

**Carsphairn
Heritage
Group**



A fox hunting a vole on the summit of Windy Standard.
Beyond lie the steep north-eastern slopes of Moorbrock Hill

Illustration from Robin Ade's "Fisher in the Hills - A Season in Galloway"

**Newsletter No 69
Winter 2005**

Chairman's Report on 2004

Mrs Campbell, the chairman, commented on the events of the year. The exhibition 'A Carsphairn family – 300 years at Knockgray' was a great success – so much so that for the first time an exhibition has been extended for another season. Knockgray was bought in December 1704 so whilst the planning of the purchase took place that year it really did not belong to the family until the very end of the year! A successful afternoon trip was made to Craigengillan near Dalmellington and the buffet supper with the talk by Margaret Roberts of Shambellie was another highlight.

The success of an association such as Carsphairn Heritage Group depends on people. Over 1500 visitors came to the exhibition this year and their comments in the visitors book reflect their pleasure not only of an outstanding exhibition but of the welcome given by the volunteer stewards. Over 30 stewards have given their time and they have shared their local expertise and love for the area. Mrs Campbell emphasised that the group could not function without the stewards' input.

The group has 80 individual and family memberships from all over Britain and several from overseas all of whom receive a quarterly newsletter. Each one features articles about local history pertaining to Carsphairn and often the Glenkens. Number 68 has just been published – there has never been a shortage of material for the newsletter!

Mrs Campbell reflected on the amount of work done by the committee who research, prepare, mount the material for exhibitions, also organise the very successful annual buffet supper. Few of the current committee members live in the parish and this reflects the wider interests of the Glenkens.

In summary this has been a good year for the Group, supported by a diverse and talented committee, backed by a team of welcoming stewards and visited in person and by internet (www.carsphairnheritage.co.uk) by people from all over the world.

Precautions in an Emergency

Having received our 'Preparing for Emergencies' booklet I decided to compare it with the leaflets which were handed out last time around, i.e. World War II. Here are some examples of the advice we were given :

'It is a good thing to get out your gas mask occasionally and put it on, so as to get used to wearing it.....' there follows a series of contortions you had to perform to get the thing on, and to prevent it misting up; *'wet the end of a finger and rub it on a piece of toilet soap. Then rub the finger over the inside of the window....'* (Public Information Leaflet no 2)

Once wearing the mask you were presumably quite unrecognisable and therefore needed item no 6 on Public Information Leaflet no 2, an identity label. *'.....you should carry about with you your name and address clearly written. This should be on an envelope, card or luggage label not on some odd piece of paper easily lost.'*

Suitably attired in gas mask and luggage label you could assume the nonchalance required in War Emergency Information and Instructions section 15: *'DO NOT TAKE TOO MUCH NOTICE OF NOISE IN AN AIR RAID.'*

MAKE YOUR HOME SAFE NOW (Civil Defence) has a note in the top right hand corner: *'Don't throw this away. You may need it badly'*. It doesn't specify what for. There is a very reassuring bit about *'flying glass, rubble, bomb splinters, and fragments from our own anti aircraft shells'* being hurled about in all directions as well as lots of DIY suggestions which involve digging trenches in your back garden (not deep ones as they are liable to collapse in on you), boarding up your windows and filling the space with *'pebbles, broken bricks, earth or sand'* or, better still, *'you can also protect a window from the inside by putting in front of it a bookcase tightly packed with old books or magazines, or by piling up against it old trunks or boxes filled with stones or earth'* (I wonder how many people were killed or injured by falling trunks and bookcases!)

Lastly, in leaflet no. 5 we learn how to deal with fires and bombs. Did you know, for examples, that if you find the remains of a bomb you should scoop them up and *'drop them into a bucket containing about four inches of sand and remove the bucket to a safe place.'* There follows a whole list of things with which to arm yourself in order to carry out your bomb disposal operations when the time comes.

Page 4, paragraph 4 : *'In a small house the sound of a bomb striking the roof would give adequate warning anywhere'* (Yes, I suppose it would ...) *'In a large house it may be necessary to have a watcher on or near the top floor. He should if possible have a whistle to summon help'*.

The current advice to GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN doesn't sound as daring or exciting but it's probably a whole lot safer!

Sue Wiseman

BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR END 31ST OCTOBER 2004

INCOME		EXPENDITURE		
2003	2004	2004	2003	
246.00	249.50	Membership	161.18	184.87
205.23	876.29(A)	Donations	0.00	0.00
423.00	414.80(B)	Spring buffet	169.44	163.85
29.96	334.96(C)	Interest	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	Centre expenses	855.98	421.52
0.00	0.00	Heat and Light	380.78	0.00
0.00	0.00	Insurance (E)	353.32	0.00
1397.40	0.00	Heritage centre	0.00	2491.07
0.00	0.00	Capital purchases	0.00	0.00
1809.48	239.00	Book sales	0.00	1365.37
1497.64	1603.69(D)	Sales (F)	1250.71	1172.38
33.90	0.00	Sundry Income	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	Purchases	0.00	0.00
5642.61	3718.24		3171.41	5799.06
80.10	15.00	Opening balances - cash		
3973.97	3783.62	Treasurers account		
5557.00	5557.00	National savings investment account		
2064.28	2064.28	Abbey National Charity Account		
		Closing balances - cash	10.00	114.00
		Treasurer's account	4034.43	3783.62
		National Savings investment account	5848.73	5557.00
		Abbey National Charity Account	2068.57	2064.28
17317.96	15138.14		15138.14	17317.96

Examined and found to be in order with the books and vouchers seen.

Notes attached to Accounts for 2004

A. This year donations have been separated from centre sales to show more accurately how much is donated. This figure represents the total amount of donations given, including those given through membership subscription, and a Wind Farm grant of £273.91 towards telephone costs.

Membership donations = £174.50
Centre donations = £427.88

B. The Buffet (Autumn) made £245.36 profit. (including £93.00 from raffle).

C. Interest on Savings and Treasurers Account.

D. Profit from sales in the Centre is £343.64.

Income includes a Wind Farm grant of £258.00 towards the productions cost of this years leaflet.

E. Insurance appears last year as zero as the figure had been incorporated into Centre costs. The sum last year was £297.18. Additional cover was taken out this year due to the diversity of objects in the exhibition and the difficulty of replacing such items.

F. Purchase of items for the shop including,
Tea towels £153.92
Notepads £43.01
Videos & Dvd's £100.00
Leaflets £258.30
And a number of local items sold on commission.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2004

▪ Robin Ade - Auchrae, Dalry	
▪ Anna Campbell, Chairman - Holm of Daltallochan,	01644 460208
▪ Carol Cathcart, Newsletter Editor Culraven, Borgue	01557 870247
▪ John Clark Kennedy - Knockgray, Carsphairn	01644 460225
▪ John Eller - Lagwyne Cottage, Carsphairn	
▪ Agnes Holden, Treasurer - Dalshangan, Carsphairn	01644 460651
▪ Joyce Hunter Blair, Secretary - 33 Main Street, Dalry	01644 430329
▪ Allan James - 6 Salutation House, Carsphairn	
▪ Bob Ramsay, Membership Secretary - 3 Deugh Cottages,	
▪ Carsphairn	01644 460260
▪ Anne Rutherford - Schoolhouse, Carsphairn	01644 460674

The Mutual Improvement Society Woodhead Mine, Carsphairn 1849-50

Set up by the sons of Charles Wilson, mine manager between 1841 and 1872, the Society was set up for 'mutual fostering and teaching' and was similar to the Mechanics Libraries which brought awareness of learning (school and university) to those other than middle class members of society. So it was a Society in which young workers and maybe officers wanted to develop their education in joint work.

Contributed by Willi Wabel, great grandson of Peter Wilson, from his great grandfather's notes and minutes of the meetings, this account is full of references to his predecessors' activities in support of the Society. Peter Wilson, a mining engineer, moved to Norway and Willi Wabel was born and lives in Germany.

'The meetings always took place at the homes of members and were opened and ended with prayers. At the founding meeting on August 18 Peter (then aged 21) presented to the assembly of twelve people solemnly presided by two eldest the idea of founding the Society mainly for young men but everybody should be allowed to attend. So the Society was formed. A library of 700 to 800 books was evidently available at Woodhead Mine; my father saw it later as well as the entries in the books written by my grandfather, who probably managed it. Peter Wilson was president. The office of secretary changed several times. For a certain period James (Peter's younger brother) held this office until he went in early 1850 to the Academy at Ayr.

Right from the beginning many essays were written and presented. There were even essay competitions. Philosophical, religious and moral issues were popular. For the second meeting home work was written about 'Sabbath' (done by Peter Wilson) or about the 'Evil of War' (covered by James Wilson) and about the 'Story of Jonas in the bible'. Very soon interest in geographical items was shown.

'The first essays probably showed that the knowledge of grammar and orthography with the members was unsatisfactory as the decision was made to learn grammar. School books were brought and a tough school operation started with home work and with questions and answers. The president acted as a teacher. Parallel home essays were done:

Moses	The Blessing of the society	Moderation
Water	Origin, nature and effect of the wind	Rain
The miner	How many bones the human body has	The Hungarian
The camel	The names of all sites in the parish	Facts about gold

'This extract shows that the interest were not one-sided. Towards the end of 1849 the president gave presentations on geography: "Origin and rise of the

USA, present situation and prospects”.

‘Books were bought jointly and their possession was pleasure. There was progress in the society! Around the end of the year the first crisis came up. It was evidently custom at Woodhead Mine to wet one’s whistle at New Year’s Eve. Peter suggested celebrating New Year’s Eve in soberness and to hold a meeting on New Year’s day. The proposal met with some opposition but nevertheless was accepted in the end.

‘On Jan 1 1850 eight people gathered at the usual hour 6.30pm and after a “very appropriate” prayer of the eldest the president gave a review of the foundation and the activities of the Society up to now and indulged in considerations about the positive fact that indulgence withdraws as education and wisdom of the people increase. (The president was not even 22 years old!)

‘Only the most ignorant of the lower classes consider New Year’s Eve as a drinking day. All present members were highly delighted at their own virtue. But soon water was poured into the wine of the moderates. The first withdrawal requests were made by members fond of drinking. One of the disloyal, however, was amongst the members later again and distinguished himself by active co-operation.

‘Early 1850 the grammar lessons were evidently considered to be boring and therefore shortened. But there were two classes - for starters and advanced learners. Geography was regularly done.

‘The lessons were organised in a more liberal way. The meetings were to be held every second week and problems to be discussed. The books were to be read more intensely. In return the president delivered papers regularly: about barometer, thermometer, astronomy, chemistry, meteorology. He presented data about the rain, frost-days, barometer and thermometer values as well as sun hours at Woodhead Mine probably based on his own data.

‘One day the meeting took place at his home. The members were impressed by the huge number of chemical apparatus and reagents. And then Peter Wilson showed his astonished colleagues and pupils experiment after experiment. He started with secret ink, then Chlorate, Soda, Explosives. One experiment was followed by another experiment. The evening became a huge success as the audience had “no idea of the existence of such an important science in the wild mountains of their moorland district” as the minutes tell.

‘During the following meeting, on March 30 1850 two members, probably the eldest, found very warm words of gratitude for their president, for his effort, kindness and love. As a sign of their gratitude they presented a silver pen to him. It was a solemn meeting in which the essay competition “Coal and Iron” was decided and a new home work item was defined: “Means to improve the social, educational and religious level of the working class” a subject highlighting the important questions of that time.

‘A little later, early in May, the Society started their summer vacations. Peter Wilson was satisfied with the results of the first semester. He had

14 students and successfully improved the mastery of basic rules of grammar by the initially clumsy members, broadened their horizon and confronted them with the key questions of their time, the period of industrial development, "How can I promote the social, intellectual and religious development of the working class?" Religion is important - why, will be shown further down.

In October 1850 the Society started working again but the interest seemed to have diminished. In the beginning only five members came, later seven. Grammar was repeated and arithmetic was taught. Peter talked about a sermon he had heard (He evidently was occupied with religious subjects at that time) showed pictures of minerals, talked about the production of alum and Macaulay's History of England. Money, measures and weights and astronomy were taught. The minutes end with the 40th meeting on Dec 7.

It is not clear whether the respectable members of the Society lost their interest in it, whether there was a dispute or the question of an abstemious or alcoholic New Year's party was the reason for the breaking up the Society. But it seems that the resolution was done in mutual understanding and friendship because Peter later regularly sent greetings from Norway to his colleagues and friends of the Mutual Improvement Society.

'The forty minutes of meetings open a deep view into the social movement of that time and the interests of our grandfather in Woodhead: Chemistry, meteorology, mining, mineralogy, astronomy and - but not least he occupied himself with religious questions.'

How good is your language?

The following are all Galloway words
see if you can give the English word or as near as you can

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----|---------|----|---------|
| 1 | anent | 6 | fleesom | 11 | moocher |
| 2 | bauchle | 7 | gorach | 12 | praties |
| 3 | clinkit | 8 | hunker | 13 | quait |
| 4 | dorty | 9 | kirn | 14 | rive |
| 5 | empy | 10 | lowp | | |

Answers to : Anna Campbell, Holm of Daltallochan, Carsphairn,
Castle Douglas DG7 3TH by 1st April please