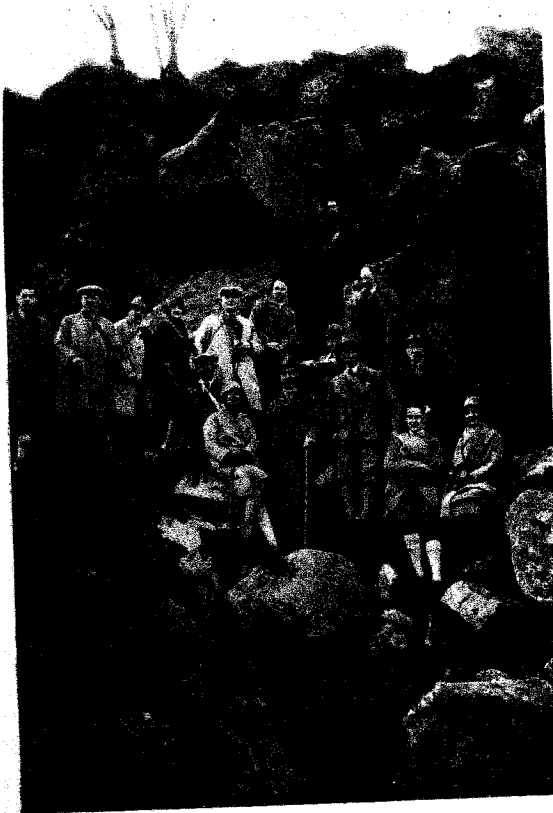


**Carsphairn
Heritage
Group**



COVE MACATERICK—HILL MACATERICK

A walking party in the 1930s. See The Rhinns of Kells on page 8

**Newsletter No 76
Autumn 2006**

The 2006 season

The Heritage Centre officially closed on Sunday 1st October but several private visits have taken place this month with a surprising number of other people calling in because they saw that the curtains were open. The last visitor on 23 October was an elderly gentleman who had been born in the police house in the village in 1922.

The last visitor on the last day of the official season was born at the Eriff, about four miles north of Carsphairn towards Dalmellington, and has already offered us some material for the 2007 exhibition which will be about sports in the parish. It doesn't have a title yet. Ideas for it would be welcome.

These two visits illustrate the interest of our visitors and that is something that our volunteer stewards enjoy. I know it's repetitive but again I must acknowledge the work done by them because without their time we could not exist. A very enjoyable lunch was held at Mrs Cathcart's home Culraven on Saturday 7th October for all the stewards

The final tally of visitors for 2006 was around 1450, about one hundred less than the previous year which is understandable when one notices that the drop was nearly all in July, a month that we will remember for its wonderful weather.

This year's exhibition, The Killing Times, about Covenanting in this area has proved most popular and created a lot of interest locally. So much so that a booklet will be produced during the winter to be added to our series on various previous exhibitions.

Anna Campbell

Autumn buffet supper

This annual event, held this year on Friday 15th September, has a reputation for always having excellent speakers and so it continued this year.

Dr Lizanne Henderson, one of the foremost researchers in Scottish folklore, who lectures in history at the Crichton Campus spoke about Charmers and charms in South West Scotland during the period 1670 until the 1760s.

She outlined the history of doctors practising mainly in the towns during that period whilst in the country medicine was given out by Charmers. The ingredients for the remedies were often obscure, for example wood lice, spiders webs and powder from Egyptian mummies. For gout, for instance, part of the remedy was to put the skin of the left foot of a vulture on the left heel and the skin of the right foot of the vulture onto the right heel. Boiled worms formed part of the essential ingredients for the cure for earache!

During the times of the witch hunts many Charmers were caught up in the search for those deemed to be witches. Generally leniency was given to them as it was recognised that they were often multi talented in that they could read the stars and provide cures not only for illnesses but for many other problems. Charmers were consulted across the social spectrum and could be anyone. Their skills might be inherited, learnt or perhaps a skill granted from the supernatural. Often they were able to move the illnesses from a person to an object, sometimes a holy well.

Religious ministers saw charmers as a threat because it was thought that people's religious beliefs were being undermined and therefore they were often summonsed to appear before the Kirk Session. Dr Henderson gave several examples from Kirk Session records from the South West where people were accused of charming. The nearest instance to the Glenkens was from Glencairn Parish where a gardener

was accused of using herbs for charming.

Dr Henderson then answered thoughtful questions from the audience who had been spellbound by her fascinating talk before enjoying, with the company, the now traditional delicious supper provided by the ladies of the committee of the Heritage Group.

Anna Campbell

**Campbell McIntosh McMillan
(Flt. Sgt) 1914-1945**

Campbell was the son of Betty and George McMillan. George (1887-1965) succeeded his father in the family joinery business at Carsphairn. He was a skilled craftsman, intelligent, friendly and well loved by all, he had a spirit of adventure and an enquiring mind.

Betty was a good deal younger, married George at the age of eighteen, attractive, and had a gentile and warm personality. Margaret, Campbell's sister, was born in 1922. Both children grew up in their native village, Carsphairn, a remote settlement close to the Southern Uplands of the Merrick range.

Many McMillan relations lived in or near the village. George's father had set up the joinery business and also the first Post office run from his family home. Campbell and Margaret went to the local village school where their Aunt Ida was the schoolmistress.

At the age of eleven Campbell would have gone to Dalry secondary school leaving at fifteen to serve his apprenticeship in his father's business. I can only remember meeting Campbell once when I was about four year's old and he would have been seventeen.

Everyone's first impression of Campbell was his

stature. He was well over six feet tall, inherited from his grandfather McIntosh. Like George he was interested in machines and had a motorbike as soon as he could ride one.

Everyone said he had a strong desire to be a flier. May be this came partly from the fact that he would have known about his famous relation, Wing Commander Norman McMillan, a first world war aviator who subsequently performed several aviation feats. Norman was well known by the McMillan's of Carsphairn and often spoken about, with many newspaper cuttings of his exploits kept in the family archives.

Charles, Campbell's uncle worked as a joiner in Glasgow and had been involved in building WW1 aircraft, and for a time was based at the local Loch Doon aircraft establishment.

As soon as he was able, Campbell joined the Air Cadets in Ayr and travelled the twenty miles there on his motorbike after his day's work, probably several times a week! I believe that the earliest he could sign up to join the RAF was eighteen, but it was well known that he gave a false age, and due to his height he managed to be accepted into the service whilst still seventeen.

I do not know of his RAF postings, except that he was finally based in Lincolnshire, where he met a local girl, Elizabeth (Betty) Sheldon. They married in December 1944. Campbell was killed along with his crew of their Lancaster whilst returning from a bombing raid over Germany. The aircraft was unable to release its large bomb and on crash landing the bomb exploded. It was assumed that little of his remains would be identified although the crewmembers were buried at the Oxford cemetery.

The devastating news to his family can be imagined. Their great personal loss was exacerbated when Campbell's sister Margaret contracted an infectious disease a year later, whilst nursing in an Ayrshire hospital, and she died within a few days.

Campbell's name is recorded on the Liggate war memorial, Carsphairn.

Written by David Seaton

whose mother was Campbell's cousin. October 2006

The story of Wing Commander Norman McMillan's attempted flight around the world in 1922 appears in Newsletters nos. 72, 73 and 74

Carsphairn Total Abstinence Society

In the month of August last, a few individuals met here, and agreed to form a Total Abstinence Society. In the short space of five months a band of 52 staunch teetotallers have rallied round the standard of sobriety.

On Friday evening we had our first soiree. The elements conspired to prevent a great muster; but in spite of wind and weather, guests were present to the number of fourscore and six - not a despicable moeity, considering the thin population, to gather from the sterile wilds of Carsphairn.

We partook of an excellent tea, but our intellectual repast was scanty. Owing to the inclemency of the weather, several speakers who were expected failed to find their way to our solitary village. Mr Boddan, preses of the society, apologised for the disappointment, and gave, not a lengthened, but a suitable address on total abstinence principles.

We had the aid of Mr Templeton, teacher of music, and several other gentlemen, who gave varied and appropriate songs; so that the evening was spent in comfortable sociality.

As good luck would have it, so far, at least, as we were concerned, the Hon. Member for the Stewartry, on his route from Cally to Edinburgh, via Ayr, was benighted, and, beaten by the wind and battered by the rain, was glad to seek shelter in the only hostelry here, which affords "entertainment for man and beast".

The knowledge of this arrival created some stir in the village; and after a reasonable time had been allowed him for refreshment, the Chairman was deputed to request him to visit our rural entertainment, which Mr Murray graciously condescended to do.

Fient a pride had he; for he merrily mingled in the dance, and listened with much apparent satisfaction to several songs, sung in Mr Templeton's best style. On retiring, the liberal-hearted Broughton left a handsome donation to the funds of our infant society.

Mrs Wallace, of Knockgrey, too, was another aristocratic visitor in the early part of the evening, and generously contributed towards the creature comforts. So that, with songs and dancing, honourable visitors, and liberal donations, our soiree went off with great eclat. Several new members were added to our list. - *Corres.*

Extract from 27th Dec 1841 issue of Dumfries Times
Contributed by David Bartholomew

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

Carsphairn Heritage Group will be held at

Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn on

Friday 10th November 2006

AGM at 7.00pm

followed by an informal gathering with

Members producing an heirloom or memento

and speaking to those present about the significance of their item

Refreshments

The Rhinns of Kells

..... "Was there ever a bonnier view?"

"Ey" answered Colin the Poacher.

"Where?"

"Frae the 'Coran o' Portmark,'" It was said so quietly, but so decisively, that all eyes turned towards him as he pointed towards that mountain. Instinctively we moved down the incline to a point where we obtained a fine panoramic view of the distant, middle distance, and near view of the beautiful Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. Ben Gairn and Screeel could easily be discerned, but the day was not clear enough to enable us to see the English mountains or the Isle of Man.

Loch Ken, the River Dee, and Loch Grenoch shone like silver, and at our feet lay Loch Harrow and the forbidding Lochs of the Dungeon. Behind spread out the fingers of the Awful Hand. The Dungeon frowned down in the middle distance. Nearer stood the conical Mulwharcker. To the north-east lay Hill Macaterick, wherein is situated Cove Macaterick, or the Aughty o' the Star, as Crockett names it, the strong-hold of the Macatericks, Marshalls, and other desperadoes described in *The Raiders*.

A natural affinity drew together the Provost, who had qualified as a lawyer, doctor, and minister, and Colin, who had also studied for the Church. As they walked along the ridge the Provost said,

"Do you know yon wee house yonder?"

"Ey" said Colin, "it's Craigenbae, and my grannie an' me leeve jist ayont it."

"Dear me," said the Provost. "Then I must be your landlord too."

"An' I'm double pleased to meet ye," said Colin, "for the doors are a' aff their hinges, the slates are a' fa'en aff the roof, an' the water's drappin' doun on grannie's bed, an' _____"

"Stop! Stop!" said the Provost. "Just go along to Milreth the millwright an' tell him to get the work done and send me the bill."

"Thank ye; but I'm the prood man to meet yin....."

A very brief excerpt from GALLOWAY: The Spell of its Hills and Glens by Andrew McCormick published in 1932.

This short passage epitomises the Rhinns of Kells for me. From the top you can see so much of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and beyond and on... a magic place.

Carol Cathcart