

Carsphairn  
Heritage  
Group



Once upon a time HP meant sauce, then Hire Purchase. What next?  
See page 2 for how times and words have changed

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This year at the Heritage Centre we conducted an enquiry into the sources of our visitors to the Centre. It proved to be quite interesting and varied but it is limited to around a hundred people or groups.

37 were passing by and curious;

21 stopped to use the toilets and came in when comfortable;

17 had visited before;

14 came through friends;

6 came through our own publicity;

2 were recommended to come by the shop-keeper in Dalry and the rest had heard about us through The Website; had relatives in area; used to live here; found us in the Rough Guide (Scotland); or from the relevant Landranger Map; walking at Woodhead Mine and visited us afterwards; and came in after a rendezvous in our car park. It is interesting to find that nobody came in through the Tourist Board although we always give them hundreds of flyers to distribute.

## **We Are Survivors ( For those born before 1940.....)**

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens, before dish-washers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes ...and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint

can you be?). We thought “fast food” was what you ate in Lent, a “Big Mac” was an oversized raincoat and “crumpet” we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating and “sheltered accommodation” was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, or young men wearing earrings. For us “time sharing” meant togetherness, a “chip” was a piece of wood or fried potato, “hardware” meant nuts and bolts and “software” wasn’t a word.

Before 1940 “Made in Japan” meant junk, the term “making out” referred to how you did in your exams, “stud” was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and “going all the way” meant saying on the double-decker bus to the terminus. In our day, cigarette smoking was “fashionable”, “grass” was mown, “coke” was kept in the coalhouse, a “joint” was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and “pot” was something you cooked in. “Rock Music” was a fond mother’s lullaby, “Eldorado” was an ice-cream, a “gay person” was the life and soul of the party, while “aids” just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today ....

**BUT**

*By the grace of God ... we have survived!*

## East Galloway Sketches

East Galloway Sketches, now a rare book and one keenly sought after was written by Alexander Trotter who lived at Dalshangan, Carsphairn when the book was published in 1901. The sketches were partly founded on family papers and writings and their publication in a book has provided us a rich opportunity to delve into the folk lore and social customs of the Stewartry as well learning about eminent people locally whose contributions would have otherwise not had the recognition so well deserved.

The following extracts are taken from the book. Any commentary written in italics is by way of setting the background to the extract.

### Rev David Gibson

In 1814 the Baptist Society of Scotland decided to send a missionary to travel for three months in Galloway. His name was David Gibson who had spent most of his early preaching life in parts of Ayrshire for which he was paid £20 a year. Not only did he have to pay his travelling expenses but he was forbidden to make money collections at his religious services.

*“His usual methods of itinerating was to preach every day in some portion of the Stewartry, undeterred, as a rule, by bad or stormy weather. If he failed to obtain a schoolroom or house to preach in, he addressed his hearers in the open air. If anyone invited him to remain all night or accept of meals he complied with the request; but failing such hospitality he paid for his lodging at the inn of the place, and invariably asked the innkeeper and his family to join him at family worship. Innkeepers those days were not the Pariahs they have since become, but were considered to have souls to save as well as other people.”*

*“In 1826 he preached at New Galloway, Dalry, Balmacellan, Carsphairn and Cadger’s Hole”* (The ruin of Cadger’s Hole can be found near the A713 going north almost opposite Lamford) *“At Carsphairn the great topic of conversation was the sudden death of Rev. Mr Currie, the parish minister who, at a wedding feast where 100 guests were assembled, suddenly dropped*

*dead in the midst of the festivities. Mr Gibson says 'fear was upon all men, as it was considered a dispensation of Providence, and he had large audiences in consequence.' Rev. Mr Currie was considered intemperate in eating, and various stories were at one time current in the Glenkens about him in this respect. He is thus referred to in the 'Galloway Herds'*

*Gled Currie, Gled Currie, on braxy ye'll worry,  
Frae hame ye lay in for starvation;  
Ye're sic a d-d glutton for tea and for mutton-  
Guid eating's your road to salvation.*

*Ye may thank the high powers that there's sheep on the moors  
To pamper your mass o' corruption,  
For our lowland wives are in dread o' their lives,  
Lest ye come down like a highland eruption.*

*"Rev Mr Currie is one of the 'Four Glenkens Ministers' of Isabella Trotter's tale of that name, in which narrative a very different idea is given of him to that contained in the scurrilous poem quoted from. He was buried in Carsphairn kirkyard, where a diminutive obelisk, supported by a miniature square basement was erected to his memory."*

This monument is no longer in the kirkyard

### **Rev Alexander Macgowan**

He was more interested in education than in being a minister. In 1872 he became master of the Free Grammar School and then later minister of Dalry from 1783 until 1827.

*"At one time in his life he was noted for the extraordinary time he was able to preach, and his sermons never seemed to tire his hearers. It is said that, wishful to put down a yearly drunken series of org.es called Carsphairn Fair, he preached during the entire evening of that day at the place of that name, and kept his audience in hand until the public-houses were closed for the night."*

## Woodhead Mine in 1888

This is the first two pages of Alfred Wilson's trip to Carsphairn in 1888. Originally written in German, and recently translated by Mrs Hough of Carsphairn, this account was for his sister Isabella. Alfred, born in Germany in 1868, was the son of Peter and grandson of Charles Wilson who was manager at the mine from 1838? until 1870.

*"In the village I spoke to some people and I understood them better than I thought and they understood them better than I thought and they understood me with little effort. I spoke to the wife of the joiner who makes windows for Woodhead" leadmine. "Then we went down the street and called on the Campbells in the Holm. It is a big farm on the lefthand side of Garryhorn from the main street of Carsphairn. After lunch (sheeps head) I went wearing a light white cardigan and a pair of binoculars down to Woodhead. You only need to go a little distance from Garryhorn to see the height of the Bow, the little white houses and little further on the pits of Woodhead."*

*"I went along the street for just a short distance. I went down left and then I went down between the houses and the spoil heaps. It is a wonderful feeling to come to the entrance to a pit where everybody worked very hard to get their daily bread. When I got nearer I realised that everything was very quiet. The big wheels that I saw from the distance are standing still. There is not water to drive the wheels and I cannot see any people. Some entrances have collapsed and are filled up with stones. The people who collected them did so with great effort. The houses at the mines are now without roofs and many are derelict and nobody takes much notice."*

This extract was from a collection of papers given to the Carsphairn Heritage Group by Wili Waben from Germany, a direct descendant of Alfred Wilson

**SWEDES** These are better known as a farm than a garden crop, but cottagers and even the better class of people in the northern parts of the United Kingdom have long recognised the value of the roots as an important article of diet.

From Vegetables and their Cultivation published in 1926

contributed by Sue Wiseman of course

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

of the  
Carsphairn Heritage Group  
will be held at  
Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn

on  
**Friday 14th November 2003**

AGM at 7.00pm  
followed by

**a Talk by Tommy Henderson**

Chairman of Dalbeattie Museum Trust

A light hearted account of the achievements  
of the Dalbeattie Museum since its inception in 1989

Refreshments

**[www.scan.org.uk](http://www.scan.org.uk)**

This is a wonderful new web site that will be of great interest to any historian or to anyone interested in delving into family history.

Now that the clocks have changed and the thought of going into the garden becomes less tempting why not sit at your computer and get into the above site. The Scottish wills section is fascinating to browse through. There is free access to a fully searchable index of over 520,000 Scottish wills dating from 1500 until 1901.

I have been using the index to try to find a link between American and Scottish McAdams and have so far failed but my curiosity was fired to see if I could find anyone from Carsphairn. I keyed in the surname "Jamieson" and up came Robert Jamieson farmer Holm of Daltallschun died 5 July 1830. Then I thought of the Rev Mr Currie whose demise is described elsewhere in this newsletter. Sure enough his will is included in the index – but I don't think I am curious enough to obtain a copy at a cost of £5!

**It's a wonderful opportunity for anyone interested who is prepared to spend a little time searching – and it can all be done from home!**

Anna Campbell

There were nearly 1500 visitors to the Heritage Centre in 2003. They came mainly from the UK but also from twelve foreign countries. One particularly happy visit was by twelve schoolchildren who had all come in a mini-bus from Galashiels to witness the wedding of their teacher Mandy Gibson to Stuart Richardson in Carsphairn Church.

Those who made comments in the book were usually generous and complimentary and below are some examples :

“Is the fur on that dress made of ferrets?” (ermine)

“A nugget in the middle of nowhere”

“Fine museum, we wish there were more like it”

“Well done, just what a visit should do”

“Disappointed no tea room”

“Pupil at Clatteringshaws School which closed in 1947”

There were also others searching for ancestors. For the first time this year we received numerous requests via e-mail for information regarding Family History.

#### Idea for a Christmas Present

The extract from East Galloway Sketches on the Reverend David Gibson in this Newsletter is included at a particularly opportune time.

From Auchencairn to the Glenkens and Portpatrick the  
**Journal of David Gibson 1814 - 1843** by Innes MacLeod  
has just been published

It is a fascinating book full of extracts from Rev Gibson's diary with many references to local places and interwoven with Mr MacLeod's scholarly commentary.

It is available from Mr MacLeod, Lower Glengorm, Biggar, ML12 6JN at £4.50 + postage and package or from local bookshops