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MDCCCLV.

CRIECH.

Crech—Creich—Creigh.

'The paroch of Creich in Sutherland is twenty four miles long from east to west, Pulrossie being the eastern and Kenlochailse the western extremities therof. It is not over a mile in breadth in most parts, but in the Highland parts of it there are straths and outskirts stricking up from the body. It runs for fourteen miles on the north side of an arm of the German Ocean commonly called in the maps the Firth of Tayn, beginning at Pulrossie near Portnaculter *alias* Mikle Ferry, and so west to Innerchasley near Castlemearn where the tyde ends.' 'Sutherland,' says Sir Robert Gordon, 'is divyded from the province of Rosse by the river Port-ne-couter or Tayn), by the water of Oikell, and by the hight of Glenmuck; so that Casley, Kean Logh Eilsh. and all the lands lying upon that river of Casley evin unto Aldi-Ne-Geale-Gigh and tlie Laydmore in Assint, and whatsoever els that payeth tithes to the parish of Creigh, apperteyneth all to the province of Southerland.' The whole parish is hilly, and is watered by the rivers Casley and Shin.

At the erection of the chapter of Cathanes by Bishop Gilbert between 1223 and 1245 the church of Crech with its fruits and the fourth of the teinds of Durnach were assigned as the benefice of the precentor. The subsequent history of the chantry has been given above. In 562 Robert Stewart chanter of Caithnes, with the consent of the bishop and chapter, leased for nineteen years to John earl of Suthirland, Helenor countess of Arroll his wife, and their heirs, his benefice of the chantry, including the parsonage of Creich, namely, the teindsheaves of the parish, an the vicarage or small teinds (inclusive of the teinds of the salmon fishings), and his quarter of Dornoch with the glebe and manse there, for the yearly payment of £102 Scots, from which was deducted the fee of the curate of Creich and the staller's fee in Dornoch.

The church (probably dedicated to a saint corruptly named Saint Teavneck) appears to have always stood on the site of the present church at Criech on the north shore of the Dornoch Firth, 9 miles from the east and about 30 from the west end of the parish. It was probably repaired by Sir Robert Gordon in 1619, when he 'interprysed the building and repairing of the parish churches of Southerland, being almost all ruynous to the ground.' It was rebuilt in 1790, and has been since repaired.

There were burying-grounds and apparently chapels at Knockan (or Crockan) and Achness, 'at the first of which (1726) they bury for ordinary.'

The yearly value of the chantry of Cathanes early in the sixteenth century is given in the Libellus Taxationum at £53, 6s. 8d., and about the same period it was taxed to the amount of £16, 10s. 3d. Between 1561 and 1566 its yearly value when leased was, as we have seen, £102. In 1569 Donald Logane 'reidar in the Irsche toung' at Creich had for his stipend £21, and in 1574 he had £14 and the kirklands.

Between the years 1203 and 1214 Hugh Freskyn granted to Master Gilbert archdeacon of Moray, to his heirs of the same family whom he might choose to name, and to their heirs, along with his lands of Scelbol, the lands of Fernebutlyn (Ferenbenthlin, Ferinbeildin, Ferrinbusky, Ferrincoskarie, Chilis, Slishchelis) and Innerchyn (Innerchen, Innerschyn, Invershin), and all his land of Suthyrlan towards the west lying between those lands and the bounds of Ros. This grant, which apparently included the entire parish of Criech, was confirmed before 1214 by King William the Lion, and before 1222 by William lord of Suthyrlan the son and heir of the deceased Hugh Freskyn. Before 1235 or in that year Gilbert the archdeacon, afterwards bishop of Cathanes, granted the same lands in heritage to his brother Richard. In 1235 King Alexander II. confirmed the grant, the lands to be held of the heirs of Hugh Freskyn (afterwards earls of Sutherland) according to the charter of Hugh Freskyn, the bishop's charter to Richard, and King William's confirmation, saving the king's service. In 1308 King Robert Bruce, besides restoring to William earl of Ross his own lands, caused him to be infeft in the land of Dingwal, and also in the land of Ferncroskry (Ferncrosker, Farncroseen) in the earldom of Suthyrlan, a grant apparently including the whole parish. In 1321 or 1322 King Robert seems to have confirmed the grant. The lands of the parish, described in general terms as those of Braychat (or Ferrincoskarie) and Strathoykil, were subsequently held by William earl of Ross the grandson of the former, by Paul M^cTyre, who appears in record from 1350 to 1372, by the crown between the years 1427 and 1431, and apparently also by the lords of the Isles as earls of Ross from 1431 till their final forfeiture in 1476.

The lands of Innerchyn, included in the above grants and confirmations between the years 1203 and 1235, were probably included also in the arrangement made in 1330 between Kenneth earl of Suthyrlan and Reginald of Moray of Culbyn (the descendant of Richard of Moray), and in the retour of the lands of Skelbo in 1518 in favour of Andrew Kynnard of that ilk (a descendant of the same Richard. In 1525 John the son and heir of the deceased Andrew Kynnard of that ilk was seised in the lands and lordship of Skelbo, including the lands of Auchindowecht and of Innirschyn with the fishings. The subsequent history of the lands of Innerschine and Awchindowich with the fishing of the water and 'lyn' is included in that of the barony of Skelbo.

In 1275, as we have seen, by an agreement between William earl of Suthyrlan and Archebald bishop of Cathanes, the lands of Miggeweth, Swerdisdale (or Swerdel), and Creych, with the fishing of the Bunnach (now Bonar) were among those ceded by the earl to the bishop. In 1430 King James I. granted to Nele Nelesoun, for his homage and for his service in the capture of his deceased brother Thomas Nelesoun a rebel, the lands of Creich, Gerloch, and others in the earldoms of Ross and Suthyrlan and sheriffdom of Innernys. In 1464 John of Yle, earl of Ross and lord of the Isles, granted to his brother Celestine of the Isles, and to his heirs by his wife Finvola the daughter of Lachlan Macgilleon of Dowart, with remainder to his heirs by any other wife, with reversion thereafter to the earl, the lands of Fernacoscreche, namely, Crechmor, Spanigidill, Davachcarry, Plodd, and Pulrossy, in the earldom of

Sutherland. In the same year King James III. confirmed the grant. In 1467 John earl of Sutherland was infeft (apparently on a crown precept) in the lands of Pulrossie and Spainzidell. In the rental of assumptions between 1561 and 1566 the bishop's lands of Soirdaill, Mygdail, and Lytill Creicht are entered as leased for the yearly payment of £20.

In 1472 a grant of the lands of Thorboll is witnessed by Hugh Poilson (*Pauli*), probably a descendant of Paul Mactyre and one of the family that held the lands of Creichmore. Sir John Poilson (probably of the same family) was, as we have seen, presented to the chantry of Cathanes in 1497, and was chanter in 1504. In 1515 Sir Donald of the Isles of Lochalch granted to Hector Monro of Foulis his fishing of Kelysakkell (the Kyles of Oikel, apparently the same as the Bunnach) in the sheriffdom of Innernys. In 1541 Margaret Ylis the wife of Alexander Ilis of Glengarry with the consent of her husband granted to Hector Monro of Fowlis the superiority of the lands of Creichmore and the fishing of Killisocheil. In the same year King James V. confirmed the grant. In 1545 there appears in record John Poilsone of Creichemoir, and in 1559 and 1567 Thomas Poilson of Creychmoir. In 1589 Master Hector Monro was served heir male and of entail to his father Robert Monro of Fowlis the elder in the superiority of the lands of Creichmor in Breachat, and the fishings of Kellisoquill both in salt water and in fresh, lying in the earldom of Ross and the barony of Fowlis. In 1608 Robert Monro was served heir male of entail and provision to his father Master Hector Monro of Foullis in the superiority of the same lands, lying in the barony of Fernicosky in Brachat in the earldom of Sutherland. In 1635 Hugh Lord Fraser of Lovat was served heir male to his father Symon Lord Fraser of Lovat in the superiority of Creichmoir, lying as before.

In 1525 Rore Murra of Spandaill appears as one of the bailies of the earl of Sutherland in giving seisin of the barony of Skelbo. In 1527 King James V. granted certain lands in Straithalladale to Gavin Murray the son of Roderic Murray of Spayngdale. In 1529 the same king granted to Alexander Murray the son of Rore Murray of Spangdale the fermes and dues of the same lands, which had been in the king's hands since 22 July 1527 by reason of the nonentry of the late Gavin Murray the brother of Alexander. In 1545 the same Alexander, styled of Begos (in Strathalladale), and William Murray of Spanzedaill, appear as burgesses of Dornoch. In 1546 two of the witnesses to a notarial summons were Gilbert Murray of Spangzedaill and Hugh Murray his son. Gilbert is said to have fallen at Pinkie in 1547. About the year 1550 mention is made of William Morray, the son of Caen Morray, one of the family of Pulrossie. In 1553 Walter Murray of Spanzedell sold to Gawin Murray his brother and to his heirs male, with remainder in succession to his brother Gilbert and his heirs male, to his brother Neil and his heirs male, to John Murray the son of the deceased John Murray in Auchcarry, and to Walter himself and his heirs whomsoever bearing the surname and arms of Murray, the lands of Spanzedell, Floid, Auchcarry, and Pulrosse, with the mill of Spanzedell, lying in the earldom of Sutherland and sheriffdom of Innernes. In the same year Queen Mary granted to Gawin Murray a crown charter of the lands. There appear in record in 1555 Alexander Suderland in Spanzedaell, in 1562 John Suderland or Hectorsone in

Acharrie and Alexander Suderland his brother german, in 1567 William Murray of Spanzedell, and in 1577 George Murray in Balliblair. In 1579 or previously John Murray of Spanziedaill granted in liferent to his wife Jonet Monro the daughter of the deceased George Monro of Daucharty, and in heritage to the heirs got between them, with reversion to John himself and his heirs, the lands of Polrossie and the lands of Floid, lying in the earldom of Sutherland and sheriffdom of Innernes. In 1579 King James VI. confirmed the grant. In 1599 George Morray was served heir to his father John Morray of Spainzedell in the lands of Spainzedell with the mill, Acharrie, Floid, and Pulrossie, in the lordship of Sutherland and sheriffdom of Innernes, of the old extent of £14, 13s. 4d. George Murray of Spanziedaill appears in 1613 as having or pretending a right to the lands of Farr, and in 1616 on an assise for the service of John earl of Sutherland as heir to his father John. In 1618 appears Walter Murray the son of the deceased John Murray of Spainziedaill, and apparently the brother of George.

From 1554 to 1579 John Gray of Kilmaly, who in that year sold the lands of Kilmaly to John earl of Sutherland (or exchanged them for Sordell), appears as John Gray of Swerdell (or Sordail). His son Gilbert Gray, chanter of Cathnes, and afterwards styled of Suardell, appears in 1577, 1579, and 1608. Among the sons of Gilbert was Robert Gray of Ospisdell, who appears in record in the year 1616.

In 1541 (20 April) Margaret Ylis the wife of Alexander His of Glengarry with the consent of her husband granted to Hector Monro of Fowlis the half of the lands and fishings of Fernecosky in Braycat, namely, the half of the lands of Inzeorane, Linsettcroy, Linsettmore, Altasbeg, Altasmore, and Achinzeis, with the half of the mill of Inzeorane. On the same day Hector Monro resigned the lands to King James V., who confirmed the charter of Margaret Ylis and gave Hector Monro a new grant of the same lands. On the same day Thomas Dingvale of Kildune resigned the (other) half of the same lands and fishings, which King James then granted to him anew. In 1541 (20 April-22 June) Thomas Dingwell, by a charter dated at Inzeorane, sold his half of the lands to George Monro of Dalcarty. On 22 June King James V. granted to George Monro a crown charter of the same half of Farnycosky. In 1552 Queen Mary granted to Hucheoun Monro, the brother german of Robert Monro of Fowlis, the nonentry and other dues of the half of the lands of Ferryncosque in Brachat between the waters of Schyn and Castnay (Casley), namely, the half of Inverren with the half of the mill, multures, and fishing, the half of Leynsidemore, the half of Leynsidécroy, the half of Altesbeg, the half of Altesmore, and the half of Auchnes with the half of its fishing, *in the earldom of Ros*, in the queen's hands since 'the redemptioun and lowsing tharof maid be Thomas Dingwell of Kildun furth of the handis of George Monro of Dalcarty.' In 1554 (4 March) the same queen granted to Thomas Dingwell of Kildun the dues of the same half of Farryncosquy in Braquhat since his redemption of the same from George Monro. On 5 March she granted to the same Thomas a letter of regress to the same lands, sold by him under reversion to George Monro of Dalcarty. In 1555 the same Thomas Dingwell sold his half of Farincosky to Duncan Bayne of Tulch, and in 1556 Queen Mary granted to Duncan Bayne a crown charter of the same. In 1563 Alexander Bane of Tullich granted his half of Ferrincosky and its

fishings to Robert Monro of Foulis (holder of the other half) in exchange for the lands of Wester Logy and certain lands in the burgh of Dingwell; and Queen Mary in the same year granted to each a crown charter of the lands exchanged. In 1577 Donald M^cAngus M^cAllister of Glengarrie was served heir to his granduncle Sir Donald Ylis of Lochelche in the half of the lands of Ferncosky, namely, Inveran, Leinset, Altesbeg, Altesmoir, and Achenis, in Brachate in the dukedom of Ross, of the old extent of 50 shillings. In 1589 Master Hector Monro was served heir male and of entail to his father Robert Monro of Fowlis the elder in the lands of Fernecoskie, namely, Innerane with the mill and salmon fishings, Lynsettcroy, Lynsettmoir, Altesbeg, Altesmoir, and Achiness with the salmon fishings—which lands with the superiority of Creichmoir and the fishings of Kellisoquill were of the old extent of £10. In 1608 Robert Monro was served heir male of entail and provision to his father Master Hector Monro of Foullis in the same lands of Ferincosky in Brachat, described as Innerane with the mill and the half of the salmon fishings of the Ness of the water of Schin, Linceatcroy, Linceatmoir, Altasbeg, Altasmoir, Innerald, and Achnes, with the half of the salmon fishing in the fresh water of Caslay and the 'lyn' of the same, with the woods, fishings, outsettis, and sheillingis of Glencaslay belonging to it, and with pasture, all lying in the barony of Ferincosky in Brachat in the earldom of Sutherland. In 1635 Hugh Lord Fraser of Lovat was served heir male to his father Symon Lord Fraser of Lovat in the same lands, described as in 1608.

In 1341 William Earl of Ross granted to Hugh of Ross his brother the lands of Strathochill with the fishing of Acheferne and Stogok. In 1350 (30 April) he appointed the same Hugh his heir, provided the king's consent were obtained, and on 18 May he ordered his bailie William Marschal (of Balnagown) to infeft Hugh in the same lands. In 1365 the same Hugh of Ross, lord of Fylorth, granted to his son-in-law Paul Mactyre, and to his wife Mariot of Graham the niece of Hugh, and to their heirs, with remainder to Paul's heirs by any other wife, and to his brothers and their lineal descendants, the lands of Tutumtarvok, Turnok, and others in Strathokel. In 1384 William Ross (of Balnagown) appears to have been infeft in the lands of Inverchasly. In 1430 King James I. granted to Neil Nelesoun, for his homage and for his service in the capture of his deceased brother Thomas Nelesoun, certain lands in Ross and Sutherland, including Daane, Tittumtarwauch, Lanchort, and Drinayde, partly in this parish. In 1475, in a marriage contract between the families of Balnagovin and Lochboy, John Ross of Balnagovin and Alexander his son and apparent heir became bound in case of their nonfulfilment of the contract to pay to Hector M^cGillane of Lochboy the sum of 600 marks Scots, until payment of which it was agreed that Hector or his heirs should hold the 22 marklands of Strathochell. In 1490 King James V., as tutor and governor of his brother James duke of Ross, granted to David Ross the nephew and apparent heir of John Ross of Balnagovn the lands of the lordship of Balnagovn, including Strathochell and Hospitall, with the mills, brewhouses, tenants, and tenandries, resigned by John Ross and reserving the liferent to him. In 1528 King James V. granted to William Ros, the brother of the deceased Walter Ros of Ballangoune, the ward, relief, and nonentry of the three marklands of Crockkane, the 7 marklands of Cullace, and the 5 marklands of Pellavelnie, and other lands in Strathoikel, in the king's hands by reason of nonentry since the decease of David

Ros of Ballangoune, for the yearly payment of 20 marks to James earl of Murray or any other having the ward and relief of the lands. In 1576 King James VI. granted in heritage to George Ros the son and apparent heir of Alexander Ros of Balnagowne, and to Marjory Campbell his wife, with remainder to George's heirs whomsoever, certain lands in the barony of Balnagowne, including the half davach of Innercaslay with the salmon fishing, formerly belonging to Alexander in liferent and to George in heritage, resigned by them, and to be held for the services formerly due. In 1578 the lands and barony of Strathokell with the pertinents, namely, Innercaslay with the fishing of the same called the Screlak, the half of the Tullen (or Cullen) of Caslaw, Glencaslaw, Glenmwke, lie Crokane, Tutentarroch, the two Turnochis with the fishing of Essokell, Killochel, Drumleth (or Drumloch), the lands of Amat, Langwell with the fishing of the water of Enoch, Dalmachtane, and lie Downe (most of which lie north of the Oikel), and certain lands in Ross, formerly belonging in heritage to Alexander Ros of Balnagowne and George Ros his son and apparent heir, and held by them of the bishop of Ros and others, were in defect of movable goods appraised in favour of James Scrymgeour of Duddop constable of Dundie for the sum of £10,000 as principal and the sum of £500, 6s. 8d. as the fee of the appraising sheriffs, to be held of the crown for the services formerly due. In 1582 James Scrymgeour resigned the lands, which were then granted by King James VI. to George Ros of Balnagowin and the male heirs of his body, with remainder to his male heirs whomsoever. In 1584 George Ros apparent of Balnagoun sold to Hugh Munro of Asschyn and his heirs the town and lands of the davach of Innercaslaw with Glenmwk, Stronroschir with the coble fishing called Swlach, Rossach with the salmon fishing of the 'lyn', and the 'lynes' of Innercaslaw, in the barony of Strahokell; and in special warrandice of the same certain lands in Stracharroun in Ross. In 1614 John earl of Sutherland was served heir to his father Earl Alexander in the lands of Strathokell, Invercaslay with the fishing called lie Sulak, the half of the Lyn of Caslay, Glencaslay, Glenmuck, Knockan, Tutumtreach with the fishings, the two lie Turnakis with the fishing of Eshokell, Kendlochalsch, Drumvaich, and certain lands in Ross, together of the old extent of £150. In 1642 Robert Lord Ross of Halkheid and Molvill was served heir to Lord William his brother german in the lands of Strathokell, namely, Auchnafairne and Sloggak, the lands of Innerchasley, with the fishing called Soulak, half the salmon fishing of the Lin of Chasley, the lands of Glenchasley and Glenvaik, the lands of Hospistill, the lands of Knokan, the lands of Tuttintarroch with the salmon fishing, mill, and multures, the lands of the Tua Turnakis with the salmon fishing of Eschokell, the lands of Kendlochalshe, the lands of Drumvaiche, Amott, Langwall, with the salmon fishing, Enak, Dalnauchtane, and Doun. In 1657 David Ros of Belnagowin was served heir male to his father David Ros of Belnagowin in the same lands of Straithhochell, of which the lands of Dalvanachtan and Downe extended to 6 davachs, 4 davachs 'lying benorth' the water of Oickell in the sheriffdom of Sutherland, and 2 davachs on the south of the same in the sheriffdom of Ros and of old in the sheriffdom of Innernes.

In 1630 there was a yearly fair held at Creigh named Saint Teavneck's fair. The Kyle markets are now held at Bonar Bridge in July, August, and September.

In the parish are the sites or remains of several of those circular buildings known as Picts' houses, built of dry stones and open at the top.

Dun-Criech on a hill near the church is a vitrified fort, locally believed to have been built by Paid Mactyre.

Near by the place where the river (Shin) empties itself in the sea is an old ruinous castle called the castle of Innershin, built by one of the family of Duffus of the surname of Sutherland, to whom Innershin belongs.

There were castles also at Pulrossie and Ospisdale.

Near the church in 1790 stood an obelisk about 8 feet high, bearing the figure of the cross, and supposed to mark the grave of a Danish chief.

The north bank of the Oikel (Eckialdsbacka) has been the scene of numerous battles, of which its tumuli still bear evidence, and among which is recorded a battle in the ninth century between Sigurd Earl of Orkney and a Scottish earl named Melbrigd, in which Sigurd was slain. Sigurd was buried at Eckialdsbacka. There are on record also the battle of Tutumtarvach fought between Macleod of Lewis and the men of Sutherland and Strathaver between the years 1400 and 1430; the battle of Aldycharrish or Doricha in 1479 or 1487 between the Rosses of Balnagown and the Mackays aided by the men of the earl of Sutherland; and the battle of Mackeil between the master of Sutherland and the Mackays of Strathnaver.

'There is a place in Southerland besyd Spainzidell, wher the inhabitants doe tak a kynd of fish called sandells efter this maner. At hight streames and springs in summer, when the sea is at a low eb, their doth appeir in the firth of Port-ne-Couter some banks or bedds of sand at these tymes the commoun sort of the inhabitants doe conveen on horsbak to the number of six or seaven hundred people, and so doe swim towards these sands; and, when they doe aryve vpon these bedds of sand, incontinent they run their horses at full speed, stryveing who can first aryve at the fishing place, wher they doe indevoar with all dilligence to tak these sandeills, not unlyk vnto sprats, whereof they tak such abundance dureing some few dayes that it sufficeth them for provision of that kynd of fish dureing the Lent and the most pairt of the yeir following.'