

Carsphairn
Heritage
Group



The Happy Heritage Steward

A friendly, approachable creature which can be observed in Carsphairn Heritage Centre between Easter and September.

Habitat: Behind the desk in Carsphairn Heritage Centre.

Plumage: Variable, warm (even in Summer)

Food: Nescafe, tea, dried milk and two stale biscuits.

Call: "Please sign the book" or "Thankyou, please call again."

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The Happiest Days of Your Life

Why are other people's schooldays always so much more interesting than one's own?

Reading autobiographies such as Winifred Foley's 'A Child in the Forest' about her upbringing in the Forest of Dean or Mollie Weir's 'Shoes Were for Sunday', an account of her childhood and schooldays in the Gorbals of Glasgow (Mollie Weir played Aggie in Life with the Lyons on the wireless back in the '50s) my own 'happiest days' seem a dreary void by comparison.

This is no doubt why the Glenkens Schools exhibition with all its little stories and anecdotes is so fascinating.

My first thought on viewing those old photos was how happy everyone looked; not just 'say-cheese-for-the-camera' happy, but really, genuinely cheerful. With all that castigation, imprisonment, flogging, extra tasks, birching and chastisement (whatever form THAT might have taken), not to mention struggling through gales, rain and snow storms across hills and moors with unmade roads and tracks with nothing like modern waterproofs to wear to actually get to school, this seems nothing short of a minor miracle.



Must arrive on time today. It's maths, history, birching and flogging!

I'm sure visitors will enjoy both the exhibition and the 'car trail' around the Glenkens all of which may well trigger off some half buried memories of their own. Come to think of it, perhaps my own schooldays were not such a void..... did I ever tell you about the time my Mum boiled my gym slip....?

Sue Wiseman

"Fragments of the History of Alexander McKay"

Extracts— this is from the introduction

"My Grandfather was the Patriach of a small sept of this clan (McKay) and since his day there has been a credible increase in the number of his descendants, and thus there is warranty against extinction for some time to come. But alas the members of this family are no longer in their original habitation. They are dispersed over the two hemispheres and many countries of this world.

On my mother's side I am a McLellan, also a Galloway clan a little more civilised than the McKays, though in reality there was not much in their habits of life whereby they might be distinguished.

My Grannie on my Father's side was a Welsh, a Jenny Welsh at that: wee, but wieri, vigorous and determined. She was also a storehouse of information of various kinds made available to myself when of years imbibing the same. We, my Grannie and I, during my childhood years lived much in each other's company. Usually we got on well together: sometimes we quarreled, but this was only in accord with the McKay - Welsh traditions.

My Grannie on my Mother's side was a very old woman and she died in her 99th year. This was almost the only notable fact of her life history, except that she went to bed to die 29 years before she actually did die, and during that period she so far educated herself as to be able to read the letters from one of her sons descriptive of life on the Victorian gold fields between 1852 and 1862.

My father was the son of a shepherd but he did not follow in the footsteps of his immediate progenitor, but became an artisan and was joiner and wheelwright in the village of Carsphairn at the time I was born. According to his lights my Father was a good man, but he lived spiritually in a state of continual alarm (especially on Sundays) because of his unalterable belief in the doctrine of pre-destination, then generally accepted by Calvinists of the Auld Kirk in rural districts such as ours.

The ultimate destination of himself, and all that belonged to him, was a subject that generally exercised my Father on Sunday nights. Ordinarily, that is on weekdays, he was alright. He was industrious, honest and conscientious in all his dealings, and succeeded in bringing up a large family on comparatively small means. His exemplary conduct, quite apart from his terrible strugglings on Sunday nights, made him a marked man for preferment in the church, and they of the Auld Kirk had him duly "ticked off" to fill a vacancy in the eldership when that should occur.

I remember how pleased he was, when the vacancy occurred, on his

being seen and urged to accept, which he did with a considerable show of apparent reluctance and real humility. In this matter his ambition was gratified and he lived and died worthily.

My Mother was a good mother, a good housewife and good looking! The Venus Milo of the village, wonderfully quiet, much respected and fond of mashed potatoes and buttermilk: she had no other vices”.

Volunteers Week 2002

“Stewards spend hours of their time during the summer months looking after the Centre while it is open. They start it up in the morning, put out the welcome sign, greet visitors, answer questions, chat about the exhibition and delve into the archives for family histories.

They encourage the signing of the visitors’ book and are responsible for cashing up at the end of the day and closing down the Centre. And they do this because they like to.

We on the committee are really grateful for their interest and support because without our stewards the Centre simply could not exist “

These words were part of the Heritage Group’s display at the Volunteers Week ceremony organised

locally by the Stewartry Council for Voluntary Services on 12th June in Kirkcudbright Town Hall.

Joyce Hunter Blair, on behalf of all our stewards, collected a certificate from Sir Norman Arthur, Lord Lieutenant of the Stewartry, which now hangs in the Centre recognising the contribution of stewards to the success of the Centre.

THURSDAY, June 13th, 2002

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Glenkens trail is an education

ANNA Campbell, chairman of Carsphairn Heritage Group, drew a good audience to the Lagwyne Hall on the Wednesday of Local History Week, when she gave an illustrated lecture on the Schools of the Glenkens.

From the very north of the Stewartry, where the Deugh School at the Muir, now part of Carsphairn Forest, was part funded by Ayrshire, to the school at Crainmuic, the house in the Stewartry and the schoolroom in Dumfriesshire, Anna took her audience round the 19 schools which have served the Glenkens since the 18th century, with many amusing and poignant quotations from log books and tales contributed by former pupils.

A leaflet is available, funded by the Lottery “Awards for All”, from Carsphairn Heritage Centre and many local businesses.

This gives a map and a “car trail” which could lead the visitor back in time through the heart of the Glenkens.

The Heritage Group Summer Visit

Keeping the theme of this year's exhibition at the Heritage Centre 'Schools of the Glenkens' we shall be exploring the site of one school and having our tea at another

The walk will take place on **Sunday 18th August** and will be a round trip starting from **Smeaton Bridge** at **1.30pm** to **Stroanfreggan Schoolhouse** arriving about **3pm** and back. Various deviations will take place to explore archaeological features on the way but the entire walk is unlikely to be more than 2½ miles.

Mr and Mrs Brander have kindly invited us to eat **our picnic tea**, remember to bring something, at Stroanfreggan - in the schoolroom if wet. We will also have an opportunity to look at parts of the school that have not changed since the pupils were there.

We hope to see former pupils who, if they don't wish to walk, can join us for tea and reminiscences.

If there are any questions please phone
Anna Campbell at 01644 460208

1848 Ordnance Survey Notebooks

Last October when I tackled the 1848 Ordnance Survey Notebooks for the parish of Carsphairn I focussed on the word traditional. This time, using material from the same notebooks I want to investigate what were then recorded as ruins in the parish. They are recorded here simply as a list with any relevant information next to the name.

- Shielholm:** About 1.75 miles to the north east of Waterhead Farm House. The ruins of a house which formerly had a farm of land attached but is now united with the farm of Moor.
- Altry:** .75 mile south by east of Lorg. The ruins of a farmhouse which formerly had a farm of land attached now united with Lorg.
- Faulds:** .75 miles south west of Meadowhead Farmhouse. The ruins of a cottage on the farm of Cullendoch and situated a short distance north of Cullendoch Hill.
- Lamford:** About .5 miles south by west of Meadowhead. A farm house

- and outhouses all in ruins with a large farm of land attached which is in the occupation of S Wallace of Knockgray and the property of the Hon. Colonel McAdam Cathcart.
- Cullendoch:** The ruins of a house annexed with Drumjohn.
- Benloch:** 1.75 miles north east of Carsphairn Village. The ruins of a shepherds house on the farm of Knockgray and situated on the western margin of Benloch Strand.
- Bank:** (site of) 1.25 miles north by west of Carsphairn Village. The site of an old house which formerly had a farm of land. It is situated on the eastern side of the Water of Deugh about 40 chains to the east of Bridgend. There are still a few loose stones to mark the location of the farm house. (*They are still there in 2002!*)
- Bank Mill:** (site of) About 1.75 miles north by west of Carsphairn Village. The site of a mill and house on the farm of Lagwyne. (*Also described in another entry as Old Corn Kiln*)
- Midgie Ha':** (*What a wonderful name!*) (site of) About 1 mile north by west of Carsphairn Village. The site of a house on the farm of Lagwyne and situated about 5 chains north east of Bridgend.
- Glen:** The ruins of a house on the farm of Strahannah which formerly had a farm of land attached but is now united with the farm of Strahannah and Glen.
- Stonehouse:** The ruins of an old house on the farm of Strahannah about 25 chains west of the farmhouse.
- Half Mire:** On farm of Polcheskie, Situated close on east side of Water of Ken.
- Benbrack:** The ruins of a house and offices which at one time had a farm of land attached but is now united with the farm of Manwhil. These ruins are said to be partly the remains of buildings which is said to have been the residence of an ancient branch of the noble family of Galloway.
- Little Auchrae:** 1.9 miles north west of Cornharrow. Now united with Strahannah.
- Smeaton:** The ruins of a house on the farm of Smeaton which was once used as the farm house of the said farm.
- Moss paul:** The ruins of an old house which formerly had a farm of land attached but is now united with that of Garryhorn. The property of the Hon Colonel McAdam Cathcart.

- Holmhead:** The ruins of an old herds house on the farm of Castlemaddy and situated on a portion of arable land on the northern margin of Polmaddy Burn.
- Little Castlemaddy:** The ruins of an old house which formerly had a farm of land attached but is now united with that of Castlemaddy.
- Faulds:** The ruins of an old house and offices on the farm of Braidenoch and situated near the western side of the old road that leads from New Galloway to Carsphairn. It is said when this road was in use that the house was used as an inn or ale house for the accommodation of travellers.
- Craiglingal:** About 1.5 miles east south east of Braidenoch farm house the ruins of an old house which formerly had a farm of land attached but is now united with the farm of Drumness. It is situated at the eastern base of a small eminence called Craiglingal.
- Nether Carminnows:**
- Bridge of Deuch:** 26 chains south by west of Marscalloch farm house. The ruins of an old outhouse on the farm of Dundeugh and situated near to Deugh bridge hence the name.
- Dundeugh Mill:** The ruins of an old corn mill on the farm of Dundeugh and situated about 5 chains west of the Water of Ken.
- Polmaddy:** About 1.25 miles west by south of Glenhoul the ruins of a farm house and offices which formerly had a farm of land now united with Barlay.
- Polmaddy Mill:** The ruins of an old corn mill on the farm of Polmaddy and situated on the northern margin of Polmaddy Burn. It is traditionally said that this mill was erected by King Robert Bruce for the use of grinding corn to his dogs, at the time (it is said) that he inhabited Dundeugh castle as a hunting seat.

Anna Campbell

New e-mail address

We have recently been experiencing problems with the computer in the Centre and our email address. We hope to be able to rescue our old address on all our letterheads and on the Glenkens Schools Brochure. In the meantime we have a new address carsphairnhg@hcentre.fsnet.co.uk

**The committee has recently agreed that
stewards may have free use of the computer whilst on duty**

Visitors to the Centre 2002

So far this year we have been pleased with the number of visitors who have come to the centre. They come in for a variety of reasons - always some who enquire where the toilets are and are never seen again but others come in to see the exhibition, the steward, family history research, tourist information or just simply for a chat.

Two of our visitors this season came in for a particular reason. The first, a young American came to ask where the plaque to the B29 Super Fortress that crashed in 1951 was situated. I was able to take him with his brother and mother to the site and there they found the name of his grandfather First Lieutenant J A O'Leary.

Secondly, a researcher from Dunedin, New Zealand came in asking for information about Alexander McKay who was born in Carsphairn in 1841 in the house opposite the school. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1862/3 where he became an eminent geologist. His entry in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography is lengthy and his grandparents, parents and some of his sisters are buried in the Kirkyard in Carsphairn.

Perhaps, most interestingly for us he wrote in 1911 a detailed autobiography of his life which contains detailed recollections of his youth in Carsphairn. See page 3 where there is an extract from the opening pages.

Anna Campbell

Regular readers will recognise the work of Sue Wiseman on our front cover. This is one of a series she has created under the title -



A carefully observed and meticulously recorded study of the wildlife of the Glenkens with line drawings and nature notes of interest to the committed naturalist and casual observer alike. Painstakingly executed by S Wiseman” Others in the series include the Golfer, the Twitcher, the Picnicker and the Policeman which have been made into cards and are for sale, with envelopes price .60p each