB Number 13739) together with the graveyard and its enclosure on June 11, 1971 (information Historic Scotland).

The pear-shape of the enclosure and the dedication to St. Martin as a typical saint of the early Christian Church might suggest an earlier origin for this ecclesial site than 13th century. A spring on the grounds of the church was believed to have cured sores but had dried out by the 19th century (New Stat. Acc. 1845, 264), probably in relation to the 'extensive and successive drainage' of the fields (ibid, 266). This spring could well indicate an earlier place of worship, perhaps even for pre-Christian times. The peculiar situation on a low rise close to the river North Esk and its floodplain could be a typical situation of an Early Christian site, too. It is this situation of the Old Church that gave the name to the parish, since the common word 'Logie' has probably derived from the Gaelic term for flat or low situation (ibid, 263).

The Old Church at Logie is now in a ruinous state with the roof lost and the stone work open to the elements. It is difficult to establish its date of abandonment, because it probably remained in use after the reunion of the parishes of Logie and Pert. It has been suggested, that the church was given up after the new parish church was built in Logie Pert in 1775, at a position exactly central of the new combined parishes (ibid, 268). However, Rev. Thomas Hill writing in January 1835 (ibid) complains about the restricted space at this church becoming insufficient for the size of the increasing population. The alteration of the old church at Logie from 1857 would support the idea that because of the high numbers of worshippers the old church was still used and acted perhaps as an overflow for the newly built one in Logie Pert. A map from about that period (Knox 1850) yet describes Logie church as 'Old Kirk of Logie' and terms the Manse at Logie village as old, too.

These medieval parish churches such as the one in Logie were rarely impressive buildings, in spite or perhaps because of the architectural grandeur of the abbeys and monasteries (Lindsay 1960, 12). The parish churches were usually provided by the feudal lord on its own land together with a Manse and a plot of land of about 120

acres, the so-called 'Glebe' (ibid). The minister would usually be allowed a teint, too, that is a tenth of the annual produce of the parish to support his living. It seems most likely that this had also been the case at Logie, although there is no Manse building in direct proximity of the church.

The nearest Manse and the only one depicted on old maps is situated about half a mile west of the church, and the ruins of this buildings are to be found on the site of the Old Schoolhouse, with which this report is concerned with. It seems peculiar that the Manse is that distant away form the church, but perhaps old field boundaries or existing tenures allowed for no closer site. There is not much further information about this Manse, but from old photographs taken in the 1860s a building is shown of probable 17th to 18th century date. The ruins now to be found are almost certainly the remains of this post-medieval structure, but given the age of Logie Church, much older foundations of a Manse could be incorporated into the later building or are still underlying the more recent foundations.

The earliest acknowledgement of a Manse at roughly this position dates back to the 1750s and could well describe the building seen on the 19th century photograph (Ainslie 1794). In contrast to the church, it is most likely that the Manse lost its function and changed hands in course of the erection of the new church in Logie Pert with the minister moving to there into the newly built Manse of 1776 (New Stat. Acc. 1845, 268). The Old Statistical Account notes that at the end of the 18th century, and hence definitely after 1776, a lady and her maid-servant resided in the Old Manse of Logie during the summer, but gives no further information (1793, 39). The mentioned photograph from the 1860s demonstrates that the building was lived in at least for almost another hundred years after it had gone out of use as a Manse and that demolition must have occurred later than the middle of the 19th cent, perhaps even more recent.

The Mills at Logie

Along the southern side of the North Esk River quite a few mills seem to have been established by the middle of the 18th century. For February 1791, the figure of 999 workers (469 men and 530 women) is given as being employed at the bleachfields in the district of Logie (Old Stat. Acc. 1793, 39). The closest to the site concerned are

the Mills at Craigo and Logie itself. Craigo Mill lays about 1 mile upstream from Logie Mill, which itself is just half a mile north of the village, right down by the river. It is difficult to state if the village existed before the mill, because the old maps seemed not very precise or concerned with the depiction of small-scale houses. The only dwelling site recorded in this area is the main farm of the estate, situated close to the Old Church up to the present day and called 'Mains of Logie'. Its earliest map depiction was found for the 1750s (Ainslie 1794).

As far as the two mills are concerned, they are recorded on the maps from Ainslie and Thomson (1820), for the end of the 18th century and the Old Statistical Account confirms their establishment by the 1760s (1793, 41). There were bleachfields at Logie for thread and for cloth at Craigo. The bleaching business at Logie seemed very successful, employing 40 people, including men, women and boys (ibid, 41). Furthermore, there is also a meal and barley mill and a thread beating mill at Logie. The probably earliest business there was set up at around 1750, when a snuff mill was erected. It seems to have flourished until the end of the 18th century until Montrose port lost its right to import tobacco and the business declined considerably, employing only one person by then. Craigo Mill seems to have been a more diverse enterprise with a meal grinding mill, a flax mill, a waulking mill, a dyehouse, a mill for cleaning yarn for duck manufacture and brown sheeting, and machinery for beating coarse thread. Altogether, this provided work for about 20 people (ibid, 42).

The notice that the master bleacher resided on site at Logie with his family could indicate that not only the foreman but perhaps the unskilled labourer, too, were staying in close proximity. It is most likely that either the proprietor of the estate or the company, namely from Montrose, who had the fields and mill in tack from the estate owner provided housing for the workers. The Old Statistical Account notes that the rent for the manufactures was 'extremely moderate' and 'only a good deal has been laid out on proper houses, machinery, etc.' (1793, 42). This short note could hint towards the origin of the little village at Logie. The New Statistical Account mentions the first banks of the parish at each of the mills, 'kept expressively for accommodation of the people' (1845, 269). Unfortunately, it could not be confirmed, if the bank was situated right by the mills, near the Old Manse or in Logie village. Perhaps it was set up in the stone-built house south of the row of cottages, now situated south of the modern railway line.

By 1835 the manufactures at Logie employed up to 50 people from the age of 10 onwards (ibid, 267). The mills at Craigo had grown even more, employing now 130 to 150 people, and both mills are regarded as under excellent management. The Rev. Thomas Hill, author of the Account, makes special notice of the ‘great attention that is paid to the health, morals, and education of those employed at them’ (ibid, 268). Further in his description he mentions two unendowed schools ‘recently built one at each of the mills’ (ibid). There even seems to have been a small library at Logie Mill, supplying religious and instructive books (ibid, 269). This is one of the few hints towards the establishment of a schoolhouse at Logie that is certainly identical with the Old Schoolhouse building.

The Third Statistical Account makes no mention of the Mill at Logie, which hence must have fallen out of use before the 1950’s. But the Jute Mill in Craigo was still employing 100 men and 100 women in the 1950s and 1960s. Those lived in the small village of Craigo and the rents were apparently lower than for the Council houses, and 50% of the houses at Craigo were mill-owned (ibid, 255).

The village

The row of cottages beside the Old Schoolhouse first appears on the first one-inch OS map from 1921-1930. However, a small community must have been resident here before that date, as photographs from around 1900 confirm. They depict well built cottages, a row on each side of the straight street leading down to the mills. Even a small shop for daily supplies was established, then owned by John Dutch. This shop was in the hands of the Dutch family till the shop was closed in recent years. The shop was no more than an extension to the cottage named ‘Rambler Cottage’ which was probably lived in by the Dutch family, too. The cottage beside this one to the North is still known as ‘Spare Penny Cottage’ and the cottage on the other side of the road, opposite the shop, was called ‘Inverness Cottage’. All of them are still standing and lived in; the only cottage that seems to have been lost is the one adjacent to Inverness Cottage on the North side. It is now reduced to its foundations and used as rockery garden.

The date of origin for the village could not be established, but the early map from the end of the 18th century names the plot of land south of Logie Mills 'Coteteton of Logie' (Thomson 1820). These cottages were most likely associated with the mills and probably the houses for the workers. The road layout of the map seems to locate them further south than today's row of cottages near the Old Schoolhouse. Indeed the first one-inch OS map (1921-1930) shows accumulated buildings southwest of the modern railway line and depicts the row of cottages on the north-eastern side of it. Therefore it has to be presumed that 'Cotton of Logie' is identical with the few houses found today in front of the railway line, when approaching Logie from the minor south-western road. The village of Logie, probably once one community with houses spread over the whole plot, is now separated by the rail track dividing it into a scatter of houses to the south of it and the row of cottages along the minor road with the Old Schoolhouse to its north.

The current access to the village is restricted by this train line, which cuts across the fields just south of the village and in close proximity to the Old Manse. This railway line, built in the middle of the 19th century seems to have changed the road layout and access to Logie quite remarkably. The old maps before the building of the rail track present a triangular road junction with the main access road splitting in a fork-like manner at the 'Cotton of Logie'-houses; one leading of to the Mains of Logie farm and the old church and the other to the Manse and the mills. Those two forking roads were connected by a short stretch of road leading off straight from the Manse, providing a shortcut from there to the road to the church. This street layout forms the mentioned triangle and confirms a close relation between Manse and church. The railway was built cutting through the fork junction, blocking direct access to the Manse. The former shortcut became the road proper and was now the only access road connecting mills, Manse, village, Mains and Church. This stretch of straight road leading roughly north-east to south-west formed the axis to which the row of cottages was orientated. It is indeed interesting that the plot boundaries of the cottages are all orientated in a right angle to this road. The Manse and the Old Schoolhouse are both set at an odd angle to this road and their general layout would suggest, they followed an older, now lost outline of plots and road line. This could indicate that the cottages are of a later date than Schoolhouse and Manse and also denotes a probable connection between the two of them.

Not much is known about the people living in the village of Logie. The only document found dates to 1960, confirming that a James Lees Dutch, residing in Rambler Cottage and the then merchant in the village store, acquired the Rambler, Spare Penny and Inverness cottages and the ground on which they stood from Sir Ewan George MacPhearson Grant of Ballindalloch (Land Registry, Search Sheet No. 30864, 141-365, County Angus,). He later sold part of the land to the tenants in the Inverness Cottage and other people from as far as Stirling (ibid).

The history of the Old Schoolhouse

There is not much detailed information to be gathered for this little schoolhouse building in Logie village beside the vague notice from the New Statistical Account regarding the unendowed school at the mill and the small library (1845, 268f). However, it seems most likely that the schoolhouse was erected in connection with the mills to educate the worker's children and the Account written in 1835 describes this school as being recently established. It is debatable whether the landowner from Craigo estate or the Montrose company who rented the mills provided for the school, but there seems to be a connection between the school and the Manse, which were in close proximity to one another and at the same orientation. This could suggest that perhaps at least at the early days of the school the minister was also in charge of the teaching. Since no date for the erection of the schoolhouse could be found, it can be assumed that it was built sometimes after the establishment of the mills after the 1760s. However, this coincides with the new church and Manse being built at Logie Pert, more central to the parish and the minister moving to there, too. Perhaps the Old Manse was then turned into the Schoolmaster's house?

The clay construction of the house suggests a relatively early date for its erection and indicates a simple building method, too. Although relatively quickly and cost-effectively built, the house would have provided very good insulation properties and the construction was perfectly feasible for a low one-storey house (Walker 1977, 61). The fact that it is still standing today indicates the durability of clay walls, as long as they are looked after. The problems occurring with the construction now have only derived from unsuitable detailing of the later added features and the neglect it had suffered from in recent years after abandonment.

It is not clear at what time the school function of the building became redundant. But it can be presumed that like everywhere in the country, the cloth industry declined and increasing automated production methods made many workers redundant. However as mentioned above, the mill at Craigo still seems to have flourished after the war (New Statistical Account 1977, 255), although it is out of use by now, too. The Montrose directory almanac records a crisis at Logie mills for the year 1873, caused by work disruption due to flooding and conflict about worker's wages. The schoolhouse was still occupied at 1910, although its function is unclear, but a photograph from that time shows smoke reeking out of the chimney.

The next information available is that the schoolhouse was used a church for Free Church services in 1929 (Montrose directory almanac). The parish of Logie Pert had been affected by the Disruption of the Church by 1843, resulting in the formation of the local Free Church in 1844, interestingly under the former Parish minister (3rd Stat. Acc. 1977, 255). In 1900 the Free Church united with the United Presbyterian Church to become the United Free Church. A minority did not go into the union and continue today as the Free Church of Scotland. In October 1929 the United Free Church united with the Established Church (the Church of Scotland). A minority didn't go into that union and continue today as the United Free Church. The occupation of the schoolhouse by a church congregation may well link to one of these dates, when a schism resulted in one faction requiring a new place to worship. The 1929 reference to the schoolhouse being used by the Free Church could refer to either the United Free Church or the Free Church of Scotland, as the United Free Church did not merge with the Church of Scotland until October of that year.

The Free Church (United Free Church post 1900) congregation in Logie acquired a church at St. Martin's Den, just at the boundary of the parish towards Montrose, and the building is recorded as belonging to the United Free Church on the map from the end of the 19th century (Bartholomew 1912). Today it is been used as a garage.

The next reference to the schoolhouse is the Montrose directory almanac (1943) that notes that church meetings of the firm Free Church members (Free Church of Scotland?) were held in Logie Hall, the previous school (?). It seem that the use of the building as a school had gone by that time and the building had been turned into the

village hall (though there is reference to a church hall, footings of which are still visible, to the SE of the row of cottages adjacent the schoolhouse).

By the mid twentieth century it is known that the schoolhouse was used by the United Free Church as the sign on the front of the porch notes this. The porch extension, cement harl and new roof date from the second half of the twentieth century, most likely the 1950s or early 1960s.

It is not entirely clear when the building ceased to be used for services, but by 1991, the schoolhouse was formally abandoned and occupancy handed back to the owners, Ballindalloch Estate. The church furniture was removed in the 1990s, though one pew was salvaged by the neighbour, Mr Maltman, who has restored it in memory of his former neighbour Miss Dutch. The pew is now located in the garden ground across the road from the schoolhouse. An attempt to steal the bell over the porch sometime since 1991 has resulted it being seriously damaged. There is a suggestion that the missing part of the bell was thrown over the bank of the burn and is still there, which, if found, may allow for this element of the building to be restored.

Permission to build a new dwelling on the site of the schoolhouse was granted which resulted in The National Trust for Scotland's interest in acquiring the building for repair under their Little Houses Improvement Scheme. The NTS acquired the building in 2005 and Historic Scotland have since listed the building Category 'A'.

Archaeological sites in close vicinity

Linear cropmarks had been identified about half a mile south of the site of the Old Schoolhouse. After preliminary excavation they were thought to be of Roman origin by none other than Prof. J. K. St Joseph (1973, 226). More extensive excavation in the following years however revealed that the linear crop-mark was a drainage ditch of relatively recent date and not a Roman temporary camp (RCAHMS 1978, 187).

The most interesting site of antiquity was found about 2 miles west of the village of Logie, namely three tumuli, two of them excavated in the 18th century. One produced a cists burial with a human skeleton, as far as the description is to be understood (Old Stat. Acc. 1793, 51). The second one had contained four skeletons and a cremation

burial. The bones were considered to have belonged to a race of giants, because of their apparently large size (ibid, 52). A bangle, probably made of cannel coal or shale was found close-by. The third and biggest tumulus remains untouched. At the time of the excavation these mounds were interpreted to be of Viking or ‘Danish’ origin (ibid), but they were most likely Bronze Age burial mounds and the overestimation of the size of the bones is probably due to the inexperience with human skeletal remains at the time of the excavation (F. Hunter, pers. comm.).

Conclusion

The clay-built schoolhouse (later church) might not provide us with much detail about its history, but its setting within the village and the connection with the mills allows an insight into community life from the 18th century onwards. Its rather unspectacular appearance disguises its importance regarding its construction. Clay buildings have been very common in medieval and post-medieval Scotland and evidence for different, highly regional types of constructions is abundant (Walker et al. 1996). Angus however is not a centre for clay architecture (Walker 1977, 39) which makes the conservation of the clay-built schoolhouse at Logie even more important. It might be one of the few remaining buildings of a by-gone construction type. Although evidence for clay structures is sparse in Angus now, it can be assumed that many such buildings had existed into post-medieval times (ibid), and perhaps still do, since the rendered façade of the Old Schoolhouse at Logie does not give away information about its wall construction at first. Maybe more clay-built houses are lurking in Angus, worth further investigation and definitely conservation.

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