



THE CENSUS

It was the first day of census and all through the land
each pollster was ready – a black book in hand.

He mounted his horse for a long dusty ride,
his books and some quills were tucked close by his side.

A long dusty ride down a road barely there,
towards the smell of fresh bread wafting up on the air.

The woman was tired, with lines on her face,
and wisps of brown hair she tucked back into place.

She gave him some water as they sat at the table,
and she answered his questions the best she was able.

He asked of her children – yes she had quite a few,
the eldest was twenty, the youngest not two.

She held up a toddler with cheeks round and red,
his sister she whispered, was sleeping in bed.
She noted each person who lived there, with pride,
and she felt the faint stirrings of the wee one inside.

He noted the sex, the colour, the age

The marks of the quill soon filled up the page.
At the number of children, she nodded her head,
and he saw her lips quiver for the ones that were dead.

The places of birth she “never forgot”

Was it Carolina, or Texas, or Georgia – or not?
They came from Scotland, on that she was clear,
But she wasn't quite sure just how long they'd been here.

They spoke of employment, of schooling and such –
they could read some and write some – though really not
much.

When the questions were answered, his job there was done,
so he mounted his horse and rode off toward the sun.

We can almost imagine his voice loud and clear –
“May God bless you all for another ten years”.

Now picture a time warp ... it's now you and me
as we search for the people on our family tree.
We squint at the census, and scroll down so slow,
as we search for that entry from long, long ago.

Could they only imagine on that far off day
that the entries they made would affect us this way?

If they knew, would they wonder at the yearning we feel,
and the searching that makes them increasingly real?

We can hear - if we listen, the words they impart
through their blood in our veins, and their voice in our heart.

Author unknown



In Days Gone By

1732|1844|1900|2000|2008

This snippet is taken from the History of Polmont Parish Church published in 1969 for the 125th anniversary of the present building. I thought it was appropriate as it concerns a story about the father of Walter Scott (donor of one of our stained glass windows).
Sandra

1829 - The Heritors of Polmont Parish Church stood armed guard, on a rota basis, on new graves. Body snatching was commonplace at this time because medical students at Edinburgh University didn't inquire about the sources of the corpses they dissected. Various safe keeps and other methods were introduced at the churchyard to forestall this gruesome practice - and at Polmont the Heritors stood armed guard over new graves for seven nights, after which time the corpses could not be used for medical research.



The infamous Burke and Hare, one of whose relatives stayed in "The Castle", now occupied by the Black Bull car park, used Polmont as a resting place before continuing their journey to Edinburgh under cover of darkness. But other body snatchers met their downfall in Polmont. One evening, just as daylight was fading, Mr Scott of Gilston Farm was gathering sheep when he saw two men remove an object from a "midden" at the rear of Parkside Cottages. As he watched, the covering fell off, and to his horror, a shrouded corpse was revealed. He ran for his horse, and rode bare-saddle to Linlithgow to alert the townspeople who had the men arrested as they drove their horse-drawn cart into the town. The men were taken to Edinburgh for trial for this and similar offences. The body, which had been removed from Larbert Churchyard, was later re-interred there. Parkside Cottages became known locally as "Resurrection Row".