

Carsphairn Heritage Group



Newsletter 99
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List of Heads of Households, Carsphairn Parish in 1736

We have preserved in the minutes of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright of 1736 a list of many of the heads of households in Carsphairn parish, who were called to vote for Andrew Reid being accepted as assistant minister to his ailing father, or to vote for other outcomes. It is clear that a large proportion of heads of households voted, though it is also clear that not all voted and the names of thirteen individuals who voted are not given. In most cases we are also told where those who voted lived. Unfortunately we are not told where the 7 church elders or 7 church deacons resided. I have been able from other documents to work out where all the elders resided with the exception of Martin McLymont. However I do not know where any of the deacons lived – they were William Gray or Greig, John Ferguson, David McCrae, James Gillespie, Robert Herries, Robert McGill, William McClellan and William McAdam. The (*) against names are for individuals who did not vote but who are referred to in the church accounts of 1737. Also referred to in these accounts are a George Stevenson, and a number of poor of the parish – William Allan, Jean Clemmett in Pomaddie, Janet Kirkpatrick in Daltamie, Robert Renwick, Enable Hunter, Elizabeth Logie, Jean McCaul and Elizabeth Shaw.

In the Presbytery voting six names are recorded under Polmeadow and there is no reference to Polmaddie. However most of the votes are grouped with voters living in close proximity to Polmaddie and it is my guess that the Presbytery scribe assumed these two places to be but one, and I have divided the names on that basis. It is surprising how few people are recorded as living in Carsphairn in those days.

Nether Broonhill

Thomas Campbell

Moat of Waterhead

John McCormack

Meadowhead

James Hair

Lamford

John McDill

William McTurk

David Heron

James McCaul

Cadgerhole

William Muir (*north of*

Drumjohn)

Drumjohn

James McMillan

Alexander Kerr

Robert McAdam

Cullzenoch

Gilbert McClellan

(*Cullendoch?*) (*just north of
Lamloch*)

John McMillan

Lamloch

Hugh McHutcheon (*church
elder*)

Woodhead

Robert Dun (*church elder*)

Brockloch

John McMillan (*residing heritor*)

Alexander McTurk
William Logie*

Polmeadow (*north of Portmark on east side of Loch Doon*)

William Clement

Portmark

James Wight (*residing heritor and church elder*)

Bearsay of Portmar

John Allan

Bow (*north of Knockengorroch*)

David Shaw

Knockengorroch

Thomas McMillan
Alexander Welsh
David McGill

Bank (*north of Bridgend*)

Anthony Currie

Holm of Carsphairn

John Hair
Archibald McQueen

Bridgend

Alexander Grierson

Lagwyne

John Campbell*

Garryhorn

Robert Dun

Halfmark (*west of Carnavel*)

William McTurk

Moss (*south of Garryhorn*)

John McNeilie
David Finlay

Dalmaddie

George Wall

Carsphairn village

David Boyle
Alexander Raphell
John McMillan
James Douglas (*mason, wright*)

William Gordon (*kirk officer*)

Carneval

John McMillan

Breddenoch (*Bardennoch*)

Robert Douglas

Bredinoch (*Braidenoch*)

James McMillan

Folds of Bredinoch (*west of Braidenoch*)

William McGill

Dalshangan

George Hennie (*Haining*)
John McCrae

Polmaddie

Alexander Quhannett
James Clement
Alexander Dempster
John Park
George Tait

Drumness

Matthew Houstin
William Carnochan
James McGill

Barlay (*north of Polmaddie*)

Daniel McMichael

Castlemaddie

James Milligan
James McCaul
William McClain
William McCrae
Andrew McLymont

Castlemaddie (cont)

James Howatson
 Thomas McCrae
 William McTurk

Liggot – Patrick Heron**Knockgray** – Alexander Kennedy
(residing heritor)

John Paterson *(church
 elder)*

James McMillan
 William Milligan

Nether Knockgray

William McMillan

Marbreck

William McMillan
 Andrew McMillan
 Thomas McAdam
 Hugh Templeton
 William Waugh
 Alexander Moffat

Formiston

Alan Kerr
 Alexander Gibson

Glenlaggan of Firminstown

William McMillan
(location unknown)

Bagulloch

John McTurk *(location
 unknown)*

Marscalloch

Patrick McCleare

Bridge of Deugh

John Murdoch
 William Ingram

Upper Carmunoc

Andrew Murdoch

Carmunoc *(Carminnows)*

William Sloan

Dundeug

Joseph Reid
 Joseph McNaught
 John McNaught

Bridge of Ken

John McCrae
 John Barbour
 William Thomson
 John McMillan *(church
 elder)*

Mardrochat

James McMillan
 John McCrae

Smitton

Robert McAdam
 Andrew Newall

Diltami *(just north of Smittons)*

Thomas Robson

Craigengillan

John McNeile
 Robert McMillan
 Robert McMichael

Glen *(just east of Moorbrock)*

William Clark

Whiteburn *(to west of Glenhead)*

Alexander McMillan

Holm of Dalquhairn

Robert McMillan *(residing
 heritor and elder)*

Overholm *(Upper Holm of
 Dalquhairn)*

James Hewatson
 John McWhinny

David Bartholomew

Some Stories Behind Carsphairn Show

A few years back I overheard a comment in the village about Carsphairn Show: “Oh it’s The Show this weekend - isn’t it amazing how it always just appears every year as if from nowhere?” And, in a way, it is like that. Over the years, hardworking committees have got together to go through the usual procedures and overnight a show field appears, a show happens, and then it all disappears again.

I have had the privilege of caring for the archives of the Show, and this year have delved in to some of these old documents to learn more about ‘Our Show’. It was interesting to read of its precursors, the Carsphairn Fair, the Glenkens Society and the Carsphairn Shepherds’ Society.

The Fair was reputedly first held in 1689 as a celebration of the end of an army occupation of Dalmellington and Carsphairn by a brigade of Highlanders and with a local murder happening on the same day, that particular Fair is well documented. So, in memory of Roger Dunne (who was sadly killed in a matter of mistaken identity) a fair was held every year on the first Friday of June.

The Glenkens Society, on the other hand, was a more genteel affair and was founded by the Victorians of the Glenkens area in 1830 ‘for the improvement of the labouring classes’. This Society included flower and vegetable growing

competitions and a poultry show, amongst its many other interests and although originally intended to be held in various venues around the district, never quite made it to Carsphairn. Also, it was felt that transport difficulties to and from Dalry were too much of a hindrance for Carsphairn inhabitants to take part there.

Finally, in Carsphairn parish an organisation existed from the early 1800s by the name of the Carsphairn Shepherds’ Society. This Society was formed to promote social contact between the sheep farmers in the parish and was also intended to be educational in the latest sheep husbandry matters. The highlight each year was the annual social evening, held in December, (it is recorded that upwards of 70 members attended on certain nights) when the matter of any straying sheep found in the parish was discussed. If the sheep (there was rarely more than one) was not claimed it was sold – generally to one of the members of the Society, and the money raised usually divided amongst nominated deserving poor in the parish. Following the business of the evening, the shepherds retired for a convivial social evening or, in latter years, were ‘entertained’ to a talk by a visiting lecturer on subjects such as: ‘The Diseases of Sheep and Dog Distemper’. There are minutes documenting this Society written up to 1929.

When the first meeting was held in the School Room at Carsphairn in 1876 “for the purpose of making arrangements for a show of poultry, dogs and flowers”, these three organisations had all played their part in the formulation of Carsphairn Pastoral and Horticultural Society. The Society took its date from the existing Carsphairn Fair, namely the first Friday in June, and there it stayed until the 1970s, when the day was changed to a Saturday to allow more spectators to attend. It was agreed that the members of the first committee would seek out ‘subscribers’ so that a prize fund could be established – again, as today, the Show relies heavily on its Patrons list.

Afternoon Entertainments over the years at The Show:

- A Wool Fair
- Races (including an Iron Ore Miner’s Race)
- Clipping Competition
- Tug of War
- Exhibition of Working Collie Dogs
- Invitation Sheep Dog Trial
- A ‘Missing Man’ Competition
- A Grand Raffle to Raise Money for Flakes
(Prizes to include a Biro Pen and a pair of nylons)
- An improved Sports Programme
- ‘Pillow Fight’ (Strong flour bags would be required)
- Clipping Sheep to Wearing Jumper Time Trial
- A ‘Cow Pat Lottery’

Reading through the minutes of the Society one can see that the Show has had a few changes, but really not that many. Initially there were no sheep classes held at the Show, but some classes for ‘cottars cows’. One logged dispute in 1922 concerned an allegation that a ‘pedigree Ayrshire stirk’ was not as entered, and a protest lodged that ‘the coo had been served with a bull fae The Holm, and they dinna have a pure Ayrshire bull’. An investigation was undertaken and the owner finally admitted he was in the wrong.....

Back in 1934 a protest was lodged in the Flower Classes where an Asparagus Fern was entered in the ‘Any Variety Fern’ Class and awarded third place. The protester maintained that Asparagus was not a fern and had supplied a letter from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew to give credence to his claim. The Committee decided to “withhold the prize of 1 shilling and 6 pence and ask for a cutting of the plant in dispute to allow the same to be submitted to an expert for examination”. The outcome of this investigation is not, however, recorded.

Also minuted was a complaint from an exhibitor that the choosing of judges was ‘a fix’, something that just occasionally might be thought, but not usually put in writing! (As present Show Secretary, I can vouch that no judge ‘fixing’ happens!)

The poultry classes were the largest section of the show and in their heyday, 'conveyances' would bring hampers of poultry, which had been collected off the train at Dalmellington. In the Show archive is a sad little post card from an exhibitor in 1936 which reads: "*Dear Secretary, owing to the pure damned stupidity of the Clerk at Drongan Station my exhibits for the Show were not put on the train yesterday morning. I left him as the train was approaching the station to put the hamper in the van. Imagine my surprise when he called at my house at 10.30 to say that he had forgotten all about it....*" etc., etc! Alas, by 1953, the poultry section was no more.

The poultry were exhibited in a building on the Crofts Showfield, known as The Show Hall, or more lately 'Pavilion'. This wooden structure, with corrugated tin roof also housed the flakes (wooden pens for show day for the sheep), and in the winter was used for the Carpet Bowling Club of Carsphairn. Gradually, this building fell into disrepair and was quite violently blown down in a storm in January 1984. The site was cleared and the timber made available to the 'ladies of the village' for firewood.

The cattle showing began in 1876 with classes for worker's cattle "*from a cottager or working man*" and eventually open classes for Galloway Cattle were introduced. However, the support for the

showing of poultry, pigeons, rabbits and even cattle declined, and in 1969, the Show became a sheep only show. One section which has always been there from the start is the Dog Section and that flourishes to the present day.

The sheep classes did not begin until 1880, but with the background of the members of Carsphairn Shepherds' Society behind it, Carsphairn Show soon established a name for itself as one of the main exhibitions of Blackface Sheep in the country. And although other breeds have been introduced, it is still known as one of Scotland's premier Blackface Sheep 'shop windows'.

Since the 17th Century, the hill shepherds have regarded the Carsphairn Fair or Show the first chance to socialise with their counterparts from other farms since the winter snow melted, and the years' lambing over.

Jean Gibbon

This article first appeared in the June/July edition of the Glenkens Gazette. The Carsphairn Heritage Group thanks Jean for permission to include it in this newsletter.



Wee Tam's First Day at the Kirk

Tam's Mither said "Noo hurry up,
And haste ye wae yir bite an' sup
The morn A'll finish a' the work
The day we're baith gan tae the Kirk

"The Kirk" thinks Tam, his eyes
ashine,
"An' sweeties tae, my that's jist fine"
Sin' he was ready, spruce n'trim
Gan tae the Kirk ne'er bothered him

They left their cosy wee abode,
And aff they set alang the road
The bells peeled oot baith sweet
an'strong,
Wee Tammy clutched his mither's
haun

They drappit pennies in the plate
An' slippit in an' took their sate.
Tam cooried doon, eyes big an'
meek,
A sweetie bulgin' oot his cheek.

The minister tae the pulpit swept,
Moose-like ahint the beadle scretpt
The reverend wiped the specs he
wore,
The beadle quietly closed the door.

Then praise began wi' right will.
Tam sang a hymn he'd learnt ar
skule.
The book was opened, words were
read
Tam followed suit and bowed his
head.

And then there cam the awfudst yell,
"Twas louder than the big Church
bell
Tam's mooth drapped open wi' the
fright
The boxed-in man had share gaun
gyte

He jumpit up, he thumpit doon,
He whirled his arms, he whacked his
croon
He shook his fists; Tam's wee heart
leapt,
He wonnert hoo the folks a'slept

The Book was banged wi' fiendish
force -
He roared and roared, his voice grew
hoarse,
W' sic a din and sic a blast
Puir Wee Tam's a courage failed at
last.

His hair can en' he clawed the pew,
Let oot a screech scuttled thro'
He turned to plead, "Aw, Mither
SCOOT,
Whit'll we dae if the man gets OOT"

**This poem may have been written
by Mrs Jeanie Ferguson (nee
McMillan) 1880 -1965.**