

## Licht Studio



This is a very interesting building that was empty and derelict for many years. It used to be called 'Spring Gardens' and later 'Spring Bank' and was originally a shop, post office and mill. The people of Coull would be able to buy many things they needed for the household there, without having to make the journey into Tarland. The local registrar used to visit the shop to use its office to register the births, marriages and deaths of the people in the parish of Coull. In Scotland every parish was recorded so that there was a record of how many people lived in the whole country. He recorded their ages, their jobs, whether they were married and how many people, including children, lived in each household. This information would appear on the Census; the first Census was issued in 1841. There has been a census taken every ten years since then. The Registrar was also 'the Inspector of the Poor' responsible for assessing the poor people in the parish. He had to decide

which people needed money and who was fit to work. In those days there was no National Health Service or Benefits Agency; life could be very harsh. Some people had to go to the 'Poor House' if they had no money, no home, no family to help them and were unable to work. Poor people like this were called 'paupers'. There was a Poor House in Tarland in the seventeenth century.

In the steading beside the Licht Studio there is a complete threshing machine which is in working order. The people in Coull would have brought the grain grown locally to be threshed. It would have separated the grain from the husk of corn that had been protecting it as it grew.



The threshing machine took a lot of the hard work out of separating the grain. It was powered by water which still flows by, along the road outside and turned the wheel outside the mill. The water had to flow steadily, from a place higher than the mill, with enough power to keep the mill wheel turning. Because the water struck the blades of the mill wheel at the top, flowing with force over the top of the wheel and causing it to



**The water strikes the wheel at the top.  
It is an overshot wheel.**

turn, it was called an overshot wheel. The mill wheel was connected, by a belt, to a shaft that drove the threshing machine. Whole bundles of corn were fed into the machine and the corn was passed along inside and shaken and beaten to separate all the grains of corn from the husk and the stalk. The grain, maybe oats, would then have been collected and taken to the meal mill, perhaps in Coull or Tarland, to be ground into meal. Porridge, brose or oatcakes might have been made from the meal. For many people this was a large part of what they ate every day.

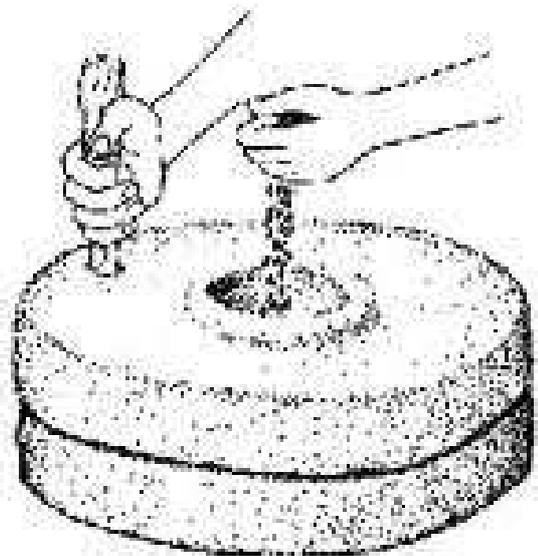
Before the threshing machine was invented people had to spread out the dried bundles (sheaves) of corn and beat them by hand with flails to loosen the grain. This was done in threshing barns. They were specially built barns with big doorways at each side so that the wind could blow right through. The wind blew away the light waste parts (chaff) and left the heavier grain behind.

If you Google 'threshing machine' there is a You Tube video of a threshing machine working.



**A saddle quern.**

Long before there were mills for grinding corn people used to grind the grain between two stones. They were



**A rotary quern.**

called 'quern stones'. The simplest type was called a 'saddle quern' because it was shaped rather like a saddle and another stone was used to rub the grain against the hard surface to make it fine enough to mix with water and other ingredients to

make useful food like oat cakes, brose and porridge. It took more work to make it into a fine flour for bread or bannocks. A saddle quern stone has been found in Tarland. The rotary quern is so named because the top millstone is powered by hand to go round and round. The grain is sandwiched between the top and bottom stones and the top stone grinds the grain against the hard bottom stone. In the later, mechanised meal mill the grain would be ground between two big circular stones just the same, except that the power would be provided by water or by a horse walking round and round at a 'horse mill' to turn the shaft to operate the grinding of the millstones inside the mill.

Today The Licht Photographic Studio is open every Friday and displays local photographic images and cards. The office, that the registrar used, is still there with a hatch through to the shop. The original toilet (called a 'long drop' toilet ) with a tiny wash hand basin made from lead is still there.



**The fire extinguisher in the studio is the original one.**

Outside the Licht Studio there is a bench where you are very welcome to sit and rest when you are travelling The tarland way