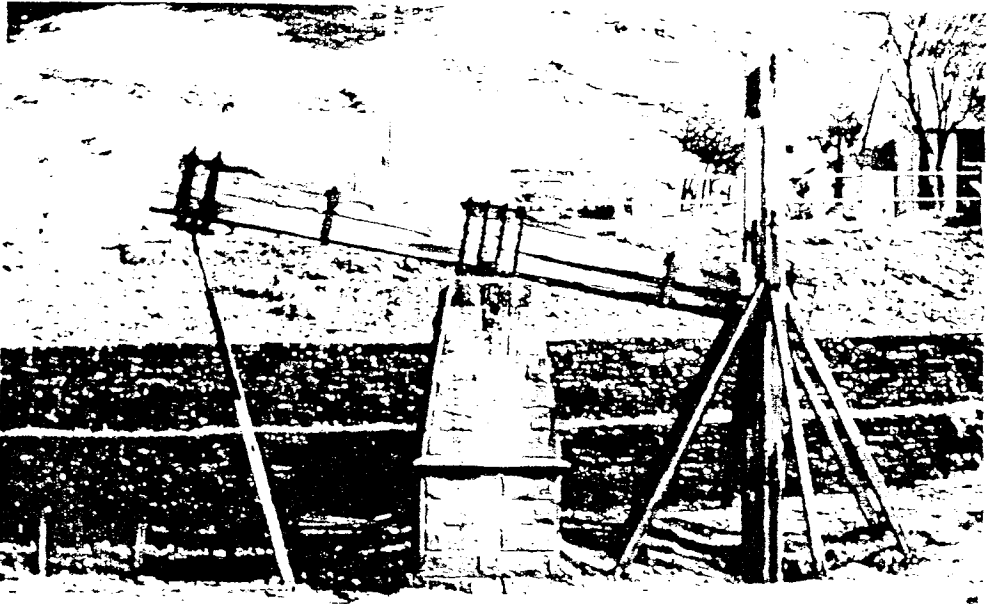


Carsphairn Heritage Group



Newsletter No 43

July 1998

Our Exhibition on Sheep is going very well. It is colourful, interesting, varied and informative and typically some visitors skim through and, finding the gory photographs of dog worried sheep, go "Ugh!", then buy one of our wee black faced sheep (made locally), leave something in the Donations Pot and depart within 15 minutes. While others come in and stay half an hour. They are completely absorbed in reading every piece of information about sheep - past, present and future - engage the steward in long interesting conversations and leave without having spent a penny! Which is the better visitor? The one who is interested in everything but leaves not a penny or the one who skims the details and leaves us better off! It takes all sorts and Stewarding is a fascinating pastime offering the opportunity of meeting people from literally all over the world - just look at the visitor's book.

The beam engine on the front cover indicates this issue's interest in lead mines. In June a group visited an old lead mine buried in the depths of Kirroughtree Forest at Black Craig just above the A75 near Newton Stewart - see article by Charles Cathcart's sister Julia Millar. Then a party from New Cumnock Historical Society visited our own leadmine at Woodhead and sent us a poem which sums up their day. Our walk this year, as you can see below, will be autumnal and not, after all, to Loch Doon but over easier ground.

THE ANNUAL WALK

Saturday 10th October 1998 2pm at Knockgray

We will be led by the Colonel who will take us on a historical walk around the Knockgray plantations and cemetery

Nearer the date further details will be available at the Heritage Centre telephone 01644 460653 or from Colonel Clark Kennedy at 01644 460225

or

Hugie Adamson 01644 460220

The Valley called Barbarusle

What a wonderful place name! It smacks of barbaric cattle raids, or Western movies, but we don't need fiction - just three days in the history of the Glenkens.

A month after Mary Queen of Scots fled across the Solway, James Stewart the Regent of Scotland, marched out of Edinburgh with certain of his nobility to "*ryde to the S.W. of Scotland for punyshinge of dysobedyent persons and theves.*" The thieves were hanged and the disobedient persons were to be persuaded, one way or another, to abandon the Queen's cause.

On June 11th they rode to Biggar and next day the Regent "*caused cast downe the castle and place of Skirling, a notable buyldinge. upon the consideracion that others might heare and feare.*" That night Sir James Hamilton surrendered to them at Crawfordjohn and they moved on to Sanquhar next morning.

"The XIIIth daye they marched forward to valley called Barbarusle, the holme of Dawherny, (Dalquhairn) where they remayned all the night, and toke some goodis there. This day they sent the Larde of Wedderburne to the Larde of Lowinvar (Laird of Lochinvar) to desyre hym to come in, who utterly refused. After (later) they sende hym offers that if he would come in, and laye a pledge at Michelmas nexte, that they wold do hym no injurye, but all their offers were refused by hym. This day they jornynd XII myles."

James Stewart was after powerful supporters of the Queen in Galloway and needed allies in the area. I think that he struck a deal with the McAdams at the Holme that night. They were then the largest group of tenant farmers in the Upper Glenkens and capable of mustering a large fighting force to support their local Laird, Gordon of Lochinvar. Within a year of this visit, Andrew McAdam, the tenant of Waterhead, obtained a Crown Charter of the merklands of Waterhead, under the Register of the Great Seal, and signed by James Stewart, the Regent Moray. "Sticks" were used to bring down the great men, were "carrots" used to bribe their tenants? Andrew, head of the family, was elevated to landowner status with the proviso that the charter was to be ratified by James VI when he came of age. (That was a smart clause to keep them on side for many years to come.)

Back to the Regent's expedition:

The 15th day they marched to a place called St John's clawan and remained there two miles from Lochinvar place, in hope of "*incommynge*" (surrender), for they would not have destroyed his place if they could have gotten any appointment of him. They journeyed this day ten miles.

The 16th day they marched to Loch Ken against Kenmure. In the morning there appeared about nine men upon a hillside, "*but enterprysed nothings*. *This daye the place of Kenmure was destroyed and cast downe, and another proper place, also an ffreindis of Lowinvaris (Shirmers). They journeyed this day two myles.*"

The following day they left the Glenkens.

Based on accounts in Bannatyne papers

Hugie Adamson

HERITAGE GROUP PRODUCTIONS

Carsphairn - a history as depicted on the Timespan boards hanging in the Centre	£2.00
Local Tales and Legends	£2.00
The Woodhead Lead Mine - Anna Campbell	£1.50
Through the Door - collection of poems	£2.00
First Catch Your Sheep - recipes using lamb and mutton	£1.20
Notelets - designs by Robin Ade in packets of five	£1.30
Past Newsletters each	.30
Index to Newsletter numbers 1-40	.75
Newsletter Binders - binds 28 newsletters plus index	£3.50
Set of Newsletters 1-28 plus index in binder	£10.90

Ordnance Survey Notebook October 1847

"Supposed Roman Road extending across Polwhat Rig(1) passed Craigs of Dunool. It is about half a mile SSE of Donn Hill(2)

"The track of an old road which John Ferguson(3) and Mr Straw(4) says that it is traditionally handed down as having been made by the Romans, the time of their invasion in North Britain. It first appears but scarcely visible in the parish of Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire on the farms of Altry(5) and Corlae(6). Thence it is lost for a considerable distance and again appearing on the farm of Burnhead(7) where it becomes well defined and taking a north westerly direction forming a boundary line betwixt divers farms to the farm of Moor(8) in Carsphairn and from the northern end of Polwhat Rig on the farm of Moor it again is lost and cannot be traced through the remaining part of the country. See Account in Chalmers Caledonia vol. 3 p 236"

1 Polwhat Rig grid reference OS Landranger 77 - 603023

2 Dunn Hill " " - 595036

3 Shepherd at Moor

4 Carsphairn Schoolmaster

5 Altry grid reference OS Landranger 77 - 6700

6 Corlae " " - 659978

7 This may be "Bawnhead". Text almost illegible. Grid reference is
621001

contributed by Anna Campbell

Leadmine Walk at Black Craig

On a clear, cold June afternoon Carsphairn Heritage Group plus guests, ten of us in all, attempted to re-create a little of the feel and work of the 18th Century leadmining community in Black Craig wood near Newton Stewart.

Andrew Shankland, our leader, a retired teacher from these parts, who has made a study of the mine, invited us to look about us and try to identify evidence of the mine works. We started at Kirroughtree Visitor Centre, worked our way up and round the hill, through beech woods and sometimes very tangled undergrowth in mixed woods and returned to Black Craig where the workers' village used to be.

Heading up a Military Road, built in 1760s to get troops to Ireland - just as General Wade built roads in the Highlands to quell the natives there - we learned that the lead was discovered during the construction of this road which went from Carlisle to Portpatrick. Thus the leadmining industry started here.

At our first stop we looked nervously at an old mine-shaft - a leafy hollow in the woods. Is it safe? Maybe, but better not to walk on it. A bit further on we reached a second shaft, highly dangerous but surrounded by a wire fence. Stones were thrown into the open shaft and took a long time to get to the bottom. We felt that it could not have been much fun building or working in these deep, damp openings, walled with stones as far down as we could see. There were other 'tryall' shafts all over the area used to test for lead content.

Then we studied rocks from a heap of earth and rubble finding that when split, the rocks contained lead, traces of copper, zinc crystals and fools gold, as well as calcyte and quartz. The barren state of this heap suggested that it contained lead and was probably a spoil heap from the mine. A little further on we saw evidence of walls, two rows of wooden stobs and a suggestion of a barrel buried in the ground, all this around a rectangular dip. This was perhaps where the lead was washed. But where did the water come from? Across the road we found a lade but not the source of the water.

A little more investigation led us to a soggy, grassy hollow with a sluice-gate, after which we followed a path which had been a lade carrying water to this reservoir - but where from? The old lade led through woods and round the hill-side and was crossed by slabs of stone forming bridges for farm carts to go about their business. The lade had to be kept level and seemed to stick to the contour of the hill. We followed it for some while. We were reminded here of similar forms of water courses found in the Levadas in Madeira built in the 16th and 17th centuries by the Portuguese and the asequias in the Andes built in pre-Columbian times.

However, still no water source was found yet. So on and up the hill through more woodland until we reached two small Lochs - Bruntis and Little Bruntis. Both clearly man made and today with jumping fish, water lilies and black reflecting water. Here surely was the source of the water.

After this triumphant discovery we walked back down hill to where the workers lived in the old village of Black Craig. Now just piles of stones in fields with the odd bit of domestic vegetation such as an apple tree or a hedge. Looking at old photographs of this village with its white houses and thatched roofs, it was easy to imagine it as it used to be. Apparently some of the houses were still inhabited in the 1960s.

Nothing remains now of this old and at times prosperous industry or its way of life, but it was a lot of fun trying to conjure up images of it, with the enthusiasm and knowledge of Andrew Shankland to guide us.

Julia Millar

Outing to Woodhead Village and Mine

enjoyed by some members of New Cumnock Historical Society

On Saturday the 23rd of May
Some members set out for the hills for a day
The Heritage Centre standing in Carsphairn
Was where they met beside the Cairn
With Anna and Carol, the doughty nine
Drove up to Woodhead Village and Mine.

Anna, so knowledgeable, led them around
Discoursing on chimneys and shafts in the ground
Ruins of houses, school, lades, stores and things
and told what had happened to most of the bings
But search as they did ne'er a midden was found
And the cemetery, without markers, was lost in the ground.

Ere they left the site Anna had a surprise
She drove three of the laggards right over a rise
There to view on a distant hill
The wind-farm of New Cumnock like sticks standing still

With nonchalance Anna reversed to go home
But the red Volvo stalled - it was stuck on a hump
Abandoning the car they descended on foot
To meet with the rest and tell of the bump.
On hearing the tale Elma said with a wail
"My haversack and purse are locked in the boot".

Seeing chaos approach Betty drove off rather quick
Beside her was Billy who had almost lost his stick
Prodding holes in a morass which was not very thick
They gave Anna a lift to her farm in the glen
Where she mustered a Land Rover and several men
Then with daughter aboard headed off for the hills yet again.

During this action the rest of the gang
Sat still in Doug's car and sometimes they sang
Doug, Elma and Barbara, Isabel and Annette
Squeezed in the car trying their tea to forget
With sweets, chat and music they themselves did regale
And watched baby rabbits at play in the shale.

They could not descend to the road to go back
In case they met Anna driving up the single track
Besides Elma really did need her new haversack
On spying the Land Rover they let out a cheer
They were delighted to see reinforcements appear
And - in no time at all the red Volvo was clear.

With cars sorted out in convoy they arrived
At the Heritage Centre at half past five
In haste all leapt out to say their farewells
And say thanks for a fun-tastic day in the hills
Then in the melee Doug and Elma drove away
Heading for New Cumnock with a wave and a toot
"Help" shrieked Isabel, "my bag's in their boot"!!