

Carsphairn
Heritage
Group



See Socks' story inside

Newsletter No 55
July 2001

Last year we were delighted to accept a donation from Mrs Margret Hough of a garden seat which, after being freshly painted by Colonel Clark Kennedy, has been put in place outside the Centre. Sadly, to ensure its safety, we have had to attach it with a sturdy chain to a strong bolt in the wall. On a sunny day it's a wonderful place to drink one's coffee in the morning and we look forward to many years of pleasure from it.

We have continued to receive many donations all of which enrich our Heritage Centre. The latest ones were handed in at the Centre just days ago by a visitor from Tarves Heritage Centre who had visited last year and there is an article in this newsletter about two items donated earlier this month which relate to 1960 which doesn't seem so long ago!

The Missing Cat

A story, with a happy ending, should be noted here as it must be recorded as a fact and not as a legend to all those who read this in years to come! The Heritage Centre has provided the vital link in the story of a 14 year old cat who went missing from Bardennoch on 16 June and was re-united with its owners on 11 July after being found at Dukieston. The owners had put up a notice in the Heritage Centre and the holidaymakers staying at Dukieston had noticed during a visit to the Centre a few days before the cat appeared outside the cottage.

The cat was missing for three and a half weeks and had, presumably, roamed over two large tracts of forestry at Dundough and the Forrest Estate. As the crow flies the distance between the two cottages is three and a half miles. The holiday maker had coaxed it into the cottage and, after using the local knowledge of the Forrest Estate Office, the cat and its owners were soon re-united.

'Socks' is a worthy survivor and this story, I hope, will bring to readers' minds other animal sotries with a happy ending. The Heritage Centre usually provides links with one's ancestors—it was very satisfying to provide a new service!

Donation Number One

Recently, on the same day, we received two quite unrelated donations, both of which give a great deal of information about the years around 1960.

The first was three volumes of The Survey Report of the Landward Area of Kirkcudbright prepared by the County Council of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and published in March 1960. These volumes contain a vast amount of statistics and maps about the Stewartry, all of which are fascinating 40 years on.

For instance, the 1951 census for Carsphairn revealed that the population of the parish was 248 as opposed to 355 in 1931 and 364 in 1921. Percentage wise, 58.8% of the parish population left between 1851 and 1931 and almost 33% of the remaining population left between 1931 and 1951. (I think it's worth noting that the population figures in 1851 would be particularly high as that was when Woodhead Leadmine was at its most populous (301) and that after that census the population at the mine dropped dramatically until it was just 14 in 1891. It's rather an alarming migration in that context). There were 80 houses in the Parish in 1951—now about the same. Then the density of the population in Carsphairn Parish was less than 1 person per 100 acres.

The population of the village in 1960 was 61 (now around 68) and on the school roll there were 15 children with only 3 from the village (now 18 with 8 from the village). In a separate reference the school had one teacher and 14 on the roll in October 1959 and a capacity of 25. The school meals supplied then were 'sub-standard' and only 9 out of 54 schools in the Stewartry served 'satisfactory' meals.

The Salutation Hotel could hold 15 guests. The one petrol station (on the Heritage Centre site) was open each day from 8am until 10pm but could not provide car hire, taxi, breakdown,

repairs, indoor garaging, caravan park, car parking or bus hire service but did have a WC, and both the AA and RAC.

The water supply for the village came from the Benloch Burn. It was untreated and it was noted that a pre-war sewage supply existed.

In November 1959 the postal delivery in Carsphairn started at 8.45 and the outgoing post left a 3.10pm. First delivery mail arrived off the London train at Castle Douglas at 4.40am. The second delivery mail arrived by train at Dalbeattie at 8.38am, Castle Douglas at 8.47am and Kirkcudbright at 9.09am.

Carsphairn Post Office boasted 1 staff, 1 kiosk and an automatic exchange - rather better off than Parton and Auchencairn, the only villages left in the Stewartry who were both still labouring with Manual exchanges.

The nearest policeman was stationed at Dalry, 12 miles distant. He was a sergeant whose Divisional HQ was at Stranraer and had a motor van equipped with 2-way wireless equipment. Now the nearest policeman is

The nearest Fire Station was in New Galloway and consisted of 10 part-time firemen. Carsphairn was supplied with Scavenging, Street Lighting and Sewage Disposal Facilities. Scavenging is presumably refuse collection!

The Ministry of Transport conducted a traffic census between 1925 and 1954. The number of motor vehicles and trailers were counted for 16 hours on 7 days in each year. One of the census points was near the Green Well of Scotland, north of the village.

1925	1928	1931	1935	1938	1954
523	1440	1424	2747	2481	2950

All the detailed information about the whole of the Stewartry was used for a Development Plan, one of many, which we have seen since then.

Old MacDonald Had A

One of my favourite exhibits in the Inside Story Heritage Exhibition this year is the impressive collection of Britains toy farm animals and other farmyard paraphernalia.

This is partly nostalgic as I was born and brought up in Walthamstow within a stone's throw of Britains (not to mention Boake Roberts, now Bush Boake Allen, who shared the same site and whose flavours and fragrances were neither flavoursome nor fragrant in the making!)

Many of my school friends' mums worked part time 'down at the toy factory' and all the children had Britains toys. The boys mostly had soldiers, I had a farm well smallholding really... very small. One cow, one pig, one piglet, a hay rick and a couple of other things which escape my memory, but when I played with them I drifted in my imagination into the countryside far from the grey, dreary bomb-scarred townscape and the restrictions of rationing. Little did I know that one day I would live on a real farm.

Britains toy factory is long gone, it's emblem, the Union Flag proudly displayed over the entrance now sadly adopted by the National Front.

Enquiries among friends who still live in the area as well as the local library as to what happened to the firm and whether it was taken over by another concern all drew a blank. They all remembered it; one lady's husband worked there during the three day week but no one knew its fate.

I doubt if today's children with their designer clothes and sophisticated computer games would think it much fun to pretend to feed bits of grass to a model piglet as we did. Tastes were simpler then.

Sometimes as I sit doing my Stewarding duty I glance across to the little black and white cows and the farmer and farmer's wife figures in the glass case and think : Hmmm.. I wonder whose mum painted you.

Sue Wiseman

The AGM for 2001 will be combined with the 'Spring' Buffet Supper, postponed due to Foot & Mouth Disease, and will be held at the Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn on Friday 16th November.

Book the date.

Details in the October Newsletter.

HERITAGE GROUP PRODUCTIONS

Carsphairn - a history as depicted on the Timespan boards hanging in the Centre	£2.00
Women of Carsphairn Exhibition 1997	£2.50
Local Tales and Legends Exhibition 1988	£2.00
The Woodhead Lead Mine - Anna Campbell	£1.50
Notelets - designs by Robin Ade in packets of five	£1.30
Past Newsletters each	.30
Index to Newsletter numbers 1-52 (Jan 1988—Oct 2000)	.50
Newsletter Binders - binds 28 newsletters plus index	£3.50

Donation Number Two

The second donation was a copy of the yearly Church Magazine published in March 1960. There is a large variety of Church news and it ends with the short autobiography of the minister, Reverend Wilfrid Sievewright.

The church accounts for the year ending 31 December 1959 are included showing a balance of £26.16s.2d. The Session Clerk and Treasurer, Mr Sandy Borthwick expressed his disappointment that his appeal brought in rather less than the one made the previous year.

"the Kirk is just like the home; every year expenditure increases therefore contributions must increase or the work of the church must be curtailed. To curtail the work of the church may have serious consequences for us all. Please remember that there are other creeds than our own, and at the present moment they are trying their best to make inroads in the Church of Scotland to capture members. Therefore, I think it is only our duty to do all in our power to sustain and maintain the Kirk of our forefathers. They fought for it, and many laid down their lives for that great inheritance which we so much enjoy today, our social and religious liberties. These great men did not take but gave; they did not ask something for nothing. All of us may at times forget or neglect the Kirk, criticise her, sneer at her, but the Kirk will always do her duty, and will not fail us in our time of need".

There was even a short section for the children of the parish starting with a piece of advice:- **Never let your parents down, they brought you up.**

Children were also invited to punctuate the following sentence—and invited to send in their results :- **That that is is that that is not is not is that it it is**

A page was devoted to schoolboy howlers such as -

Teacher "Give a sentence employing the phrase 'to the bitter end'

Boy "The dog chased the cat and bit her end".
Teacher "How would you describe 'a man of letters?'"
Boy "The postman, sir".

There was a page specifically for the 'young folk' but they were chided as in the seven years in which the minister had provided such a page only two replies had been sent in to answer the questions and problems set and I will give you now the questions he set in 1960 to see how many replies I get!

What are the expressions we use for the following?

Example : To exaggerate a trivial problem

Answer : To make a mountain out of a molehill

- 1 To reverse the right order
- 2 To grapple directly with a difficulty#
- 3 Have one's suspicions aroused
- 4 Work late at night
- 5 Dwell persistently on the same subject
- 6

As I type these I don't know the answers myself so I'll welcome any replies from any age group!

After having read this fascinating and varied magazine one gets the feeling that the Church of 1960 was grappling with similar problems to that of 2001. Those problems weren't solved then and the downward spiral of declining membership and parochial influence has continued.

Anna Campbell

Stewards' Party

The lunch party for last year's stewards had to be postponed twice for various reasons BUT it will go ahead, all things being equal, in October

Stewards from both last and this year will be receiving invitations to a lunch party at Holm of Daltallochan on Sunday 28th October

A couple from Corsock who attend Bill's art workshop related this story to him. At the start of the Foot & Mouth Disease restrictions a neighbouring farmer spotted a couple with rucksacks walking on the officially closed Southern Upland Way. He approached them and explained that there were emergency measures in force and that they should not be there.

"Oh it's alright" they told him airily, "it doesn't apply to us—we're vegetarians".

“Petticoat Rule—Women of Carsphairn”

This was the theme of an exhibition held in the village of Carsphairn in 1997. The information then collected seemed too interesting to be dispersed and lost and so some of it has been published in booklet form.

On the title page is a splendid photograph of a woman beside her spinning wheel and inside are more photographs, reminiscences, a poem, letters, a legal document, dated 1584, and stories such as the one about a peddler saving a young woman's life and Mrs Hunter's own story about how she slipped on ice and fell down a well at Woodhead Mine.

Readers who are familiar with the parish of Carsphairn will be interested to find the names of farms and places still the same as of yore. Others will find plenty of general interest such as a list of wedding gifts in 1875 and an account of the elaborate breakfasts served to a land-owning family and their guests. There is a light-hearted account of a children's party which forms the subject of a letter from a Carsphairn resident to her father; extracts from school logbooks emphasise the importance of teaching sewing—in contrast to the 21st century when a woman seldom uses a needle.

The booklet contains a wealth of historical material all quite unique with much of it giving an insight into local life over many centuries. It would make an ideal gift for anyone interested in Carsphairn or in the role of women in previous centuries.

It may be purchased from the Heritage Centre —£2.50 or by post £3.00 from either Mrs Anna Campbell, Holm of Daltallochan, Carsphairn, Castle Douglas, DG7 3TH or Mrs Carol Cathcart, Culraven, Borgue, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4SG

Miss Jean Gibson

The Bakers of Carsphairn

For four years before the Heritage Centre was built our exhibitions were set up in the Lagwyne Hall for two weeks during the summer.

We had a great many visitors in those days because of our extra attraction. We sold tea, coffee and a wonderful array of fresh cakes, scones, biscuits and tray bakes.

The bakers of Carsphairn were so good people used to return year after year—for the delicious tea foods and were really disappointed when the Centre was built andno more teas!

Some of the excellent recipes were gathered into a mini-cookbook which we would like to re-issue. We know there is new talent out there so ... If you have a favourite tea food recipe : cakes, scones, biscuits or traybake PLEASE send it to one of us (see above article) for inclusion in our updated version of Teafoods from Carsphairn Heritage Group members.