

**Carsphairn
Heritage
Group**



The Winning Sermon - from left to right Nellie Borthwick, Alec Borthwick,
Betty McMillan and Charles E Stewart or Ned the postman

**Newsletter No 80
Autumn 2007**

The 2007 season

The Heritage Centre closed on September 30th on a high note. It had been included in the Doors Open weekend for Dumfries and Galloway which resulted in more visitors than usual on the closing weekend.

Visitor numbers were slightly less than 2006 but we were glad to see many people who return often as well as tourists from all over the world making their first visit. Family history becomes more popular and we have been able to help visitors researching at least ten local families. It is always a pleasure to be able to fill in parts of the jigsaw of a family tree and often we have received generous donations from those who had found the missing links from material held in the Centre.

The season was completed with a lunch for the stewards and during that occasion the list of possible themes for the 2008 exhibition was discussed. It was decided that an exhibition about food and cures would be held with the proposed title of Carsphairn Kin - Cakes and Cures. If you have any old recipes or cures passed down your family or from a member of the community we would like to know.

Cricket Match in 2008???

Those who visited the 2007 exhibition were intrigued by the local cricket matches played in the first decade of the twentieth century against Dalmellington, Kirroughtree and Glencairn.

It has been suggested by a member of the Glencairn community that there should be a match next year to commemorate the games that were played annually between the parishes in the years between 1906 and 1910. There may not be many in the community here who have ever played cricket but it would be fun to have a match.

If you would like to play, or know someone who would volunteer even if they only have a tenuous link with Carsphairn, please do get in touch. It's a challenge we should meet!!

Anna Campbell

Carsphairn Mutual Improvement Society

Dumfries & Galloway Standard, 19th January 1867

Carsphairn Soiree – The Carsphairn Mutual Improvement Society held their anniversary on the 11th inst. in the schoolroom, which was all the better suited for the occasion through the taste of the Sabbath-school teachers, who had treated the scholars to a soiree. Mr Carson, the president, asked a blessing, and tea was served up in a way that did credit to the officiating ladies. The meeting was addressed by the chairman and Messrs Bone and McNaught, who explained the object of the Society and meeting. Mr Maxwell played the part of a comedian in a most excellent way, and kept all in a merry mood; Mr Gracie gave vocal and instrumental music in a masterful manner; Mr Hunter read a capital essay, entitled “Onward”; and Mr McKay recited a piece for the ladies. Mrs Ferguson, Mrs Gracie, Miss Ferguson, and Mr R. Gracie sang some songs in good style. On the motion of Mr Hannah, the chairman was awarded a vote of thanks, and all who had taken part in the proceedings were heartily applauded for their performances. – *Corres.*

The Dundee Birtwhistles

The Birtwhistles who built the mill at Gatehouse (the Mill on the Fleet) were an energetic Yorkshire family who pursued various interests in Scotland. Whilst the mill was their lasting achievement they also had an interest in our parish.

They owned Dundee which was used by them as a farm for overwintering sheep and cattle that they were buying from Crieff and Falkirk for the English market in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Dundee is not far from the old drove road which is still visible today between Carnavel and Polmaddy. On the Ainslie map of 1797 it is clearly marked with the name Birtwhistle Esq.

A researcher from Yorkshire who is giving a talk on the Birtwhistle family in Kirkcudbright in the spring next year came to search for the farmhouse at Dundee. It was found but is really only a heap of stones and it played a significant part in the story of a prominent family seeing opportunities for enrichment in Scotland late in the eighteenth century..

The winning sermon

Charles Edward Stewart, more commonly known as Ned Stewart was a postman in the parish for many years. On Mondays (the “wee day”) he went to the Shiel, Castlemaddie and Braidnough and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (known as the “Big Day”) he went to all the places before and as far as the Muir.

He was born in the village and spent all his days there. Just after the Great War with the encouragement of Reverend George MacNaughton he entered a national sermon writing competition. He won first prize which was five guineas and the sermon was preached at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh.

Mrs Helen Stewart, Ned’s wife recalled for her grandson Jim Reid that Mr MacNaughton was so excited when he heard that the prize had been won by a member of his congregation that he ran from the Manse to Glenelg (the Stewart’s home) with the piece of paper giving the notification of Ned’s award.

Below are extracts from the sermon which was entitled Riches. If anyone would like the full transcript please contact Anna Campbell. We are grateful to Jim Reid for allowing us to use this material.

“No one needs urging to pursue wealth. All men seem bent on making money. From the lucky broker or merchant, who by a few successes becomes a millionaire, or the popular physician who seems to gather in gold during his consulting hours, or the able lawyer who is simply coining money, down to the humblest clerk or artisan, every one makes it his aim to be as rich as he can...It is a great privilege to be rich, when the owner draws the line between prodigality on the one hand, a miserliness on the other and knows how to spend the treasure given to him.

“Wealth some of us may never acquire. Perhaps we may be always poor; but the poorest man is he whose character is worthless. No

amount of credit at the bank can purchase a good name. Solomon says, proverbs XX11; "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches". In other words, an excellent character is better than worldly wealth.....

"Let us try to see how a good name may be acquired.....It must be the outcome of our own endeavour, the reward of good principles and honourable conduct. Of all the elements of success in life, none is of more importance than Self Reliance.....If difficulties or disadvantages meet us, all the better, so long as we have the pluck to fight through them.....

"It is an honourable ambition for people to wish to get on. It is a nobler ambition to wish to get up and to be respected by all who know us. The pursuit of a good name must be started early in life.....What constitutes a good name? The answer depends on how high we raise the standard of excellence.

Let us take one or two of the elements which help to form a good name. 'Truthfulness'. We should always tell the strict truth, no matter what the cost of doing so may be.'

'Purity' Everybody's character should be above suspicion. 'Kindness' We should try to cultivate a kind, unselfish nature, and be always ready to do others a good turn when we are able. 'Company'. People are scarcely aware how much their reputation is affected by the company they keep. 'Piety'. A good name will not last long unless it is founded on piety.

"No one can obtain purity or safety of themselves. Our strength must come from God. A good name is to be chosen before all things."

The editor apologizes profusely for allowing the previous Newsletter number 79 to go to print before first checking the advertising staff had actually completed the notice about 'The Quaint and the Curious'. No venue. No date. No time. Just a description of the evening! Heads should roll! Slackers should be fired! Standards have slipped! People came all the same.... read on

The Autumn Buffet

September 2007

It seemed enough just to mention the name Sandy Gilchrist for people to find out just when he was appearing again in Carsphairn. It does seem incredible that it was in 2003, four years ago, that he was last at the village hall bringing us a truly memorable evening with his collection of "Quaint & Curious" items. However Sandy once more loaded his car with items of interest, curiosity and bafflement, came down here from Biggar and presented them on long tables, just a few items on each with cryptic words of 'help' as to its use.

The trick was to join the crowds around each table, listen to other teams ideas, pick an item up for closer examination and when the penny drops return item to table and fight through the crush back to your table to write the answer and find your team tucking into the food. Then send another team member into the fray while you caught up with the eating which, as usual, was excellent! No need to panic, there was plenty for everybody at this popular Carsphairn evening out.

I don't know which was more intriguing - the identification of the items or how the food kept coming and coming. When you thought the plate was becoming well - a little sparse, wham another full one had arrived from the kitchen. It was bedlam, well, polite bedlam and such FUN.

After giving us due time Sandy called us to order and started the answers and explanations. Quiet oohs and aaahs emitted from tables where one from each team ticked or crossed their answers and all became clear after explanations.

After a winning team was found there was such a crush at the bar for either celebration or solace but the most pleasurable part of the evening for this contestant was the looks on people's faces as they finally figured out the purpose for items. Also the looks of puzzlement and incredulity from the young when a pensioner stated with authority that the cylindrical metal box in her hand was for sending change back to the purchaser in a department store! Ha, those were the days, Oh yes, I remember them well....

Other items of interest included one of a pair of fancy clips for pinning a lady's skirt up to prevent the hem from being muddied; a container like an oil can but with a very narrow spout for filling inkwells on school desks; a cone made of plastic with blade for shaving used candles back into the shape of un-

used ones; a very small measure on a long handle and a item like a small lathe with a clamp fitting to screw it onto a table, which turned out to be a home-made cartridge maker. A brave man to do that and actually use his own cartridges. Then there was a set-square but the right angle was beautifully rounded used by a tailor or dressmaker; a box with embossed lid used in WWI for soldiers to keep chocolate or cigarettes in; a funnel for force-feeding geese; a minute set of fragile looking scales for weighing letters; a wonderful leg-shaped cradle for just that cradling a gouty leg when resting it on a stool.. I could go on and on.

It must be said that the winning team consisted of pensioners with the exception of a local man who has a metal detector and who probably has developed a good eye for a strange item over the years. An enormously enjoyable evening was had by all if the noise level was anything to go by. Thanks to Sandy Gilchrist for his wonderful collection and masterful control of the evening.

Carol Cathcart

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

Carsphairn Heritage Group will be held at

Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn on

Friday 16th November 2007

AGM at 7.00pm

followed by Bob Martin who is the **History Stop** co-ordinator for **CatStrand** and is responsible for the collection of large post-cards, picture on one side, local history on the other

Refreshments

A GROCERY LIST from 1803

In keeping with the theme for next year's exhibition at the Heritage Centre which is to be about food, herbs, cures and so on I found a list in a book of Quintin McAdam's letters written in the early 1800s from his house Craigengillan near Dalmellington an order for groceries - "I will also be much obliged to you to get for me the different articles mentioned on the fol-

lowing page which my housekeeper says will serve for nearly a year, and I think I'll will be much better and cheaper served, than by getting them from Ayr.

"Get them all of the best quality and as cheap as you can, and send me the account by my carter and I will instantly remit you the amount.

"Get also, besides what is mentioned on the opposite page 20lb finest Clay'd Soft Sugar, which is reckoned the finest sort for Coffee or any other thing. I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, but this is the only way I can get them good, unless from London, as by getting them from Ayr I found them very bad and very dear. -

I am, Dear Sir, Yours Truly
signed Q McAdam

40lbs best Bohca tea	2lb White Ginger
2 ? best single refined Loaf Sugar	½lb Mace
1 -do- best Soft or Raw Sugar	10lb Black Pepper
6lb best Chocolate	2lb White - do -
4 lb best Cacao	4lb Salt Petre
4 lb best Maccaroni	2 Small bottles Capers
4lb best Sago	25lb Pearl Barley
24lb best Jar Raisins	12lb Rice
20lb best Currants	1lb Spanish Blue
12lb best Prunes	1lb Azure - do -
2lb best Sweet Almonds	6 Stone Moulded Candle
1lb Orange Peel	1 Small bottle Cayenne Peper
1lb Citron	4 Dozn. bitter Oranges
4lb Vermicelli	6 Bottles best Mushroom Catchup
2lb Cinnamon	1 real good Cheshire or Double
1lb Nutmeg	Gloucester Cheese
1lb Cloves	

The list is verbatim. I do hope no residents of Ayr are offended by Mr McAdam's comments. Strange anomolies arise. Pepper spelt with 2 ps then 1 p. Their diet was not so very different to ours. And this to last big household nearly a year...

Carol Cathcart

The Seaton Family

A CD of the history of the Seaton family compiled by a family member has been presented to the Heritage Group. Should anyone wish to borrow it please let me know. Anna Campbell at Holm of Daltallochan , Carsphairn tel: 01644 460 268