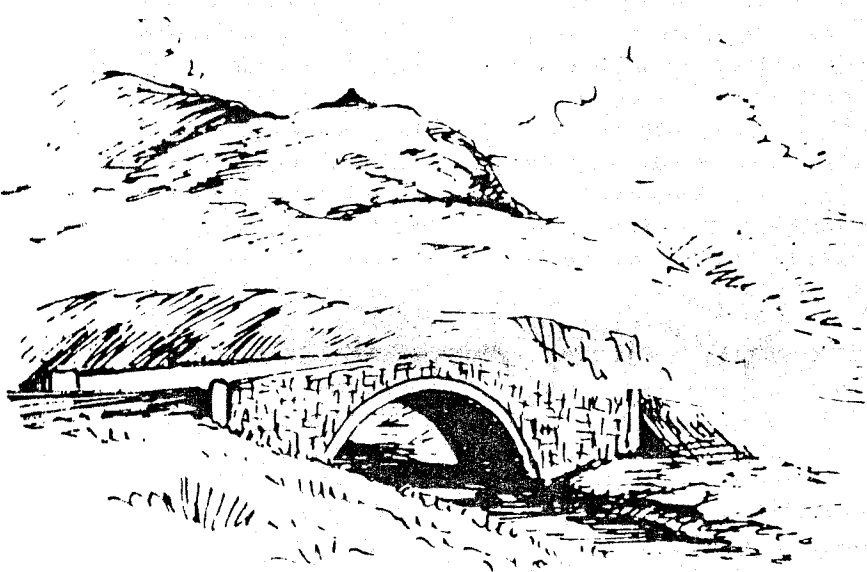


CARSPHAIRN  
HERITAGE  
GROUP



Stroanfreggan Craig

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

The hallmark of any successful group activity is a strong momentum existing Independantly of any particular individual. The Carsphairn Heritage Group has shown such a momentum ever since its Inception. Indeed, as we enter our third year the scope of our activities continues to Increase at a pace which not only provides a constant series of challenges but at times threatens to overload the systems.

The snowball effect, however much it taxes the group's resources, is certainly a sign of success.

It is heartening to see that membership continues to rise: the 50 total of subscriptions represents over 100 people when family dues are taken into account. The number of people who are taking an active part in the group's projects is also rising steadily while the vital co-operation of landowners and various bodies both inside and outside the parish has continued. A private forestry company has recently asked us for advice on the proposed planting at Woodhead. The first time a forestry concern has invited local comment on a new planting.

While general enthusiasm for our activities continues to rise so does the workload for members. The forthcoming summer events, plus the preparation for the A-frame building, will require the involvement of more people if these projects are to succeed as planned. We hope that all members will be involved as much as possible in the summer events.

## SIGNPOSTS LEAFLET DISPENSERS AND WAYMARKERS

Those members, who live locally, will have noticed several signposts and leaflet dispensers. These mark the beginnings of several walks or drives on the Carsphairn Heritage Trails. Each of the seven dispensers are leaflets describing the seven walks and what can be seen on them. You may wonder how there are seven different walks. On two of them Polmaddy Carna and the leadmires the walk can be done either way so leaflets have been written from both ends; therefore it doesn't matter from which end the walk is done. We hope that the leaflets will give the explorer some added information which will give them greater pleasure from the walk. Those who have ventured onto the walk or drive will have found waymarks with the logo of the Carsphairn Heritage Group branded into them which hopefully will prevent anyone from getting lost and will also show a recommended route.

The Group would like to thank Colonel Clark Kennedy for his generosity in providing the stobs and branding them and to his helpers, Mr Lewis and Mr Marshall for the hours of work that a three put into the erection of not only the stobs but the dispensers and the signposts. Also the Regional Council Department of Physical Planning has given financial aid and practical assistance through the help given by Mr Arthur Howatson, the Rights of Way Officer. We hope the completion of all the work will help those wishing to enjoy the country side and learn about some of the lesser known features of Carsphairn Parish.

## COMPETITION

If you are going on any of our Heritage Trails please take your camera with you and if any views of historical sites on the way particularly catch your eye take a picture. Stuart Marshall will be pleased to have copies of your best efforts - no limit as to how many! Closing date and prizes for this competition will be announced in the next Newsletter. Please keep your negatives as we may ask to use the best entries to illustrate an enlarged map of the Heritage Trails.

## SUMMER EXHIBITION

We need lots more artifacts for this years Farming exhibition. Anyone who can lend old farming implements, dairy equipment or any other material, including books, maps and photographs, relating to the history of farming in Galloway please get in touch with any Committee Member as soon as possible.

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Three events are planned for 1989 -

### 1. 27th May : Wine and Cheese Party.

The main events of the evening will be

1a. Competition based on identification of old farming artifacts. Anyone with suitably mysterious implements please get in touch.

1b. Competition for the best old farming photograph - please bring your best.

### 2. Mid Summer : Teddy Bears Picnic for children.

### 3. Autumn : Social event, games, dance and entertainme

## RECIPE BOOK

The success of home baking at past events has inspired the idea of producing a recipe book which will be sold at future exhibitions etc. All members are invited to provide favourite recipes - please contact Mrs Watret at Carsphairn 667.

## SUMMER OUTING

We are hoping to arrange a summer outing on the same lines as last year. It will either be an evening trip in June to visit the cottage in Chapel Row at Waterside which has been made into a replica of an Ironworkers home around 1915 or a short trip on the Ayrshire Railway Preservation Society line at Minnivey, Dalmeilington. This may be arranged during their open day on June 25th which means that as the whole Waterside Project has an open day you will also be able to visit the site at Waterside (if you visited it last year) and the cottage. You may be interested to see how the work on the repairing of the chimney is progressing. Scaffolding was erected in March and the top ten rows of bricks are being removed, as they are very unstable, and then they will be recemented back into place.

As soon as we have firm details of this outing we will inform you.

## GIFTS

Mrs Richardson from Carsphairn has given a grocery price list from April 1939. Mrs Auld from Ayr has given a copy of Ralder's Land by S. R. Crocket published in 1904 and a coloured Ordnance Survey Map of this area published in 1905. If members would like to look at the catalogue of gifts given to the Group or borrow any of them please contact Mrs Campbell at Carsphairn 208.

## CARSPHAIRN POST OFFICE

1968 - 1989

On Monday morning the 28th November, 1968 I opened my Sub Post Office in what had previously been our dining room at 'The Cottage' and my first customer was the late Rev. John Alexander, minister of our Parish Church, who occupied the manse in the village, now known as 'Calrnsmore House'. He and the late Mrs Catherine Campbell were the two people I had asked for references when I applied to have the Sub Post Office. Having attended to his postages, he went off with a box of sweets - his gift for being my first customer.

From my predecessor, the late Mr Alexander Borthwick, I had purchased and paid for a large oak desk and chair which had graced his Post Office in the corrugated iron building which still stands beside the public telephone box in the village. Somewhere during these changing times the gentleman who was buying Mr Borthwick's

house had also bought the Post Office building. He must have thought the contents were his too and surprised me one day by saying "I didn't intend you to have the chair as well as the desk", to which I said I had assumed they went together as a pair. His reply, "When I go to the shop for a loaf of bread they do not give me half a pound of butter to go with it".

The two-tier postage was introduced in 1968 and I have a letter posted to me in December of that year with a 4d. stamp. Now stamps are 14 pence and 19 pence, almost equivalent to the old 3/- and 4/-.

In 1971 decimal coinage was introduced and metric weights followed in September 1975.

The basic pension then was around the £5 now £41 plus. Child allowance was 7/6 with nothing for the first child, now it is £7.25 per child. Sunday mail collections, (these went on the afternoon bus in a miniature letter box chained to the bus) and telegrams from here ceased in 1968. Now every house has a phone.

When I started the mail bag was sealed each day with a very foul smelling sealing wax, now a metal clip is used. Mail goes daily with the postman except for Saturday when it goes by bus.

I enjoyed my Post Office days in meeting friends and keeping up-to-date with events around us and in the summer it was interesting to meet visitors from overseas.

My last customer on 4th March was Sheila Pringle and she too received some sweets.

That is the end of a full-time Post Office in Carsphairn and we now have a Community Office at the shop.

Agnes S. Dickson.

#### NEW GALLOWAY TO CARSPHAIRN BY COACH

The following is an extract from the Galloway Advertiser sometime in 1895.

A Contributor naming himself/herself as Verax wrote of a trip from New Galloway to Carsphairn by coach.

"In June last I foreshadowed in some stray jottings in the Advertiser the probability of a coaching tour being established between the station (New Galloway) and Dalmellington, and a few weeks ago I found it an accomplished fact. I feared at the time that rumour might justify her reputation of being a "many tongued liar" and I was therefore delighted to mount the coach and share with so many the delights of a drive to Carsphairn. Before we reached Carsfad the flow of conversation was free and easy among the passengers and Polharrow bridge seemed to echo with a sound like marriage bells. A tinge of sadness, however, supervened as we neared the scene of the Carsfad murder in 1862, where the victim, Ann Hannay, was done to death, through jealousy it was said. Visions of happy hours many years ago flash through my

memory as the comfortable steading of Strongcastle appears. The ruins of the ancient Castle of Dundeach, once belonging to a branch of the Kenmure family, and which figured in the campaigns of Robert Bruce, next claim attention, and soon we whirl within sight of Dalshangan, where the author of "Galloway <sup>Northies</sup> ~~Westies~~" (Dr Trotter) occasionally seeks relaxation from busy life in his own demise. Soon we speed over the bridge of Deuch, past the manse, kirk and schoolhouse, and our charabanc, the cynosure of all eyes, as it heads quite a procession of vehicles, deposits its cargo of passengers at the Salutation Arms, Carsphairn, where the capacity of that recently enlarged rendezvous of tourists is taxed to the utmost by such a sudden influx of visitors. Luncheon is ordered for five, but upwards of twenty seek refreshments of a substantial kind, and the genial hostess has to ransack her larder - remote from means of speedy replenishment - to satisfy the sharpened appetites of her unexpected guests. The day is unfavourable for moorland rambles. Rain is falling in torrents and the green well, ruins of Lagwine, Garryhorn (with its Lag associations) the gallows hill, and Woodhead mines are mere matters of confab among the groups of weather imprisoned visitors. Tourists, however, can scarcely enter any village where the hospitality of the natives is so kindly and genuine. The return journey began in rain, and brief glimpses only of the Knockgray and Deuch scenes were secured under a fringe of dripping umbrellas. At

the "Tinkler's Loup" none of the passengers responded to Henderson's smiling invitation to alight and scan the fearful gorge over which the pudding-thieving tinkler leapt. All along the line of route on the downward journey the scenery is varied and charming, and cannot fail to enchant the soul of wanderers in quest of natural beauty.

The fact that an average of 17 passengers have availed themselves of the tour on each of the two days on which a coach is run is proof positive of its popularity and augers well for the future. The failure of junction with Ayrshire passengers is a source of inconvenience, which will doubtless be speedily obliterated by the access of experience. Possibly the dream of a "Puir Ladder" may be realised in a Glenkens Railway, for I observed officials prospecting; or a light railway, recently advocated by "St. Mungo", may come to pass. But railways notwithstanding, the coach of Mr Milligan has made the lovely glen an open sesame."

In the article you will have noticed that Stroangassel was known as Strongcastle. In 1355 it was called Sronggassill and in 1365 Sronggasshill. Reference to this can be found in the pamphlet "The Glenkens 1275-1456" written by Dahne Brooke published by the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society. In this period Carsphairn (known as Keresban) was part of Kells parish.

## EXTRACT FROM AYRSHIRE DIRECTORY 185

List of arrivals and departures of the mails.

Arrivals From Girvan, Maybole, Carsphairn, Dalmellington, Patna and Coylton at 4 p.m.

Departures Box closed for Carsphairn, Dalmellington, Patna, Dalrymple, Maybole and Girvan at 7 a.m.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AT POLMADDY

The Forestry Commission has indicated that over the next 5 years it intends to spend a very large sum of money developing tourism and recreational opportunities in its forests in the region. Polmaddy is one of the few archaeological sites that the commission owns therefore it is high on the list of priorities. The District Manager contacted the Heritage Group to ask for our ideas as to how the Medieval Village could be developed. Amongst suggestions made by the group were that some paths, signs and interpretive boards could be put in so that visitors could walk round and the layout of the settlement.

CAIRN AVEL

NGR : NX 5594 9245 Cairn Ave

Long Cairn Neolithic

References I) Chambered Tombs of Scotland 2, 447.

A. S. Henshall

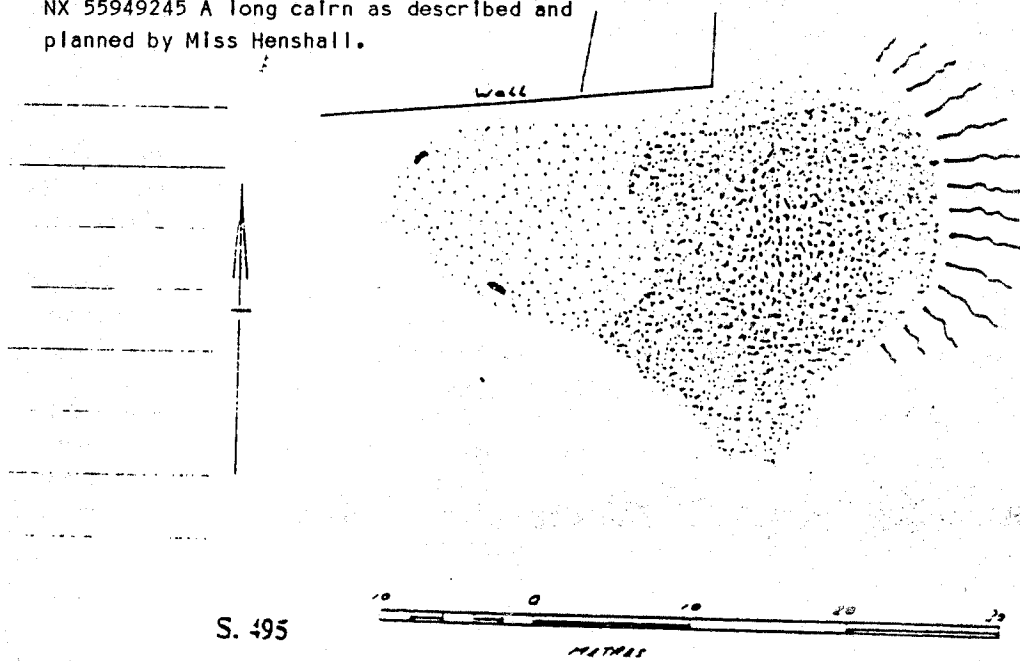
II) RCAHM Galloway 2, 1914 p.64 No. 94.

Cairn Avel, a long cairn, is about 118 ft E by S to W by N. For about 50 ft from the W end, the cairn has been so completely demolished that this area rises only 1 ft above ground level, though the edge is obvious. Presumably this part of the cairn has been used for building the nearby walls, one of which runs along the N side of the cairn. The rest of the monument remains as a fine steep-sided cairn of bare stones 10 ft high.

The width at the E end is about 73 ft

NX 55949245 A long cairn as described and planned by Miss Henshall.

but at the NE corner the cairn material extends about 10 ft outside the steeply rising point of the cairn at a gentler pitch. As the ground dips into a hollow at this corner, this extension of the cairn may be a platform foundation for the main cairn; on the other hand it may be that the cairn has been much robbed round this corner, and the original width of the cairn was about 83 ft. The sides of the cairn taper westwards to about 30 ft across at the W end. Three slabs, set on their edges and projecting 1 ft high, may be parts of a peristaltic. Two slabs are at the W end about 3ft within the cairn edge, and the other is 5 ft within the S edge 27ft to the E. These stones suggest a strictly trapezoidal plan with squared W end, though the cairn edge at the W end is now rounded in plan. The E end of the cairn is curiously irregular, being concave towards the SE corner, and it has not obviously been robbed. (See plan on illustration card).



## A-FRAME BUILDING PROJECT

At the E.G.M. held on 16.02.89 it was agreed by a vote of 19 to 1 that if asked Carsphairn Heritage Group would accept responsibility for the management of the A-Frame building as a Heritage Centre. On 22.02.89 the Community, at a public meeting, decided to go ahead with the project and to ask Carsphairn Heritage Group to assume responsibility. We, Anne Rutherford and Rhoda Campbell, agreed to liaise with relevant bodies regarding setting up of a Company limited by Guarantee and sourcing of funds by way of grants etc.

Since then we have met with S.D.A., City Design Co-operative Ltd (architects), District Council, Country Side Commission, Tourist Board, Enterprise Trust and D. Mackle Business Consultant. This meeting was very helpful in that it gave us an indication of where grants and assistance could be available. The plans for the site are being re-drafted incorporating a toilet block clad in wood to be in keeping with the building.

Earlier this month we also met Mr W McPherson of M.K.W. Interior and Exhibition designers with whom we discussed ideas for interior lighting and exhibition furnishings. He has suggested constructing a model so that various interior layouts can be considered and we eagerly look forward to receiving his interpretation of our ideas.

During Easter week we ventured to

A-Frame Building and also to Helmsdale to see their "Timespan" exhibition. Both were worthwhile trips and anyone wishing to see photographs should contact Rhoda Campbell, Dairy 365.

The Community Meeting held on Wednesday 26.04.89 in Lagwyne Hall viewed a number of proposals in model form for siting of a Toilet Block by the A-Frame Building. These were presented to us by Mr Duncan Roberts of City Design Co-operative. The decision as to layout was made by those attending the meeting after consideration. Final plans will now be completed by Duncan Roberts in the very near future.

As soon as these are available we will make formal approaches to the organisations which might grant aid our project.

## LOCAL DRAMA

Earlier in this newsletter there is mention of the Carsfad murder in 1862. Last November a play about it was broadcast on Radio Scotland. It was called "The Execution of Mary Timney" and recreated the events leading to the death on the gallows of the last woman to be publicly executed in Scotland. It is being staged for the first time during the Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival on Friday May 26th and Saturday May 27th at the Bridge End Theatre, Dumfries.