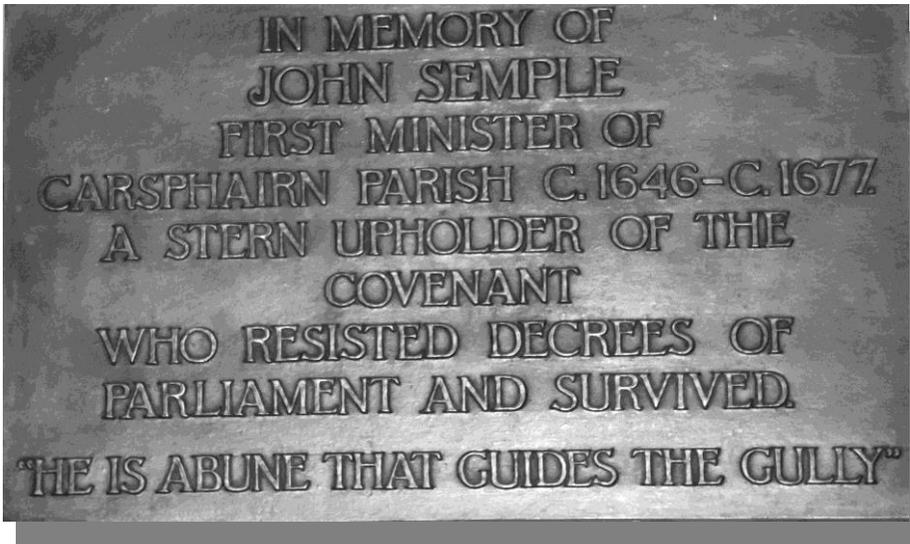


Carsphairn Heritage Group



Newsletter 106
Spring 2014

2014 season: Petticoat Tales - The Gentle Touch

The Heritage Group opened for the season on Good Friday April 18th on a glorious, warm day. Finishing touches were made to the exhibition, the floral display was planted, the big publicity signs were screwed into the fence and the distribution of the eye catching flyers was started. Much hard work has been done by the committee in preparation for this season, in the gathering of written material, dresses and other artefacts which all look magnificent against the freshly painted interior of the building.

On Good Friday vehicles flowed into the car park with their passengers mainly scurrying to the toilets, some coming to see the exhibition and others simply enjoying the wonderful views, including some snow on the Rhinns of Kells.

Our private view was held a few days later with very positive comments about this year's exhibition and we hope that many of you reading this will be able to come and see it.

Membership

We have 4 Life Members, the latest one being Dr David Devereux who was for many years the curator of the Stewartry Museum. He has guided and supported us throughout.

We had planned to increase the membership fees for 2014 but because our AGM was postponed we were not able to get approval before the new year started so the membership is unaltered ie £3 for Senior Citizens, £5 for individuals and £10 for a corporate fee. However, second class postage (shortly to be increased) 4 times a year eats into the membership income so I am making a plea to those of you who would be happy to receive the newsletter by email to contact Sheila Hey our editor (email address smhey2014@yahoo.co.uk).

Our thanks to the many members who have already renewed their subscription for this year. We are grateful for the generous donations which many of you add to your subscriptions. If you have not re-joined yet and would like to please complete the enclosed form and send it back.

Flyer

A copy of the 2014 flyer is enclosed with this newsletter. Emma Cathcart has designed our flyer for many years and we are very grateful to her for her time and great talent.

Chairman's Report for 2013

Now in February 2014, last year seems a distant memory but when I focus on it Carsphairn Heritage Group had a good year.

Our exhibition about the Show received world wide publicity as ALBA TV came on Show Day primarily to film the dog trial but also came into the Centre and filmed the exhibition as well as doing some interviewing. Carsphairn School children visited the Heritage Centre and used what they read there for the 2014 school calendar so we also have publicity that should stretch throughout the UK and beyond for the whole of this year. Visitor numbers were up to almost 1200, considerably better than 2012.

Family history enquiries came from all over the world, either by enquires to our web site or in person and we were mostly able to help. One family wrote enthusiastically in the visitors' book "Could have spent a week here just looking at the paperwork for our family" We already have a family coming to research their ancestors in May. Those of you who are members will have read in the last newsletter the poignant visit of the American lady who visited the crash site of the American bomber to see where her father died in 1951.

Our stewards, as ever have been loyal and enthusiastic and together with some very welcome new stewards have been excellent front of house people not only for the Heritage Centre but for the whole area. In the Visitors Book there are many comments showing appreciation of the helpfulness and friendliness of the stewards and several are mentioned by name. There are no paid posts in this organisation. We rely on our membership subscriptions, donations, and sales. We are not funded by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

We are also grateful to our members who renew their loyalty each year and give generously. Our thanks are also due to Carsphairn Renewal Energy Ltd for funding our flyers and some of our revenues cost. Without successful applications to CREFL we would be dipping into reserves which cannot be sustained indefinitely.

This year Jean Gibbon as Show Secretary helped us enormously lending us the Show box which was crammed with artefacts as well as doing a considerable amount of research for the Exhibition, Anne Talman provided many photographs and Emma Cathcart produced another wonderful flyer.

Within our Committee we have a lively group of people with abundant talents who are willing to give their time and enthusiasm to, each year, produce an exhibition of a very high standard. Ideas and positive comments overflow during the meetings and I as chair, often feel quite exhausted after the meetings trying to keep control of the fast flowing discussions. Thank you all for your support

Our secretary, Joyce Hunter Blair retires from that post this year after many years of recording what is said at the meetings. She has led by example, producing the

minutes within days of the meeting and acting on many of the decisions. She stays on the committee and remains as Rota Organiser, a job for which she deserves a medal.

I think it's about 25 years since we were constituted as a Group. It's great that we are still going and I hope Carsphairn Heritage Group will go from strength to strength.

Anna Campbell

A cup of tea

After the Annual General Meeting Alison Campbell gave a very interesting talk about the Royal Collection and the afternoon finished with all present enjoying a cup of tea (or coffee) and cakes. Looking back in the Shepherds' Society minute the quality of the cups of tea after meetings was carefully recorded.

The main purpose of the Carsphairn Shepherds' Society was to deal with stray sheep and return them to their rightful owner. Each year, usually in December, a meeting was held either in the Crosskeys Pub or later in the Salutation Hotel. Some years ago, the Heritage Group was given the Society's minute book which covered the years from 1881 to 1929. After the business was completed there would be a social time during which tea or supper was provided and a comment about the quality of it was often recorded in the minutes.

1884 "Sixty gentlemen sat down to a most sumptuous tea prepared by Miss McRobert in first class style".

1897 "There being no stray sheep the company adjourned to tea which was served in Mrs Mitchell's usual excellent style".

1924 "Thereafter the shepherds enjoyed a hand round cup of tea, supplied by Mrs Randall".

1926 "Mr Randall provided a beautiful tea" and in **1927** "a splendid cup of tea supplied by Mr Randall in his usual good style".

1928 "Twenty joined in a friendly cup of tea purveyed by Mr Randall in his usual good style".

1929 "the committee and a few friends enjoyed a nice cup of tea supplied by Mr Randall".

What wonderful variations on the merit of a cup of tea.

Carsphairn Heritage Group**Charity No SC007408**

Year Ending 31. October 2013

<u>Income</u>	2013	2012	<u>Expenditure</u>	2013	2012
		£			£
Membership	255.00	292.00	Exhibition Exp.	290.53	243.02
Donations	941.20	669.56	Center Exp.	476.41	894.30
Center Sales	810.25	839.49	Sale/Return/Purchases for sale	466.05	495.92
Interest	44.03	16.33	Insurance	531.69	508.76
Grants	2443.16	2060.56	Heat & Light	1143.00	648.89
Sundries	5.00		Printing	457.59	604.75
			Sundries	76.95	228.89
			Social Event	33.30	25.27
Total income	4498.64	3877.94	Milage	90.00	
Total Expenditure	-4764.69	-3649.80	Refurbishment	1199.17	
Profit/(Loss)	-266.05	228.14	Total Expenditure	4764.69	3649.80
Total income 2013	4498.64	4498.64	Total expenditure 2013	4764.69	4764.69
Uncleared from last year now cleared		-672.8	Uncleared cheques		-192.02
Cash in hand @ 1/11/12		20.00	Cash in hand @ 31/10/12		20.00
Treasurers account @ 1/11/12		5711.27	Treasurers account @ 31/10/13		4920.41
National Savings Investment @ 1/11/12		8181.60	National Savings Investment @ 31/10/13		8225.63
		17738.71			17738.71

Rev John Semple of Carsphairn

There is a brass plaque in Carsphairn Church on the wall near the organ with the words 'In Memory of John Semple, First Minister of Carsphairn Parish c.1646 – c.1677. A Stern Upholder of the Covenant Who Resisted Decrees of Parliament and Survived.

He is abune that guides the gully.'

I was curious to know a little more about this worthy man. He was not the first minister associated with the church at Carsphairn. Rev John Adamson ministered there in 1637, and was later commissioned in 1644 by the General Assembly to minister in Ulster, until he was ejected by Charles II in 1661. He was succeeded by Rev Hugh Henderson in 1638 - but he was only there for a year before moving to Dalry where he served until 1643. The General Assembly then sent him to Ireland for five years. He returned in 1648 to become the popular minister of Dumfries, until he was deprived of his position in 1662.

However it was only in 1645 that the Parish of Carsphairn was officially created by an Act of Parliament, and the following year John Semple was appointed as its first full time parish minister. We don't know a lot about his earlier life. He was born around 1602 and went over to Ireland as precentor for one of the Scottish ministers who were active in supporting the new Protestant settlement of Ulster. He settled in County Down, where one day he was singing a psalm before the minister arrived to preach and was moved to speak on the psalm he was singing. The minister when he arrived noticed he had a remarkable gift for preaching and, after giving him some private trials, gave him license to preach in private houses. The Covenanter Rev Gabriel Semple describes how once he had this freedom he travelled around Ulster and gathered quite a following, often filling houses and even barns, and was the happy instrument in converting many souls to God. It was a time of great revival amongst the Scottish emigrants in Ulster.

When he left Ireland he came to Kirkcudbright where he passed his trials for the ministry, despite his limited education and his lack of the Latin language, and was called to minister amongst the hill folk in the new parish of Carsphairn. There he quickly made a name for himself. The Covenanter Patrick Walker who gathered and published stories of six celebrated Covenanters (including Alexander Peden) included John Semple amongst that number. He published his booklet on Semple in 1727 and later all six of

his booklets were gathered into one volume under the title ‘Six Saints of the Covenant’. John Semple is also included in John Howie’s ‘The Scots Worthies’ published in 1853.

Walker wrote, ‘Mr Semple, by his singular piety and exemplary walk, was had in such veneration that all ranks and sorts of people stood more in awe of him than of many ministers; yea, he was a great check upon the lazy corrupt part of the clergy, who were much afraid of him... He was very painful and laborious among his own people, preaching frequently on week-days, which is now rarely done in country-places. The Lord’s presence with him in preaching, catechising, and in the exercise of church discipline, reclaimed that people, who were scarcely civilised before; several of whom became eminent Christians, and were endued with the grace of prayer; of which Mr Peden used to say that they had just place at the court of heaven beyond many Christian professors of religion that he knew. He sometimes had the Lord’s Supper administered two Sabbaths together in the year, to which many godly people came from a great distance; of whose edification he was so tender that the ministers, who were countenanced with their Master’s most gracious presence, were invited by him from remote places to feed God’s children.’ So his ministry clearly reached to the encouragement and spiritual strengthening of his fellow ministers. Carsphairn’s communion cups are dated 1647 and Semple must have procured them at the beginning of his ministry.

He was much given to secret prayer, and ordinarily prayed in the kirk before the sacramental occasions, because the kirk was more retired than the manse. He set apart the Friday for wrestling with his Master for his gracious presence on the Communion-Sabbath; and he being favoured with merciful returns, to the great comfort of both ministers and people, he appointed a week-day for thanksgiving to God... When he visited his parish, he caused every head of a family pray after he had prayed, and exhorted every member of the family; this method of obliging heads of families to pray, before the minister and family, has been remarkably followed with success, although many now refuse it; but they were all so subject to him that few positively refused.’

One story that shows how he drew people to Carsphairn from far and wide and how he had a heart for young people, as well as proving that communion tokens were used at Carsphairn even at that early date, is

repeated here: ‘He gave tokens to two youths, one of fourteen the other sixteen years, that they might come to the Lord’s table at Carsphern. Before he gave them the tokens he prayed for advice (they being come from afar, some say from Fife), and after examination he found them endued with a great measure of Christian knowledge; but some ministers quarrelled his giving tokens to such boys; wherefore he desired these ministers to catechise them, which the ministers did, and allowed of their admission to the Lord’s table; and after the communion, they gave satisfying accounts of their case, and proved solid Christians; of whom Mr Semple said to the rest of the ministers, these are God’s bairns, and had more grace than many who were far older, and therefore he could not deny them God’s food to their souls; they came from afar to meet with the Lord, whom they had heard to be sometimes remarkably present at Carsphern, and he hoped they would not repent their journey. He dismissed the lads with encouraging exhortations to be steadfast in the faith, and to make good use of their Bibles.’

David Bartholomew

The second part of this article will appear in the summer newsletter.

Rainfall in the Carsphairn area

After a very wet winter when the Deugh reached record levels you might be amused to read the paragraph below which appeared in the Galloway News in 1915.

“A Carsphairn correspondent writes to point out that we did his parish some unintentional injustice in a note in this column last week, when we described Carsphairn as the rainiest district in the Stewartry. Our correspondent states that the rainfall record which is kept at the Shiel, and from which we took our information, hardly gives a just record for the whole parish as it appears that hay-making is often going on in the valley of the Deugh while rain is falling at the Shiel, which is situated very high among the hills. We are pleased to hear this, but all the same the Shiel can afford to give away a good deal from its record, and we would not advise anyone to go to Carsphairn on holiday without a water-proof.” Sound advice!