

## **ANDREW BUIST (1727-1815) TENANT FARMER, HIS FAMILY AND HIS SON HENRY; THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FARMING IN ABDIE, MARKINCH, STRATHMIGLO AND ABERNETHY PARISHES, FIFE**

**By their descendent, Michael T. Tracy-Fifth Great Grandson of Andrew Buist**

Andrew Buist, a tenant farmer from Fife, typified the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit in Scottish farming in the mid-18th century. Andrew Buist farmed the estates of Woodhead, Cowden and Craigmill in Abdie Parish, Fife and would later relocate to Markinch Parish, Fife. He like many other tenant farmers in lowland Scotland would make contributions to the improvements in agriculture. His son Henry Buist (1762-1822) was tenant farmer of East Mill, Strathmiglo Parish, Fife and Pittuncarty, Abernethy Parish, Fife. He would live through the height of the Scottish Enlightenment when new science was being brought to bear on Scottish agriculture and would play a part in those exciting changes.

### **ANDREW BUIST (1727-1815)**

The future tenant farmer of Abdie and Markinch Parishes, Fife was born twenty years after the Treaty of Union was adopted by Scotland. Andrew Buist was born in June of 1727 at Lochmilne (Lochmill), Abdie Parish, Fife. According to the 1853-1855 Ordinance Survey Name Books for Fife: "Lochmill is about 2 ¾ miles west by south of the village of Lindores. A farmhouse two stories high with suitable offices and thrashing mill attached all in excellent condition...The thrashing mill was formally a corn mill, hence the name."<sup>1</sup>



*Fig.1. Lochmill with old steadings on right, Abdie Parish, Fife, Birthplace of Andrew Buist, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

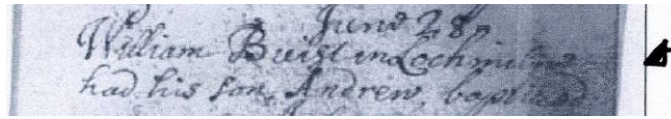
### **Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland**

The 1707 Union with England had benefited the Scottish economy by opening up trade markets not only to England but to the protected English colonies. Many Scots landowners would become wealthy in the British Empire and some would use this wealth to improve their land. From the middle of the century the age of Enlightenment saw the application of new scientific method to agriculture which resulted in improvements in crop production and led to

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance Survey Name Books, Fife & Kinross Ordinance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855. Volume 49 (OS1/13/49/54) Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

new crops being planted. By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a feudal economy based on the run-rig had been transformed in Lowland Scotland into a productive market economy.

Many of Scotland's villages did not exist during Andrew Buist's early youth. However he would live to see the new settlements based on small clusters of homes and steadings occupied by tenants and in some cases the farm workers employed by them who together worked the land.



*Fig. 1. Andrew Buist Baptismal Record, 28 June 1727, Abdie Parish Records, Crown Copyright*



*Fig. 2. Abdie Parish Church in Abdie, Fife where (Andrew Buist was baptized and married here.) It is now a ruin. Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

During the time that Buist was growing up the economy of Scotland was undergoing a remarkable improvement. Previous to this period most of the farms had either been let without leases, or on very short tenure of two or four years which starved all long term enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Now however, as they came into the laird's hands, several mailings or small tenancies were combined into one farm and let to 'substantial' tenants, who came under agreement, with a lease of nineteen years, to carry out intelligent modes of agriculture with regard to liming, ploughing, sowing, the use of artificial grasses, and the due rotation of crops.<sup>2</sup>

### Early Life

Andrew Buist was baptized on Saturday, 28 June 1727 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>3</sup> He met and married Isabel Thomson on Monday, 29 November 1745 at Abdie Parish, Scotland.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graham Henry Grey. *The Social Life of Scotland in the eighteenth century*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1901 p.201

<sup>2</sup> Graham Henry Grey. *The Social Life of Scotland in the eighteenth century*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1901 pp 201-02

<sup>3</sup> Baptismal Record of Andrew Buist, 28 June 1727, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0253

<sup>4</sup> Marriage Record of Andrew Buist, 29 November 1745, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0471

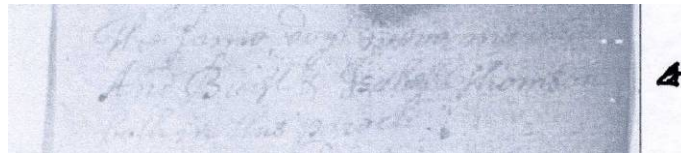


Fig. 3. Marriage Record of Andrew Buist, 29 November 1745, Abdie Parish Records, Crown Copyright

They had eight children: Rachel, William, George, Cecile, Alexander, Andrew, John and Isobel. The family lived in Woodhead, Cowden, Craigmill, Lumquhat, and finally in the Grange of Lindores all in Abdie, Fife. A tenant farmer as Andrew Buist was, he also did farm work alongside of his workers. His grandson, Henry Buist (1771-1865) would remember: "...when the most respectable farmers in the county wore the broad blue bonnet and it was only on the Sabbath that the most aspiring of them exchanged it for the beaver hat."<sup>1</sup> Sometime after the birth of their last child in 1764, Isabel Buist died.

### The Window Tax

Andrew Buist is listed in the Window Taxes for Abdie Parish. The Window Tax was a property tax based on the number of windows in a house, and in Scotland this tax was imposed in 1748. A house had to have at least seven windows or a rent of at least five pounds to be taxed. The 1770 tax showed Andrew Buist residing at Craigmill with three windows. The last tax he was listed in was on Wednesday, 7 August 1771 also at Craigmill.<sup>2</sup>

*A Survey of the Rates and Duties on Windows or Lights and Houses in The County of Fife from 6<sup>th</sup> April 1771 To 6<sup>th</sup> April 1772 By Charles Scott Surveyor.*

Time when Surveyed.	INHABITANTS NAMES and DESIGNATIONS.	Proportion Part of Houses.	R A T E S.													Duty ON	Duty ON		
			Seven windows	Eight windows	Nine windows	Ten windows	Eleven windows	Twelve windows	Thirteen windows	Fourteen windows	Fifteen windows	Sixteen windows	Seventeen windows	Eighteen windows	ON WINDOWS.	ON HOUSES.			
Apr 1771	<i>Abdie Parish</i>																		
	<i>Alexander Spence Buryhockgraben</i>																		
	<i>M<sup>r</sup> Wingate Minister</i>	1				10												8.. 4	1
	<i>Andrew Buist Craigmill ad. M<sup>r</sup></i>	2																1.. 8.. 6	1
	<i>M<sup>rs</sup> Dick in Advocates</i>	3																1.. 8.. 6	1
	<i>Patrick Murray of Dyke Esq<sup>r</sup></i>	4																	1
	<i>George Jarvie Parkhill</i>	4																	1
	<i>William Jarvie at L<sup>o</sup></i>	5																	1
	<i>Dann Reid Dummer</i>	6																	1
	<i>Robert Thomson Hattonhill</i>	7																	1
	<i>James Farmer Easton Dummer</i>	8																	1
	<i>James Rysel Dummer</i>	9																	1
		9				10												3.. 5.. 4	9

Fig. 4. Extract from the archive showing Window Taxes paid in Abdie between April 1771 and April 1772. Although Andrew Buist is listed on the third line, he no longer was required to pay the tax. © Scotlandplaces.gov.uk

<sup>1</sup> Fifehire Journal Newspaper, 16 November 1865, p.5

<sup>2</sup> Window Tax, 1748-1798. Window Tax for Fife, Volume 45 (E326/1/45/132) Scotlandplaces.gov.uk





*Fig. 5. Craigmill from a distance, Abdie, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Mrs. Frances Black, Fife Family History Society, 2014*



*Fig.6. Craigmill, Abdie, Fife. Andrew Buist lived in the house on the left. The large building in the centre is a mill. Today the buildings are residences. Photograph Courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland © Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*

### Relocation and Death

Andrew Buist relocated to Markinch Parish, Fife sometime after his wife's death following the family of his daughter Rachel Imrie. He was also a land proprietor in Markinch Parish, Fife. His son, George Buist was residing in the neighboring parish of Kettle. Andrew Buist met and later married Christian Martin of Markinch. She was born on Friday, 14 May 1728 in Markinch, Markinch Parish, Fife<sup>1</sup> and was thus a year younger than her husband. It is not known when the marriage took place because of the lack of record keeping at the parish Church of Markinch. They

<sup>1</sup> Baptismal Record of Christian Martin, 19 May 1728, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0010 0160

had one daughter, named Janet Buist who was born in Markinch. Andrew and Christian Buist's daughter, Janet died on Tuesday, 20 May 1777 at Markinch and is buried in the Markinch churchyard.<sup>1</sup> The Buist family, were residing in the town of Markinch and are listed in the Consolidated Schedules of Assessed Taxes on Thursday, 9 August 1798. Andrew Buist was taxed 2 shillings and 6 pence.<sup>2</sup>



Fig.7. High Street, Markinch, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Neil, Markinch Heritage Group, 2014, Markinch Heritage Group

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AN ASSESSMENT made upon the several Inhabitants of the Parish of Markinch for levying the several Duties under mentioned, from the

purstant to the Consolidating Acts of Parliament, passed 38<sup>th</sup> Geo. III. Cap. xl. and xli. by

Surveyor.

Day of Assesment.	Inhabitants Names and Designations.	Duties on Houses			Duties on Inhabited Houses.			Duties on			Duties on Carriages		Duties on Carriages with Two Wheels and Tread Cattle.		Duties on Hacks for riding and driving Carriages with Four & Two Wheels.		Duties on Hacks or Traps, and on Mules.		Duties on Dogs.		TOTAL.										
		Widow's	and Widows.	Rem.	Houses.	High Screens.	Male Screens.	Four Wheels.	Two Wheels.	Traps.	Hacks.	Hacks.	Hacks.	Dogs.	Dogs.																
1798 August 9 <sup>th</sup>	Parish of Markinch Brought forward		119	12		7	16		39		2	5	61	4	1	1	4	26	4	262	78	12	7	15	5	18	339	10	-		
Inverlaven	James Irvine		2	6																									2	6	
	John Gibb		2	6																										2	6
	William Beall		2	6																										2	6
	David Smith		2	6																										2	6
	James Smith		2	6																										2	6
	John Strachan locaver		2	6																										2	6
village of Markinch }	John Gililand		2	6																										2	6
	Andrew Mitchell sen <sup>r</sup>		2	6																										2	6
	Joseph Dryburgh		2	6																										2	6
	William Dewart		2	6																										2	6
	Archibald Welch		2	6																										2	6
	Alexander Bogue		2	6																										2	6
	Thomas Shuttle		2	6																										2	6
	James Martin		2	6																										2	6
	Thomas Bennett		2	6																										2	6
	James Dewar		2	6																										2	6
	David Bruce		2	6																										2	6
	John Knox		2	6																										2	6
	George Barclay		2	6																										2	6
	John Chambers		2	6																										2	6
	David Chambers		2	6																										2	6
	Peter Thallon		2	6																										2	6
	William Drummond		2	6																										2	6
	George Galbraith		2	6																										2	6
	John Halls		2	6																										2	6
	David Spittal		2	6																										2	6
	James Gibb		2	6																										2	6
	Andrew Buist		2	6																										2	6

Fig.8. Consolidated Schedules of Assessed Taxes for Town of Markinch, Markinch, Fife listing Andrew Buist (Last Entry) dated 9 August 1798, Copyright, Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

Andrew Buist died on Thursday, 2 February 1815 at the age of 87 in Markinch. He was buried in the Markinch churchyard on Wednesday, 8 February 1815. His death record reads: "Andrew Buist at Markinch was interred on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1815 in the grave of Betty Moor, spouse of deceased George Philp in Markinch, interred on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1805."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burial Record of Janet Buist, 20 May 1777, Grave Inscription  
<sup>2</sup> Consolidated Schedules of Assessed Taxes, 1798-1799 for Fife, Volume 12 (E326/15/12/63) Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk  
<sup>3</sup> Burial Record of Andrew Buist, 8 February 1815, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0040 0094





*Fig. 9. Andrew Buist Gravesite, Markinch Parish Churchyard, Markinch Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

His wife, Christian Buist died on Friday, 5 February 1819 at the age of 90 at Markinch. She was buried to the right of her husband in the Buist family lot on Sunday, 7 February 1819 in the Markinch churchyard. Her death record reads: “Christian Marton, spouse of the deceased Andrew Buist at Markinch was interned the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 1819. She lys by her husband to the Right [sic]., 7<sup>th</sup> February 1819, a stone.”<sup>1</sup> Their gravestone still stands in the Markinch churchyard cemetery and reads: “This monument was erected by Andrew Buist (feuar in Markinch) and his spouse, Christian Martin, in Memory of their daughter, Janet who died on the 20<sup>th</sup> Day of May 1777 in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of her age. Andrew Buist died 2 Februy 1815 aged 83 years.” There are two symbols on the gravestone itself, one being a shovel and the other a scythe. These are symbols associated with mortality. The shovel used to dig the grave and the scythe used by Death to harvest society.

### **THE CHILDREN OF ANDREW AND ISABEL THOMSON BUIST**

Andrew and Isabel Buist had eight children who were all born in Abdie Parish, Fife. Of the eight children: six were born at Woodhead; two were born at Cowden and the youngest being born at the Grange of Lindores.

**Rachel:** Born at Woodhead, Abdie Parish. She was baptized on Wednesday, 8 March 1747 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>2</sup> She married Robert Imrie. They had nine children: Jean born on Thursday, 1 December 1768 at Abdie;<sup>3</sup> Helen who was baptized on Sunday, 24 March 1771 at Abdie<sup>4</sup> and died on Wednesday, 12 October 1771 at Abdie; Isabel baptized on Sunday, 19 June 1774 at Newburgh<sup>5</sup> and died on Sunday, 10 November 1867;<sup>6</sup> Rachel baptized on Sunday, 6 June 1776 at Newburgh<sup>7</sup>; Jean baptized on Sunday, 26 October 1777 at Newburgh<sup>8</sup>; Rachel baptized on Sunday, 17 February 1780 at Newburgh<sup>9</sup> and died on Saturday, 29 November 1856;<sup>10</sup> Nelly born on Wednesday, 16 March 1785, baptized on Thursday, 24 March 1785 at Abdie<sup>11</sup> and died on Wednesday, 29 July 1863;<sup>12</sup> David born in 1787<sup>13</sup> and died on Monday, 2 June 1862;<sup>14</sup> Cecilia baptized on Sunday, 17 June 1792<sup>15</sup> and died on

<sup>1</sup> Burial Record of Christian Buist, 7 February 1819, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0040 0117

<sup>2</sup> Baptismal Record of Rachel Buist, 8 March 1747, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0295

<sup>3</sup> Baptismal Record of Jean Imrie, 1 December 1768, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0338

<sup>4</sup> Baptismal Record of Helen Imrie, 24 March 1771, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/0010 0189

<sup>5</sup> Baptismal Record of Isabel Imrie, 19 June 1774, Newburgh Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/0010 0197

<sup>6</sup> Death Record of Isabel Louden, 10 November 1867, Markinch Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 447/00 0119

<sup>7</sup> Baptismal Record of Rachel Imrie, 6 June 1776, Newburgh Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/110 0202

<sup>8</sup> Baptismal Record of Jean Imrie, 26 October 1777, Newburgh Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/0010 0204

<sup>9</sup> Baptismal Record of Rachel Imrie, 17 February 1780, Newburgh Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/0010 0210

<sup>10</sup> Death Record of Rachel Menzies, 29 November 1856, Abdie Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 400/00 0021

<sup>11</sup> Baptismal Record of Helen Imrie, 24 March 1785, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0369

<sup>12</sup> Death Record of Helen Staig, 29 July 1863, Abdie Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 400/0010 0369

<sup>13</sup> Death Record of David Imrie, 2 June 1862, Markinch Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 447/00 0044

<sup>14</sup> Death Record of David Imrie, 2 June 1862, Markinch Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 447/00 0044

<sup>15</sup> Death Record of Cecilia Imrie Watson, 20 February 1865, Markinch Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 00 00 0018

Monday, 20 February 1865.<sup>1</sup> The family lived in Abdie, Newburgh and Markinch Parishes, Fife. Robert Imrie was a miller throughout his life. In later years the family resided in the village of Markinch in Markinch Parish. Rachel Imrie died on Monday, 23 August 1819 at the age of 72.<sup>2</sup> According to the Markinch Parish records it listed the family as purchasing a mort cloth on the same day (23 August 1819) paying 2 shillings. She is buried in the Markinch Parish churchyard. Her husband, Robert Imrie died on Sunday, 9 April 1820 and is buried next to his wife in the Markinch Parish churchyard.<sup>3</sup>

**William:** Born at Woodhead, Abdie Parish. He was baptized on Wednesday, 29 January 1749 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>4</sup> William Buist later relocated to St. Andrews, Fife where he met and later married Elizabeth (Betty) Forrester on Wednesday, 28 December 1785 at St. Andrews, Fife.<sup>5</sup> She was born in Cameron Parish, Fife, date unknown. They had two children born in St. Andrews Parish, William born on Saturday, 23 April 1791<sup>6</sup> and John born on Friday, 31 May 1799.<sup>7</sup> It is not known when William Buist died however his wife Betty Buist died on Friday, 4 August 1837 in St. Andrews Parish, Fife.<sup>8</sup>

**George:** Born at Woodhead, Abdie Parish. He was baptized on Sunday, 20 December 1750 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>9</sup> He married Margaret Low on Friday, 7 September 1770 at the Parish of Kettle, Kingskettle, Fife.<sup>10</sup> They had four children: Henry, Jean, John and George. The family lived at Orkie farm. Margaret Low Buist died on Friday, 23 November 1781 at the age of 29 at Orkie.<sup>11</sup> George Buist later met and married Christian Ballingall on Friday, 4 June 1784 at Kettle Parish in Kingskettle.<sup>12</sup> They had eight children: Janet, Katherine, Unnamed Child (Stillborn), Christian, Thomas, Margaret, Robert and James. George Buist died on Tuesday, 24 January 1797 at Orkie farm at the age of 46.<sup>13</sup> He was buried in the Kettle Parish Churchyard, Kettle, Fife on Wednesday, 25 January 1797. For more information See Sheet on George Buist.

**Cecile:** Born at Woodhead, Abdie Parish. She was baptized on Sunday, 1 October 1752 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>14</sup>

**Alexander:** Born at Woodhead, Abdie Parish. He was baptized on Sunday, 1 September 1754 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>15</sup>

**Andrew:** Born at Woodhead, Abdie Parish. He was baptized on Thursday, 2 June 1757 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>16</sup> Andrew Buist met and later married Elspeth Gardiner on Saturday, 22 August 1772 at Errol, Perthshire.<sup>17</sup> However there is a discrepancy as to the exact date. According to the Commissariat of St. Andrews (Scottish Record Society. Commissariat Record of St. Andrews. Register of Testaments, 1549-1800. Francis J. Grant. Edinburgh: James Skinner & Co., 1902), the date of marriage was Friday, 6 August 1773 at Errol, Perthshire. The couple had at least two children (twins) by this marriage. They are: John born on Wednesday, 7 July 1773 at Inchtire, Perthshire<sup>18</sup> and Thomas also born on Wednesday, 7 July 1773.<sup>19</sup> Andrew Buist was a tenant of Bayne of

<sup>1</sup> Death Record of Cecilia Imrie Watson, 20 February 1865, Markinch Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 00 00 0018

<sup>2</sup> Death Record of Rachel Imrie, 23 August 1819, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0030 0407

<sup>3</sup> Death Record of Robert Imrie, 9 April 1820, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records

<sup>4</sup> Baptismal Record of William Buist, 29 January 1749, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0299

<sup>5</sup> Marriage Record of William Buist, 28 December 1785, St. Andrews Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0160 0042

<sup>6</sup> Baptismal Record of William Buist, 24 April 1791, St. Andrews Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0030 0551

<sup>7</sup> Baptismal Record of John Buist, 3 June 1799, St. Andrews Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0030 0621

<sup>8</sup> Death Record of Elizabeth Buist, 4 August 1837, St. Andrews Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0210 0084

<sup>9</sup> Baptismal Record of George Buist, 1 December 1750, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0303

<sup>10</sup> Marriage Record of George Buist, 7 September 1770, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0030 0326

<sup>11</sup> Death Record of Margaret Buist, 23 November 1781, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0050 0078

<sup>12</sup> Marriage Record of George Buist, 4 June 1784, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0030 0381

<sup>13</sup> Death Record of George Buist, 24 January 1797, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0050 0323

<sup>14</sup> Baptismal Record of Cecile Buist, 1 October 1752, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0308

<sup>15</sup> Baptismal Record of Alexander Buist, 1 September 1754, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0311

<sup>16</sup> Baptismal Record of Andrew Buist, 2 June 1757, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0316

<sup>17</sup> Marriage Record of John Buist, 29 August 1772, Errol Parish Records, Old Parish Records 351/0050 0172

<sup>18</sup> Baptismal Record of John Buist, 7 July 1773, Inchtire Parish Records, Old Parish Records 359/0020 0143

<sup>19</sup> Baptismal Record of Thomas Buist, 7 July 1773, Errol Parish Records, Old Parish Records 351/0020 0313

Inchmartine in Perthshire. It is not known when Andrew Buist died. Elspeth (Elizabeth) Buist died on Saturday, 26 June 1790 in Auchtermuchty, Fifeshire at the age of 46. According to the Auchtermuchty death record, “the twenty sixth received for the second mort cloth to Elspeth Buist.”<sup>1</sup>

**John:** Born at Cowden, Abdie Parish. He was baptized on Thursday, 12 July 1759 at Cowden, Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

**Henry:** (1762-1822): The youngest son was to play an important role in improving farming in Fife during his lifetime while as a tenant farmer of East Mill in Strathmiglo Parish and Pittuncarty, Abernethy Parish, Fife. His life and times is described in detail below.

**Isobel:** (1764- ) The youngest daughter was born at Grange, Abdie Parish. She was baptized on Sunday, 23 December 1764 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>3</sup> She married Alexander Russell on Saturday, 27 April 1793 at Abdie Parish, Fife, Scotland.<sup>4</sup> They had two children: Alexander born on Wednesday, 26 February 1794 at Newburgh<sup>5</sup> and George born on Sunday, 28 August 1796 at Newburgh.<sup>6</sup> Alexander Russell was a wright in Newburgh. No other information is available.

### **HENRY BUIST (1762-1822)**

Henry Buist, a tenant farmer from Fife, typified the innovative spirit in Scottish farming in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A tenant of East Mill, Strathmiglo Parish, Fife and Pittuncarty, Abernethy Parish, Fife, Henry lived through the height of the Scottish Enlightenment when new science was being brought to bear on Scottish agriculture. As we have seen his father Andrew Buist (1727-1815) and grandfather, William Buist (b. 1691) were also tenant farmers in Abdie Parish, Fife.

#### **Early Years**

The future tenant farmer of Strathmiglo Parish and Abernethy Parish, Fife was born in 1762 at Cowden, Abdie Parish, Fife to Andrew Buist and Isabel Thomson, the eighth child of nine. According to the Ordinance Survey Name Books for 1853-1855 it listed Cowden as “a row of cottages, on the farm of Woodmile occupied by the farm labourer of Mr. Kay and property of Captain Nelson of Inchrye.”<sup>7</sup> Cowden is located about one mile west of the village of Collessie.

#### **Marriage & Family Life**

Henry Buist later married Rachel Robertson, who was born in 1779 in Auchtermuchty Parish, Fife but there is no record available of their marriage. They had twelve children who were all born and raised at East Mill in Strathmiglo Parish, Fife.

The children were:

Arthur not known when born, and died on Friday, 12 October 1810;<sup>8</sup>

James baptized on Monday, 4 December 1797<sup>9</sup> and died on Monday, 25 January 1875;<sup>10</sup>

George baptized on Sunday, 8 September 1799<sup>11</sup> and died on Thursday, 29 March 1832;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Death Record of Elspeth Buist, 26 June 1790, Auchtermuchty Parish Records, Old Parish Records 406/0020 0525

<sup>2</sup> Baptismal Record of John Buist, 12 July 1759, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0320

<sup>3</sup> Baptismal Record of Isobel Buist, 23 December 1764, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0010 0330

<sup>4</sup> Marriage Record of Isobel Buist, 27 April 1793, Abdie Parish Records, Old Parish Records 400/0020 0062

<sup>5</sup> Baptismal Record of Alexander Russell, 11 March 1794, Newburgh Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/0010 0265

<sup>6</sup> Baptismal Record of George Russell, 3 September 1796, Newburgh Parish Records, Old Parish Records 450/0010 0276

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance Survey Name Books, Fife & Kinross Ordinance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855. Volume 54 (OS1/13/54/5) Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

<sup>8</sup> Death Record of Arthur Buist, 12 October 1810, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records 457/0030 0461

<sup>9</sup> Baptismal Record of James Buist, 4 December 1797, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>10</sup> Death Record of James Buist, 25 January 1875, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Statutory Deaths, National Records of Scotland

<sup>11</sup> Baptismal Record of George Buist, 8 September 1799, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland



Henry baptized on Sunday, 19 July 1801<sup>2</sup> and died on Tuesday, 14 February 1832;<sup>3</sup>  
Henry baptized on Sunday, 31 July 1803<sup>4</sup> and died on Tuesday, 19 December 1876;<sup>5</sup>  
David baptized on Monday, 24 February 1806<sup>6</sup> and died on Tuesday, 12 March 1867;<sup>7</sup>  
Helen baptized on Tuesday, 17 May 1808<sup>8</sup> and died on Sunday, 4 November 1866;<sup>9</sup>  
John Ingles born on Monday, 7 May 1810;<sup>10</sup>  
William born on Monday, 2 March 1812<sup>11</sup> and died on Thursday, 6 January 1870;<sup>12</sup>  
Catherine born on Wednesday, 7 September 1814<sup>13</sup> and died on Wednesday, 1 November 1843;<sup>14</sup>  
Rachel born in 1818 and died on Friday, 18 February 1898;<sup>15</sup>  
Rachel born in 1823 and died before 1851.

A devoutly religious man, Henry Buist and his wife regularly attended services at the Strathmiglo Parish Church where all their children were baptized.

### East Mill & Pittuncarty

Strathmiglo Parish, Fife is a small parish only about 5 miles long. It is partly flat and partly hilly. In the Statistical Account of Scotland published during the time of Henry Buist in 1792 it states: "The Strathmiglo farmers generally sow in April and May, and reap in August and September... The farms in general may be at an average of 150 acres, and the average rent is about 10 shilling per acre. The number of farms is diminishing rather than increasing... The farmers are in appearance richer, and their families dress and live better."<sup>16</sup>

Henry Buist is residing at East Mill, Strathmiglo Parish, Fife in 1797. According to the Ordinance Survey Name Books for 1853-1855 it listed East Mill as "a corn mill, farm house and offices situated east of Strathmiglo. The mill is worked by the water of the Eden."<sup>17</sup> According to the Fife Horse Tax, on Wednesday, 30 August 1797, Henry Buist is shown at East Mill with four horses being subject to the tax and was taxed 8 shillings.<sup>18</sup>

An advertisement place in the *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper* dated Wednesday, 28 January 1807 reads: "Mill and Lands in Fife. To let for a term of years, the East Mill of Strathmiglo and lands belonging to it... possessed by Henry Buist. Premises are situated in the immediate vicinity of the town of Strathmiglo..."<sup>19</sup>

The farm fields of East Mill have an interesting early history. In these fields once stood the castle of Strathmiglo which was in existence from about 1420, but was demolished in 1734, part of the stones of the castle being used in the building of the steeple at the tolbooth or town house of Strathmiglo. The History of the County of Fife, published in 1840 stated: "The castle of Strathmiglo stood in the middle of an arable field, a short way east of the village and about 100 yards northeast from the farm steading of the East Mill of Strathmiglo... but has now entirely disappeared, not one stone of the building being left to mark its site... It was said to have been erected in the reign of James V (1420) who bestowed upon it, rather unaccountably, the nickname of Cairney-flappet, from its having been very hurriedly erected."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George Buist Inventory, 22 November 1835, Cupar Sheriff Court (SC20/50/9) National Records of Scotland

<sup>2</sup> Baptismal Record of Henry Buist, 19 July 1801, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>3</sup> Death Record of Henry Buist, 14 February 1832, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0060 0234

<sup>4</sup> Baptismal Record of Henry Buist, 31 July 1803, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>5</sup> Burial Record of Henry Buist, 1877, Strathmiglo Churchyard Burial Records, Strathmiglo, Fife

<sup>6</sup> Baptismal Record of David Buist, 24 February 1806, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>7</sup> Death Record of David Buist, 12 March 1867, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 457/00 0021

<sup>8</sup> Baptismal Record of Helen Buist, 17 May 1808, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>9</sup> Death Record of Helen Buist Dunn, 4 November 1866, Auchtermuchty Parish Records, Statutory Deaths, National Records of Scotland

<sup>10</sup> Baptismal Record of John Ingles Buist, 18 May 1810, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>11</sup> Baptismal Record of William Buist, 13 March 1812, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records, National Records of Scotland

<sup>12</sup> Death Record of William Buist, 6 January 1870, Auchtermuchty Parish Records, Statutory Deaths, National Records of Scotland

<sup>13</sup> Burial Record of Catherine Buist Crambie, 3 November 1843, Auchtermuchty Churchyard Burial Records, Auchtermuchty, Fife

<sup>14</sup> Burial Record of Catherine Buist Crambie, 3 November 1843, Auchtermuchty Churchyard Burial Records, Auchtermuchty, Fife

<sup>15</sup> Death Record of Rachel Buist, 18 February 1898, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 457/00 0008

<sup>16</sup> The Statistical Account of Scotland. Volume 4. Parish of Strathmiglo. Rev. George Lyon. Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1792, pp. 402-404

<sup>17</sup> Ordinance Survey Name Books, Fife & Kinross Ordinance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855. Volume 27. (OS1/13/27/36)

Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

<sup>18</sup> Horse Tax Rolls, 1785-1798. Horse Tax for Fife. Volume 2 (E326/10/2/282) Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

<sup>19</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper*, 28 January 1807, Page 27

<sup>20</sup> *History of the County of Fife: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*. Volume 2. Leighton, John M. Glasgow: Joseph Swan, 1840. p 187

It is not known when Henry Buist purchased Pittuncarty, Abernethy Parish, Fife. Like East Mill, Buist owned this until his death in 1822.

According to the Ordinance Survey Name Books for 1853-1855 it listed Pittuncarty as “a good dwelling house two stories high and stated with a court of farm offices, a garden, and farm attached.”<sup>1</sup> An interesting note should be made about Pittuncarty. When this author personally visited the farm in October of 2003, the present owners Mr. and Mrs. Harley, showed me the remains of the old homestead and the cornerstone Henry Buist laid and had stamped with the year 1821. The farm is still in operation at the time of writing.

To obtain a better understanding of the kind of crops Buist grew on these two farms and the kinds of farm machinery he had on them, an inventory was conducted on Monday, 14 July 1823 after his death. This inventory showed the following:

“Crops and Animals at East Mill: oats, barley, wheat, hay, potatoes, turnips with 4 workhorses, 4 cows and 1 pig.

Crops and Animals at Pittuncarty: oats, barley, wheat, hay, potatoes with 6 workhorses, 5 cows and 1 threshing mill.”<sup>2</sup>

According to surviving land tax rolls for Strathmiglo Parish, Fife, Henry Buist is recorded as being taxed for Pittuncarty in the year of 1811 with the valuation being 155 pounds.<sup>3</sup>

### Agricultural improvement

With the height of the Scottish Enlightenment and the new scientific approach to agriculture, Buist lived through what was known as the ‘Age of Improvement.’ The ‘Age of Improvement’ relied on the best practice or best approach to farming in Fife. Examples of this approach were: enclosure by stonewalling between farm lands; liming of the fields were begun which in turn made the soil better and improved the grazing of livestock; and finally crop rotation was introduced. All of these improvements made great and lasting improvements to agriculture in Scotland.

### Later Years & Death of Henry Buist

Buist was a member of the Heritors of the County of Fife. He would meet with other members of the Heritors to discuss, debate and vote on important matters of the day. One such meeting of the Heritors was reported by the *Morning Chronicle* dated Friday, 14 June 1811. The article stated: “At Cupar, 23 May 1811. In a meeting of the Heritors of the County of Fife, for the special purpose of considering a Report of the Commission of Heritors of the County, appointed to prepare and carry to Parliament a Bill for erecting a New Jail in the Burgh of Cupar.”<sup>4</sup>

Henry Buist on Saturday, 2 August 1817 made out his Last Will and Testament at East Mill, Strathmiglo Parish, Fife.<sup>5</sup> In the Will, he named his two nephews Henry Buist of Berryhill and the Reverend Dr. George Buist, one of the Ministers of St. Andrews as Trustees.

Henry Buist died on Tuesday, 5 February 1822 at the age of 60 at East Mill, Strathmiglo Parish, Fife.<sup>6</sup> According to the Strathmiglo Parish burial records it stated: “Henry Buist from East Mill aged 60 years was interred 9 February 1822.”<sup>7</sup>

The *Edinburgh Advertiser* for Tuesday, 19 February 1822 carried this notice: “Notice to Debtors and Creditors. All persons having claims on the deceased Henry Buist of Pittuncarty, are requested to send a state of the same, as soon as they conveniently can, either to Henry Buist, Esquire of Berryhill, ... and those indebted to Mr. Buist, are requested to make payment to either of these Gentlemen, without delay. 13 February 1822.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance Survey Name Books, Fife & Kinross Ordinance Name Books, 1853-1855. Volume 50 (OS1/13/50/13) Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

<sup>2</sup> Inventory of Henry Buist, 14 July 1823, Dunkeld Commissary Court (CC7/9/5) Pages 614-639. National Records of Scotland

<sup>3</sup> Land Tax Rolls for Fife, Volume 4 (E106/15/4/24) 1811. Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk

<sup>4</sup> *Morning Chronicle Newspaper*, 14 June 1811, Page 2

<sup>5</sup> Last Will & Testament of Henry Buist, 2 August 1817, Dunkeld Commissary Court (CC7/9/5) Pages 614-639. National Records of Scotland

<sup>6</sup> Burial Record of Henry Buist, 9 February 1822, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records 457/0040 0144

<sup>7</sup> Burial Record of Henry Buist, 9 February 1822, Strathmiglo Parish Records, Old Parish Records 457/0040 0144

<sup>8</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper*, 19 February 1822, Page 1

A few months later the *Edinburgh Advertiser* on Friday, 9 August 1822 stated: "Subjects in Fife for Sale. To be sold by public roup, within the house of Walter Taylor, vinter, Auchtermuchty, on Monday, 19 August 1822 at 12 o'clock noon, and entered to at Martinmas next, if not previously sold by private bargain, the following properties which belong to the deceased Henry Buist of Pittuncarty viz.: the town and lands of Pittuncarty, Abernethy, Fife consisting of 232 acres, have for several years been in the natural possession of the late proprietor, who made considerable improvements upon them...three dwelling houses at the west end of Strathmiglo...lands situated in Gardener's Park consisting of 4 acres...Drumwhannan & Bank Park consisting of 4 acres...East Bank Park consisting of 8 acres...Well Bank Park consisting of about 6 acres...For further particulars apply to Henry Buist, Esquire of Berryhill."<sup>1</sup>

Henry Buist's wife, Rachel Robertson is listed in the 1841 Census for Strathmiglo Parish, Fife as being 60 years old, working as a dressmaker and living with her daughter, Rachel.<sup>2</sup> Rachel Robertson is again listed in the 1851 Census for Strathmiglo Parish, Fife as being a widow, aged 73 and an annuitant proprietor of houses. Rachel Buist, her daughter is also shown residing with her.<sup>3</sup>

Rachel (Robertson) Buist died on Thursday, 3 March 1853 at the age of 74.<sup>4</sup> She was buried next to her husband in the Strathmiglo Parish churchyard. Their gravestone still stands presently and reads as follows: "Erected by desire of the late William Buist, Merchant, Auchtermuchty died 6 January 1870. In memory of Henry Buist his father late of Pittuncarty who died 7 February 1822 aged 59. Rachel Robertson his mother died 3 March 1853 aged 74 and Arthur, Henry, George, John and David Buist his brothers. Also James Buist died 23 July 1875 aged 77 years. Also Henry died in Canada 19 December 1876 aged 72 years. Also Rachel Buist died 13 February 1898 aged 80 years."

When Henry and Rachel Buist's last surviving child died in 1898, Rachel Buist stated in her Last Will and Testament some interesting mention of various family heirlooms that were eventually passed down to other Buist family members. In the Will, she stated that her nephew, James Buist, Inspector of Police of Perth should be left a photograph of her brother William and her father's (Henry Buist) eight day clock. Furthermore, her Will bequeathed the following: To Henry Buist, (son of her brother, George Buist) a portrait of her brother John and a Bible described as being in 2 divisions which belonged to her grandfather, Andrew Buist. To Andrew Buist (son of her brother, Henry), a portrait of her cousin, the Reverend Dr. George Buist and the books of his sermons.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusion

The Life and Times of Andrew Buist spanned 88 years. As a tenant farmer in Abdie and Markinch Parishes in Fife he lived through and took part in exciting changes which were occurring in Scottish agriculture. His son Henry too was a Fife tenant farmer and land owner of East Mill and Pittuncarty. He saw at first hand many of the land improvements taking place in the time of Scottish Enlightenment. Through a series of shrewd land purchases and investments he contributed to one of the major developments in Scottish agriculture, increasing the size of the tenant farm and thus improving productivity. He also had a sense of civic duty and as a member of the Heritors of the County of Fife, Henry helped in securing funds for the new gaol house for Cupar Parish.

Andrew Buist and his son Henry lived in the Age of Improvement and worked to make their farms better. Fife can be very proud of its own, Buist family, which is warmly commemorated here in grateful esteem and recognition by their descendant, Michael T. Tracy.

*Viva enim mortuorum in memoria vivorum est posita (The life of the dead is retained in the memory of the living)*

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<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper*, 9 August 1822, Page 91

<sup>2</sup> 1841 Scotland Census for Strathmiglo, Fife, Scotland; Enumeration District Number 6, Page Number 11

<sup>3</sup> 1851 Scotland Census for Strathmiglo, Fife, Scotland; Enumeration District Number 6, Page Number 11, Line Number 20

<sup>4</sup> Gravestone of Henry Buist & Family. Strathmiglo Parish Churchyard, Strathmiglo, Fife

<sup>5</sup> Last Will & Testament of Rachel Buist, 18 January 1895, Cupar Sheriff Court (SC20/50/78). National Records of Scotland



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