



CARSPHAIRN HERITAGE GROUP

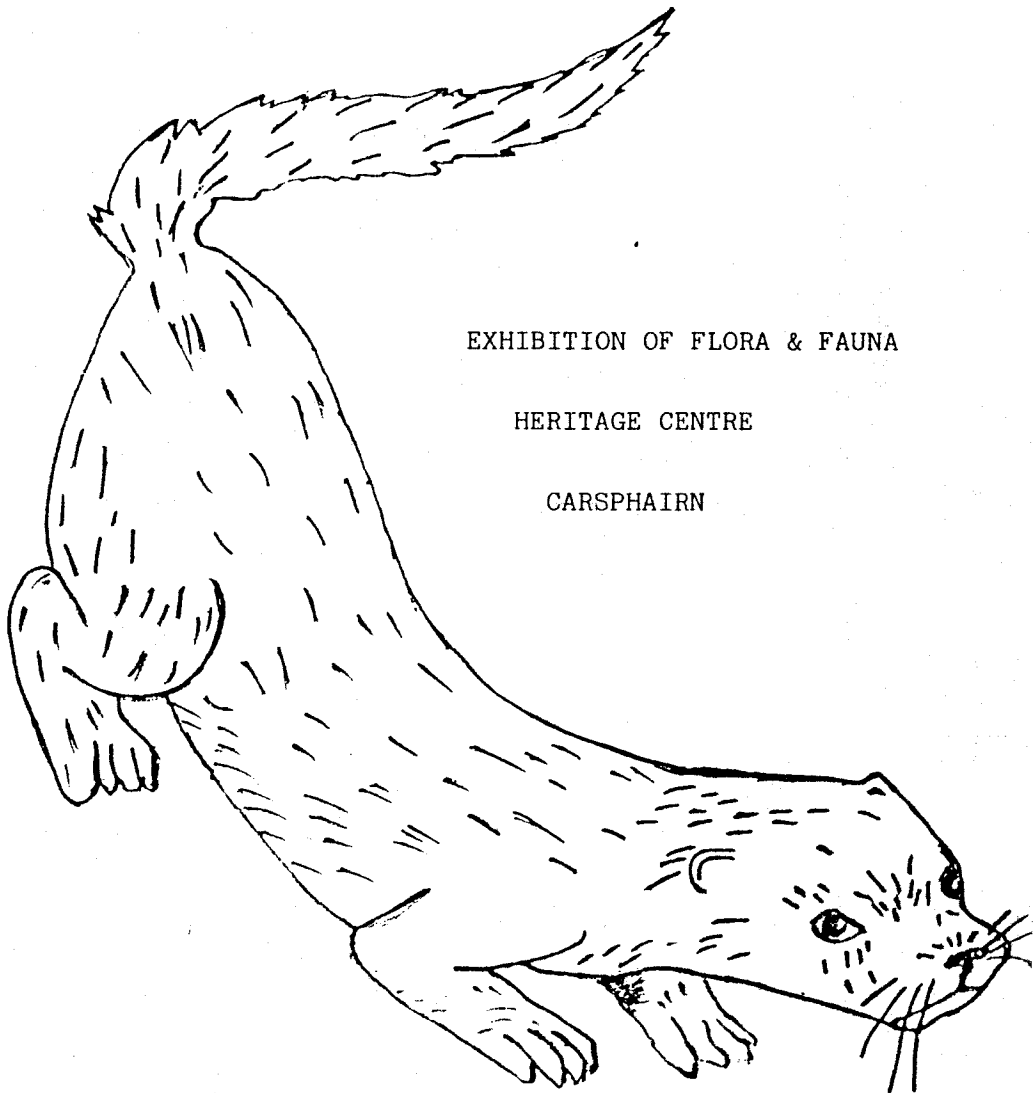
NEWSLETTER NO. 19

JULY 1992

EXHIBITION OF FLORA & FAUNA

HERITAGE CENTRE

CARSPHAIRN



## The Heritage Centre.

By the time you receive this issue of the Newsletter our exhibition "Flora and Fauna in Carsphairn" will be up and running and the committee hope you will be able to visit and see it before we close on October 18th for the winter.

We will also have a small exhibition on "Clogmaking" on display. This has kindly been loaned to us by Godfrey Smith, Clogmaker at Balma-clellan.

Stewards are always needed and we are indebted to a number of people who have stepped in at the last minute to help out. Judging from comments of those who have been on duty in the Centre they have found it easy to do - Mrs Moffat even took her Spinning Wheel up one day and sat spinning by the door between visitors.

If you have not yet stewarded or are happy to take another turn, please contact Peter Marshall, Carsphairn 621 or Rhoda Campbell, Dalry 365 as soon as possible to arrange days or half days.

Over 500 people have visited the Centre and we hope to be busier in the height of the summer season.

The Heritage Centre signs are now ready and we are awaiting planning permission to erect them. They should attract more passing motorists.

### Sponsored Walk August 29th.

The assembly point will be the car park at Craigencaillie which can be reached by turning up the road just west of Clatteringshaws

Loch. It is signposted to Loch Dee. The walk will start at 10.00am. There will be a choice of two walks, a long one of 11 miles taking about 6 hours and a shorter one of 6½ miles taking 4½ hours. Both walks will go to the top of Millfore (2152') from where there is an excellent view of the Galloway Hills. Those preferring the shorter walk will return through a gap in the forestry and then onto a track whilst those on the long walk will go to Red Gairy (2033'), past the White Lochan, down to the Black Loch, then onto the White Laggan Bothy and then to Loch Dee.

At the end of the walk there will be refreshments provided at the Craigencaillie Car Park.

Sponsor forms and further information are available from Rhoda Campbell at Dalry 365, Doug Lewis, Carsphairn 219 or the Heritage Centre. If you wish to contact the marshalls please phone Doug Lewis or John Clark Kennedy at Carsphairn 225.

If the weather is very bad the walk will be postponed until the next day - Sunday August 30th.

The sponsored walks are organised by Doug Lewis who, each year, puts a lot of work into finding a route which is interesting and spectacular. He also chooses an easier route for those who do not feel up to the longer challenge.

We hope that you will come and bring as many with you as possible to make it a memorable day.

Gifts.\*

A number of gifts have been donated to the Heritage Group recently. Dr Moffat gave a tradesman's tool stamp, Mrs Richmond a goose tailoring iron and a candlesnuffer and Mrs Elma Haining has given a variety of interesting things amongst which were the following; a record of the collection made for Ned Stewart to mark his retirement as postman in the Carsphairn area after 37 years, a bill for the hire of a horse in 1932, the particulars of the sale of the Craigenkillan Estate in 1919, the valuation roll for Carsphairn 1938 - 39 and a number of photographs of Carsphairn residents.

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Diary Dates.

Friday November 6th 1992. Annual General Meeting. Lagwyne Hall. 7.30 p.m.  
Friday, November 20th 1992. Old Time Dance. Lagwyne Hall. 8.00 p.m.

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Kars Castle.

For those of you wishing to find the remains of Kars Castle they can be seen quite easily not far off the A713. Going north, pass Dundeugh Village, Polmaddie and then turn right down a forestry track, over the bridge and park about 40 yards further on. The remains are about 50 yards into the forestry on the right.

*Nor fader quhilk beist i Hevin.  
Hallowit weird thyne nam.  
Cum thyne kinrik.  
Be done thyne wull as is i Hevin,  
sva po yerd.  
Nor dailie breid gif us thilk day.  
And forleit us nor skathis, as we  
forleit tham quha skath us.  
And leed us na intil temptation.  
Butan fre us fra evil.  
Amen.*

### Recollections and Reflections of a Grandmother.

You may recall in a previous newsletter (Number 16 October 1991) a review of Jane Abel's book "Recollections and Reflections of a Grandmother". Mrs Abel, who is now 88 is a member of the McMillan family who lived in the village for many years. She was born in the Manchester area but spent many holidays in Carsphairn and has many vivid memories of Carsphairn before the Second World War. We are grateful for her permission to print some extracts from her book in our newsletter.

#### The Shiel Farm. \*

Among my grandfather's family friends were two shepherds who managed the "Shiel" farm among the hills below the Merrick mountain, 2760 feet high. It lay in a beautiful spot by a crystal clear mountain stream and among peat moors which provided the fuel for the house.

Old Mrs Wilson had been born in another farm house a few miles away and come to the Shiel as a young bride. Her two sons Sam'l and Rob, still known as "the boys", now managed the sheep and seemed most content with their job, hard though their work was at times. The one daughter had married a Leven coal merchant, so only seldom paid a visit but Miss Jessie, the elder one, now kept the house remarkably clean, stacked the cut peats to dry, attended to the cows and fowl, baked delicious "tattie scones" on her girdle, and cooked appetising meals.

Most weeks some members of the family, suitably shod and clad to weather the elements, sometimes even wading through the swollen River Deugh, would go over to the village, to collect papers, letters and books to read. When possible, they would enjoy a short visit to grandfather's house, a light meal and generally "ca the crack" - (have a gossip). Aunt Agnes who ran the Post Office could supply most of the latest news as well as bits of scandal.

When work permitted, one or two of the family would set off in their Sabbath "claes" (clothes) to attend the noonday service at the Wee Free Kirk\*\* which grandfather and friends had long supported after the break with the Parish Kirk. Their old boots hidden by the dyke nearest the village, they would then put on their Sabbath foot wear and arrive smartly dressed in their tweedy best-suits that would last for years.

Old Aunt Jeanie, in smart black coat and flowered silk hat, would distribute the pennies and peppermints for the family "weans" on holiday, plus prayer and hymn books. A tight clasp must be kept on these, no sweets to be dropped on the wooden floor to disturb the peace! And what noise if one accidentally was let fall on the wooden floor!

The bell would ring for a few minutes; the doors closed and in would walk the suitably clothed Precentor. With his tuning fork he would strike the desk, setting a suitable key for the psalm to open the service. On a fine Sunday, many of the village folk and others living further away, filled the bright little church. Visiting families would also attend - it was the done thing, and a chance to meet and plan for the week ahead. The novelty of watching the Precentor ceased years later when a harmonium took over, and a choir was formed.

During the summer it was quite a common thing for the minister to invite a small number of people to accompany him on his hill trek to Mrs Wilson's home. Then he would take a short communion service in the parlour for the benefit of the old lady and any who wished to participate.

Some would be shown around the farm and chat with the workers who were free. The older visitors enjoyed a seat and a friendly gossip after their long trek from the village. Miss Jessie, noting roughly the size of the party climbing up the hillside, would have set a table covered with delicious "tattie scones" fresh from her girdle, small pancakes, treacle scones, pats of prettily shaped farm butter, delicious home made apple, rowan and other jellies for spreading on the scones.

And how dear Mrs Wilson enjoyed the company - even when over 90 years old. I still picture her in the seat of honour, wearing her best black dress, a finely knitted grey shawl draped round her neck, a saintly smile on her weather beaten face. As a youngster I was assured that the "boys" would soon be back from the hill, and awaited more young companions. But, "the boys" I soon learned were over sixty years of age! Still boys to her and never married.

More than once on the return journey, they would accompany us part way back especially if rain and thunder threatened. For then, they would carry the females one by one, safely over the swirling River Deugh and return to duty while we all made the last mile or two back to the village.

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\* The Shiel farm was sold for forestry in 1949 and now is part of Dundeugh Forest.

\*\* The Free Kirk was built as the United Presbyterian Church and later it became known as the United Free Church. It was opened in May 1893 and it continued until 1930. In 1929 the United Free Church united with the Church of Scotland and so for a brief period Carsphairn had two churches belonging to the Established Church, Carsphairn North and Carsphairn South. The United Free Church is now a home known as "Kirkholm".

Ancestral Research.

There have been a few occasions, since the Heritage Centre opened when people have come in looking for evidence of their ancestors.

One instance was when Mr McMillan from Invergordon came in to see what he could find about the McCulloch family who were stone dykers in Carsphairn in the last century. From the Manpower Services project on the gravestones in the kirkyard and the 1891 census it has been possible to produce a family tree for Mr McMillan. Some of the McCulloch's lived at Burnfoot and some in the village and they were all stonedykery. From the evidence we have the last survivors of the family locally were Mary who died in New Galloway in 1933 and James who died in Carsphairn in 1924. If you can add any information please contact Anna Campbell.

Colonel Clark Kennedy has found some references to them in his "Knockgray Archives".

Letter from John Waugh, gamekeeper on Knockgray.

The Ligget February 4th 1869,

Sir,

I beg leave to inform you that I have taken estimates for the Dyke at the Ligget.

James Guffié 7 shillings per rood, William McCulloch 7 shillings per rood, Thomas McCulloch and Andrew McCormick 6 shillings and ninepence per rood the most of the stones will be bad to get.

Your humble servant,  
John Waugh.

Extracts from a Pocket Book of Receipted Bills kept by Alexander W.M. Clark Kennedy.

No.	Address & Trade	Date	Name	Amount
89	Stone Dyker. Burnfoot. N.B.*	1872	Hugh McCulloch	£14.12.0.
90	Stone Dyker. Carsphairn N.B.	1872	James McGuffie.	£18.11.3.

\* N.B. = North Britain.

Colonel Clark Kennedy also has an estimate for "Garden Wall at Knockgray at 10/- per rood, all materials supplied, to be completed in a thoroughly tradesman - like manner. Hugh McCulloch & Sons 1872.

The First Statistical Account of Scotland Published in 1799.

The Account for Carsphairn was probably written in 1792, two hundred years ago. The minister Reverend Samuel Smith who was responsible for this account moved onto Borgue in 1793.

Included in his remarks about pasturage in the parish is a section about sheep.

"The farmers here have certainly given less attention to the improvement of wool than it merits. The only sheep used is the common black and grey faced, and no fair trials have been made, whether any other species with finer wool would thrive with them, though they are invariably of opinion that they would not. Hence the wool is in general coarse. It sells these two years past from 6s to 8s per stone, or 26 lib. averdu-pois. The mutton is excellent, and improves in quality till the wedder is 6 years old. They are usually sold at three. A wedder of this age weighs 10 or 11 lib. averdu-pois per leg, has 6 or 7 lib. ditto of fat, and sells at 11s. Part are sent to the markets in the north of England in summer, but the greatest quantity to Edinburgh in the end of harvest. - The two most fatal diseases of sheep are the rot and sickness. These two dreadful maladies used often formerly to sweep away the half of a stock, but seldom now make very great havock. The means to prevent the former is to stock light, and after bad seasons to sell off every one that is suspected. The best method of preventing the latter, is to take the young sheep which are most liable to it either to a different farm, or to another part of the same farm, where the quality of the soil is different. The proper cure of the rot would be salt marshes, or house feeding. The sickness is an inflammation of the intestines and ought certainly to be treated by bleeding, injections and warm fermentation.

In one or two farms a disease also prevails termed the vanquish. It arises from feeding on dry barren moss, void of all nourishment, to which the creatures are so attached, that they will never leave it till they die of emaciation. In this disease the horns usually become red. This disease almost constantly proves fatal, unless the sheep are removed to the low grounds, and put on better pasture, which always operates a cure".

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Spitfire Crash.

On May 23rd 1942 a Spitfire crashed on the east side of Cairnsmore of Carsphairn. The pilot was David Hunter Blair, a cousin of Frank Hunter Blair from Marbrack. The aircraft, with another Spitfire, was patrolling over the Clyde observing the Cunard Liner, the Queen Mary which was bringing

in the first lot of American troops. The Spitfires were diverted to look for a German plane that was flying into Galloway. The intruder wasn't found but the Spitfire piloted by David Hunter Blair had climbed to a great height and it was thought that he suffered oxygen failure. He lost consciousness and the plane called "Blue Peter" crashed. David Hunter Blair was killed.

The Dumfries and Galloway Aviation Museum has been asked by the B.B.C. to try to locate the exact site of the crash. The B.B.C. would like to include a feature on the crash on its programme "Blue Peter". Anyone who could help the Museum locate the exact spot of the crash is asked to contact David Reid on 0387 65957.

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### Book Reviews by Colonel Clark Kennedy.

"Owners and Occupiers" by R.H.Campbell sub-titled "Changes in Rural Society in South -West Scotland before 1914". This hard back (priced £14.95) covers Ayrshire, Dumfries-shire and Galloway with particular emphasis on Wigtownshire and the financial collapse of the Earl of Galloway's Estates there. The whole area is well covered in social and particularly agricultural changes and there are six references to Carsphairn for example! An excellent "Bibliography", listing books for further study!

"Fergus the King" by Daphne Brook.

This most excellent and informative booklet by our old friend (who is also responsible for one of the sections in Galloway Lord and Lordship) is the first of a series of three small volumes entitled "The Medieval Lords of Galloway" and covers the period up till 1455 when the Lordship was finally annexed by the Crown. Charles, Prince of Wales, is of course also Earl of Carrick and the origins of this ancient title will be recorded in Volume 2 "The Brothers" 1160-1185" out shortly. The current volume records how well Fergus did for Galloway by playing Scotland off against England and "vica versa" as it suited Galloway. This booklet is published by The Friends of Whithorn Trust.

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### Frontispiece.

The drawing of the otter has been done by Patricia Toland. The otter is one of the exhibits at the "Flora and Fauna" Exhibition.