



**Carsphairn
Heritage
Group**



The Killing Times - booklet available at Carsphairn Heritage Centre

**Newsletter No 91
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Heritage Centre Quiz

All eleven pupils at Carsphairn School came to the Heritage Centre before the end of term and did the quiz on the photographic exhibition that had been prepared for their visit.

They answered all the questions with great enthusiasm and gave fuller answers to some questions than had been anticipated.

The quiz has now been revamped so it can be completed by anyone who visits the Centre and has enough time to really study the photographs. On a wet day it provides a very interesting educational pastime for any age group.

Carsphairn Captured on Camera 1885-2010

The 2010 season is now about half way through. There are nearly 200 photos grouped in sections on display so there is something of interest to all visitors; whether they are locals, those who have connections with Carsphairn or are strangers to the area. Locals like looking at photos of people, those with connections like photos of events or buildings and those from afar are interested in the photos of heavy amounts of snow, the elephant in Carsphairn and the Spitfire photographs.

Comments in the Visitors Book are always interesting, ranging from "Nice to see photos of myself"; "would make an excellent souvenir book"; "An interesting village with great community spirit" ; "A little gem" and "wonderful and enjoyed hearing the harp also" - a steward practising for a concert. Residents from 6 overseas countries have signed our book, the most being from Australia and the most unusual from Laos.

Being a steward can be fascinating. As I write this on a wet Monday afternoon today there have been about 15 visitors including cyclists going from Lands End to John o' Groats, people looking for information about their ancestors who were the spirit dealers i.e. the innkeepers in Carsphairn from about 1841 until 1881. We never know what to expect and still there's another hour to go until closing!

Miss Ida Hay Macmillan

The following testimonial was found in a cupboard in a house in the village recently.

1st March 1909

Miss Ida Hay Macmillan was a Monitor and Pupil Teacher in this school from 2nd Sept 1902 till June 1907.

For about half of the time she assisted in the Infant Department, teaching classes at all stages with excellent results.

Her ability as a teacher is of a high order, maintaining discipline in a gentle and kindly manner.

I have much pleasure in recommending her to the notice of those who desire a conscientious, kind and thorough teacher.

*Rachel Nichol
Infants Mistress.*

Miss Macmillan was born in Carsphairn in 1885 and was educated at the village school. She married Robert Buchanan and became Head Teacher at Carsphairn in 1943 where she remained until her retirement in 1950. She lived in Carsphairn for many years afterwards but died in Ayr in 1970.

There are photos of her in this year's exhibition - with her husband and their car outside Granite House in the village and also in one of the Drama Club photographs in the 1950s.

A painting of the village street commissioned by her in 1955 as a gift to her son Kenneth who lived in Rhodesia is also on display in the exhibition.

1st July 1817

28th June. - The inhabitants of the parish of Carsphairn have been greatly alarmed by the bursting of a water spout, the effects of which have been dreadful in the extreme. Sheep and Cattle have perished, and stones of immense size have been removed from their places; but as good sometimes comes after evil fish in considerable quantities are found in heaps near the banks of the river, which will be great relief to the poor, who smoke the large ones, and salt the small ones in barrels.

Contributed by David Bartholomew

STROANFREGGAN WALK July 16 2010 by Robin Ade

Most of you are probably aware by now of Ruth Williams ongoing efforts to bring the Heritage Group Trails information up to date. The latest of these is the Stroanfreggan Trail which Ruth and other members walked in April.

Afterwards it was suggested that an alternative return route could be sought from the medieval village of Little Auchrae down to the Water of Ken road, and in early July Anna Campbell and Carol Cathcart prospected possible routes via the new clearfell in Auchrae Forest.

On July 16 a group consisting of Ruth Williams, Anna Campbell, Agnes Holden and Robin Ade looked over the ground again, walking in from the forest gate upstream of Strahanna to the scenic ruin of Meikle Auchrae.

Here they left the track, crossed to the bottom of the old farm meadow and located the path previously taken by Anna and Carol towards the forest boundary near Little Auchrae village. The last section consisted of very rough ground and another possible entry point from the forest had become completely overgrown with trees.

It was decided that a simpler way to improve the Trail would be to link it with the nearby Southern Upland Way and to have a circular tour at the north end covering Little Auchrae and two smaller historic remains, an ancient cairn and a Burnt Mound.

The group then continued on, left the forest and crossed the spate-swollen Auchrae Burn to take a closer look at the neglected medieval village. In the 1500s Little Auchrae is recorded as being inhabited by MacAdams and on Pont's map it appears as a significant fermtoun.

Today many house foundations are still clearly visible as are their associated fields, boundaries and at least one corn kiln. Although most of the stones from the houses have been used to create a very large, circular sheep enclosure, the place remains an impressive example of a pre-clearance village similar to Polmaddie. the Heritage Group.

The site however no longer appears on the latest OS Landranger map and it was agreed that further research into its construction and history could be a timely project for the Heritage Group.

Evacuees at Carsphairn

In 2009 Mr Hamish Porter who had been an evacuee in Carsphairn came into the Heritage Centre and through subsequent correspondence with him and looking at the school registers and log book for that time we have found out a little more about the evacuees.

On 31st August 1939 the school log book notes “ *According to instructions received by telegram, the school was closed for at least a week – or until further orders – as evacuation from Glasgow had commenced. This being a reserved area, no evacuees are expected at present, although all arrangements have been made for their reception*”

Six private evacuees came in 1940. They probably had relatives in the village. The greatest number arrived in April 1941. 21 came from Cardonald School in Glasgow and they were billeted in many of the village houses and to farms - to the north as far as Drumjohn and, nearer the village, Holm of Lagwyne and to the south Knockgray, Carnavel and Bardenoch.

A member of staff, Miss Fleming from the school in Cardonald came with the children. Classes were rearranged and extra desks were provided. Miss Fleming was replaced in August by Miss Husband from the same school and by now the school roll was 45 consisting of 31 local children and 14 evacuees.

By January 1942 Mrs Latimer replaced Miss Husband but, by now, there were only 9 evacuees left and when Mrs Latimer returned to Glasgow in April 1942 she was not replaced.

Throughout 1941 there is mention in the log book of a few private evacuees returning and a few transferring to Cally House as they were entering a High School course. In November 1942 14 desks that had been used by the evacuees were removed by truck to Glasgow.

Amongst the children from Cardonald came Hamish, Agnes and Mary Porter and from Mr Porter have come

memories of Carsphairn. Mary, just 7 in 1941, could remember feeding lambs and going on a class walk which included looking into a well which some of the other pupils said was bottomless and really frightened her . Could this be the Green Well of Scotland?

Mr Porter lodged at the schoolhouse with Miss Dougan, the headmistress. One of the villagers allowed the evacuees to use her derelict henhouse as a den. He remembered a particularly ferocious sheep which attacked anyone who got too close. It was known as the "Duncher".

Two other evacuees stayed at the Knowe in the village and one of them with Mr Porter were told off for running over the gravel to the front door and kicking the gravel onto the front lawn.

Mr Porter remembered that one day, not long after they arrived at Carsphairn he and two other boys plotted to run away and started walking from the village towards Dalmellington. As they walked away from the village they went off the main road to a house which appeared to be empty. The other boys began to throw stones at the windows of a house and broke some.

They were caught and according to the log book for May 5th 1941 *"the headmistress went to Castle Douglas that day to speak for some evacuee boys who had to appear at a Juvenile court for breaking windows at the disused leadmines. The boys were admonished"*

Frustratingly there are no records of when the evacuees left Carsphairn but it would appear that few stayed very long. We are grateful to Mr Porter and his sister Mary for sharing their memories with us.

by Anna Campbell

A KIDNAPPED LASS OF GALLOWAY

from Ned Maxwell

I am a lass of Galloway
a bonny lass, they used to say.
Most likely, that's the reason why
I was sold to slavery.
How I long for my dear Galloway.

The Galloway Mountains are my
home,
and never did I wish to roam
far from the heather, and sweet bog-
myrtle
in profuse growth, where land is fer-
tile,
throughout Bonny Galloway.

The glen of peat and towering crag,
was
my classroom 'neath the heavenly
sky.
Like sailors, yearning for the sea
these hills are where I long to be,
in Bonny Galloway.

The tinkling sounds of sparkling rills
that flow between the mighty hills,
comprise the music I adore.
I long to hear them sing once more
A song of Galloway.

The golden eagle soars the sky,
a bird of gracious majesty:
for mate he searches far and wide,
they'll nest upon the mountainside
in the heart of Bonny Galloway.

Buzzard, falcon, and kestrel hawk,
are native to this land of rock
formations that rise high
towards the cerulean sky,
over geology rich Galloway.

I watched them preening studiously
and
flap about in silver-sand
reduced from granite of ancient times,
by vicious storms, and cracked by
rime
in prehistoric Galloway.

Curlew whaup their mating calls
as only curlew may,
they whaup through daylight and at
night,
and through the hour that starts next
day
into early morn in Galloway.

The pretty, songful did-loee
of charming little woodlark
trills in summer atmosphere,
and fills this lovely mountain park
with
sweet music throughout Galloway.

I am stolen in 1721,
when mountain gypsies still hold
strong.
They rule the mighty Rhinns of Kells,
and by bloody sword and poisoned

wells,
the whole of Galloway.

Billy Marshal, Gypsy King,
he rips me from my parent's wing.
The rogue, aged more than sixty years
abducts me regardless of the tears
that wet my shawl, in Galloway.

King Billy's bride, I thought I'd be:
though I did not like the notion.
He steals my precious maidenhood:
I'm robbed without emotion
on the braes of my own Galloway.

He doesn't want me now, the King:
I am no more than just a curse,
but he won't set me free to go,
I'll become silver, in his purse
when we are far from Galloway.

He takes me to a foreign land
where Englishmen men of Kent live.
I see potatoes fill the fields,
this land has lots of food to give
much more than upland Galloway.

The gypsy sells me to a man
of farming type, I know not when
I'll see my Scottish home again.
It could be years if ever, then
I may never see my Galloway.

The farmer kicks me to the ground
to put me in my place, he says.
I already wish that I were dead.
I cannot hope for any way
of ever seeing Galloway.

He starves me three, then two days
more
to break my will, and turn me
whore
unto his wanton ways, and deeds:
to satisfy his selfish needs
upon this lass of Galloway.

This once young, lass of Galloway
is an ancient hag at forty-three.
The brute attacks with zealous
greed
to satisfy his cruel need
upon this lass from Galloway.

The Killing Times

Covenanting in the Glenkens in the 17th century

Material from our 2006 exhibition is now
in booklet form

**Available at £3.00 from Carsphairn Heritage
Centre, Carsphairn, Castle Douglas, DG7 3TQ
tel: 01644 460653**