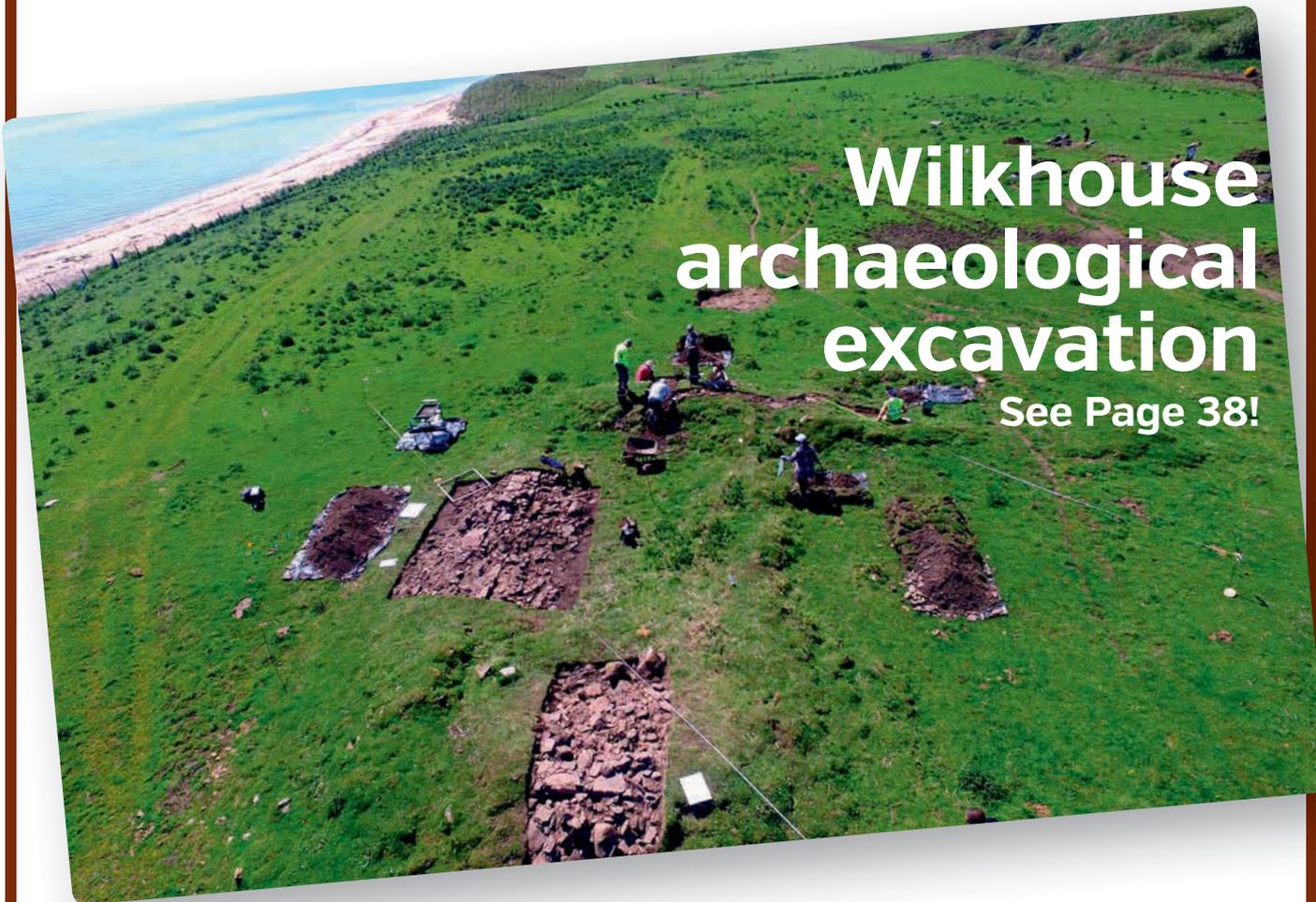


The Clyne Chronicle

The Magazine of Clyne Heritage Society

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Wilkhouse archaeological excavation

See Page 38!

Includes:

First-Time Archaeologist: My Take on the Wilkhouse Dig Janet French

Nurse MacLeod's Babies Dr Nick Lindsay

Sutherland Estate Petitions 1871 Dr Malcolm Bangor-Jones

Lt E Alan Mackintosh, World War 1 Poet with

Brora Connections Dr Donald Adamson

The Capaldi's of Brora Story Morag L Sutherland

...and more



With great thanks to *Cunningham's of Brora*
and *Cornucopia* for continuing support.

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The Editor welcomes all contributions for future editions and feedback from readers, with the purposes of informing and entertaining readers and recording aspects of the life and the people of Clyne and around. Many thanks to CHS member, Tim Griffiths, for much appreciated technical assistance with the Chronicle and also to all contributors.

Cover Image: George Gunn's amazing drone picture taken on Day 4 at the Society's archaeological excavation at the old inn at Wilkhouse, near Kintradwell.

Comment from the Chair

Happy belated New Year to all our readers! Well, it has been another really busy, successful and significant year again for the Society, as we celebrate 20 years of our existence.

Yes, it really was in March 1998 that Hamish Bruce and Willie Gunn decided to create a heritage society in the parish. I remember very well responding to the wee article they placed in *The Northern Times*, my 'reward' for which was to be the Society's Secretary at its inception! Also on the first committee were Morag Gibson (Treasurer), Hugh Baillie (Vice-Chairman), Betty Faassen de Heer (who is still playing an incredibly vital role as our Archivist), Jean MacLeod, Doris Murray, Dennis Pryde and Edna Rekhy. Since then, many others have helped greatly along the way, but, sadly, from that original committee, only Betty, Jean, Dennis and Edna are still with us (and myself too, of course!).

As I wrote in the Chronicle at our 10-year anniversary, I sometimes wonder what Hamish and Willie would have made of the Society today; would they be proud? I think the answer is a resounding yes! The Society is part of the fabric of the parish and village now and we are widely known for our activities, which have massively increased even in the last decade.

We have just completed our second year running Brora Heritage Centre on behalf of High Life Highland, where, thanks to our excellent and welcoming staff and volunteers, we increased our visitor numbers on our first year and doubled our sales, largely by increasing our retail area, which helps to put on more activities and better facilities in the future. In May last year, with archaeological expertise from Guard Archaeology Ltd and financed by one of our members, Dr Donald Adamson, we added to our expanding 'curriculum vitae' by taking part in a tremendously successful two-week long excavation of an old inn at Wilkhouse, near Kintradwell, to the north of Brora during the best weather of 2017.

As we enter the start of our next decade, I have one word of caution for anyone still reading this! Whilst we all pride ourselves on what we do and what we enjoy, as well as what we have achieved, the whole Society is based on a huge voluntary effort – which is only going to increase in the coming years with our exciting plans for the new centre. Sometimes, just sometimes, we are a little short on volunteers, so, if you feel you can help in any way, we would welcome any assistance.

I know that you entrust all of the activities and the guardianship of the heritage of the parish to us, but if you think that we fall short on occasion, please remember that we all do other things and that Clyne Heritage Society is, after all, a hobby. It is a very powerful, stimulating and rewarding hobby and the more that people become involved, the better it will be for our aims. We appreciate your past support and welcome your help in any way in the future, for what has to be just the best parish in the Highlands for the quantity and quality of heritage, with definitely the best people!

Long live Clyne Heritage Society!

Chronicle News

Co-op 'Local Cause'

Thank you to our members and who are also members of the Co-op, who nominated us as their favourite Local Cause, in the company's community scheme.



Presentation of cheque outside the Brora Co-op store.

presented with a cheque for an incredible £2,948 by the Co-op staff on 21st April 2017. In discussion, at the following Board meeting, it was agreed this sum should be used to develop community events for the Society, especially at the Heritage Centre, thereby giving the money back to our local supporting population.

Many thanks to Stuart Nicolson of the Brora Co-op for the photo.

Brora Carnival Week

The Society's contribution to Brora Carnival Week activities were a busy and fun-filled, sunny afternoon Mock Dig at the Brora Heritage Centre, and a guided history walk around the village.

Over fifty children and parents attended the 'dig'. Children thoroughly enjoyed unearthing buried 'treasures' in fish boxes filled with sand, kindly loaned by Lorna and Alistair Jappy.



Children at the Mock Dig.



The History Walk participants at Brora Harbour.

Brora Heritage Centre: the Story of 2017

Our second season operating Brora Heritage Centre, on behalf of High Life Highland, was a very busy one, capitalising on the experiences of our first season. Our excellent Heritage Officers, Mary Stewart and Lorna Jappy, were re-engaged and all of the volunteers returned for more sessions, with the addition of another recruit too. Some of the highlights from the season follow.



Nicol Manson with his military collection, including uniform, loaned to BHC.



George MacBeath with Brora P1, P2 and Nursery classes.

Opening day arrived and we were just about ready and opened the doors at 10.30, after Dorothy Thorpe, one of the volunteers, brought in some fresh daffodils to brighten up the reception area.

Over the Easter weekend, Heritage Officer, Lorna, was kept very busy, with almost 100 people through the door in the first three days – a fantastic start to the season. Those who had visited before approved of the new displays and layouts. The till was

Revamping some of the displays began on 1st March, six weeks ahead of the planned opening date of Good Friday, 14th April. The Crofting/Archaeology Room underwent the biggest change, with the previously partly hidden crofting tools taking pride of place mounted on the back wall. We received the loan of a fascinating collection of 93rd Sutherland Highlander artefacts, including the stunning 100-year-old uniform of a 1st Sutherland Highlander Volunteer, from Society member, Nicol Manson.

The research area, last year shared with the Children's Play Area, was removed to a dedicated room beside the reception desk and a display of school class photos was installed in its place. The retail area was upgraded and expanded to accommodate the increase in product lines, especially books, but also including Capaldi's ice cream tubs.

kept busy too, with great sales in the new, expanded retail area, which featured some locally made hearts made from Hunters of Brora tweed from Handmade by Fiona and bonny jewellery and silk scarves from Parakeet Unique, adding a fresh burst of colour. We almost sold out of Capaldi's ice-cream too!

Like last year, in June we were visited by children from Brora Primary School, class by class. On the day of the Brora P1/2 and Nursery classes visit, we had arranged for Doll favourite, George MacBeath to share some stories and answer questions about crofting life and also his experiences as school 'Jani' for 22 years. This involvement stirs interest in the younger generation, which, hopefully, will stand Brora's heritage in good stead for the future.

Also in June, Harry – from Halkirk – brought his folks back for a return visit to the centre. Harry was the first user of our doggy parking spot in the May of the previous year and we were delighted to welcome him back again!



Children at the Dinosaur Detective Workshop.

Finally in June, we held our first activity day for the children, the Dinosaur Detective Workshop, when we had fifty-two children and parents on another sunny day. We held three other workshops for children in July [Vikings] and September [Ice Age and Ancient Rocks & Stones] which were all well attended and thoroughly enjoyed.

As we geared up for our Viking Day, Lucy and her Mum and Dad from Garelochhead made a visit to Brora Heritage, on their way back home from a holiday in Orkney. They became Vikings for the afternoon and Fiona, her Mum, later posted on our Facebook page:

“Lucy had so much fun and we learned lots about Brora Past & Present. Thanks for all your kind hospitality – hoping we’ll have a chance to pop by again in the future!”

Earlier in July, Brora Free Church held their annual Sunday School picnic in the grounds at the Centre and we recorded our largest number of visitors for a day too – thirty-nine. At first glance, thirty-nine doesn't seem too many, however, when visitors receive the excellent level of personal customer attention from the staff and volunteers, we can assure you that it is a full-on day. Just like it was for the Brora 10k, which is run from Fascally. Overall visitors that day totalled over 200 and it was our best day for sales too.



Annabella and her *Guide to Brora*.

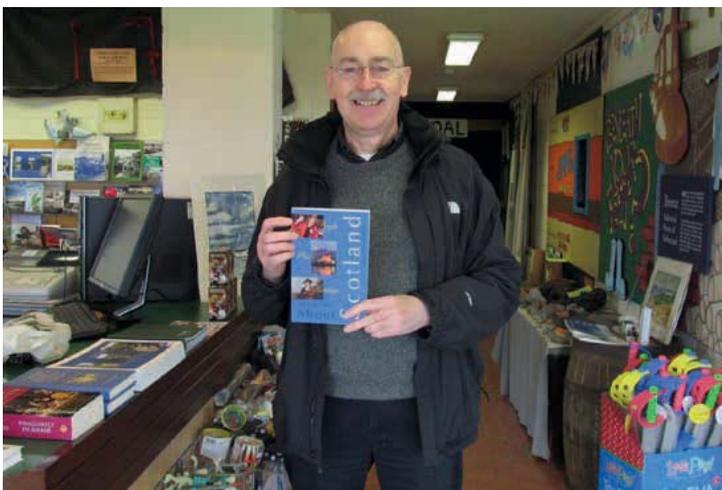


Jimmy Fernie, ex-Brora Coal Mine Surveyor, visiting from Fife.

In August, we had a coach visit from an American tourist party, the leader of which visited last year and added the Centre into his itinerary for this year. They were thrilled with their visit and the new donation box at the exit was swelled with notes.

September saw the return visit of 7-year-old Annabella, along with her parents and grandparents. She presented us with her own carefully planned and drawn '*Guide to Brora*' leaflet, after coming last year for the first time on holiday. It is now pinned, taking pride of place on our information board, for all visitors to read. Annabella's grandfather is Society member, David Sutherland, who has Brora roots, but lives in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Another surprise September visitor was Jimmy Fernie visiting from Fife. Jimmy was the Brora Coal Mine Surveyor from 1962-65. Mary was on duty that day and she was enthralled listening to his stories from his mining days in Brora.



Iain Laing – visitor 3,192 – beating last year's total!

October saw us overtake last year's walk-in visitor numbers. Iain Laing from Glasgow was the lucky man, when he became our 3,192nd visitor of the season, eclipsing last year's total of 3,191. He was thrilled to be presented with an '*About Scotland*' guide book as a gift to mark the occasion, by our on-duty Heritage Centre volunteer, Dorothy.

Our final activity for the children occurred a few hours after we had closed the doors for the season.

Lorna guided the ninety-three children and parents around the grounds at Fascally for the 2nd Annual Brora Heritage Spooky Walk. And what a spooky walk it was! There were ghosts all around Fascally park and live werewolves screaming from the bushes. It was clear that many of the parents were just as frightened as the children. Everyone returned to the centre afterwards for mulled wine and juice.

The Spooky Walk nicely brought the curtain down on the second season at the centre. Visitor numbers had exceeded last year, donations were up too, but sales had doubled, which was great news and thoroughly justified investing in an increased range of heritage-related products.

Great thanks to the volunteers who all played a huge part in the success of the season. We hope to see you at the Centre for our third year when we open on Good Friday, 30th March, for another fun-filled season.

Visitors to Brora

During the summer, several visitors came to the Centre for specific, family history reasons. Most had contacted the Centre or the Society in advance and detailed their family connections and the gaps that they hoped would be filled from a visit to the land of their ancestors. Below are the experiences of a few.

First to arrive was Leah Haywood, from Ohio, USA, in April. Her connection with Clyne is through her five-times great grandparents, Andrew Murray and Chirsty Bruce, from Brochrobbie. One of their sons, William, married Catherine [Ketty] MacLeod and they are both buried at Clynekirkton Graveyard.

Society Chairman, Nick Lindsay, arranged to meet Leah and her husband, Dale, and showed them around the haunts of their ancestors, including houses in the parish in which their ancestors lived and also their burial places. After some follow up research on the family tree by Nick's wife and genealogist, Ellen, it transpired



Helen MacDonal (right) with Heritage Centre volunteer and genealogist, Ellen Lindsay.

that Leah has living relatives still in Brora and Golspie. Leah is second cousin to CHS member Mary Ann Melville (nee MacKay) in Golspie and also third cousin to Wilma MacGregor and CHS member Anne Clarke. Nick passed on this information to a delighted Leah and arranged for her to meet up with Anne and they spent a fascinating afternoon together, catching up on old family tales!

Next up, in July, was Helen French, daughter of Mark and Jane French, who have visited their Doll roots several times over the past few years, and also niece to Janet French, who wrote the article about volunteering at last summer's Wilkhouse excavation on Page 38.

On holiday from Edinburgh, Helen and her partner, Michael, were shown around the old family croft of Thomas Ross (1796–1863), Schoolmaster at Doll, and his wife, Ann Melville (1808–1895). Nick also took them to see the old ruin at Rallan, to where Ann moved after the death of Thomas, along with their son, Donald (1844–1909), who continued to live there with his wife Christina Gunn (1839–1907).

Also in July, Helen MacDonald, from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, visited the Centre again, following her visit the previous year. She had very little time to spare in 2016, but she was interested in her Anderson ancestors, joined the Society then and kept in touch. This time, she had more time and was also accompanied by her daughter, Laura, and Nick showed her to the house in Badnellan where her Anderson's stayed and to their headstones at Clynekirkton.

Five days later, we had a visit from Meryl Smith, from New Zealand. She was a descendent of one of the most colourful characters of our parish, the Reverend Walter Ross, Minister of Clyne, who served here from 1776 until his death in 1825. Meryl was keen to find out more about him and where he worked and lived. Again, Nick took her to the graveyard at Clynekirkton, in which there is the ruin of the old parish church, where the Minister would have preached to his flock in the brand new church erected in 1775. He would have lived in the adjacent manse, built at the same time as the church.

Meryl had done some research prior to coming to Scotland and was keen to know where her ancestor had a tack (an area of land which he mortgaged from



Helen and Michael at Rallan.



Meryl Smith in the bracken-covered ruins at Greanan.



Bev Rea at Clynekirkton Graveyard.



Ann and Phil Sutherland at Alexander MacDonald's headstone at Clynekirkton Graveyard.

September, with a view to show her around the parish, visiting places relevant to her Clyne MacKay family. These included Ascoilebeg [from where her MacKays were evicted in 1820], East Clyne [to where they settled, following eviction] and, of course, the obligatory visit to Clynekirkton.

While talking to Bev at the Centre before visiting these places, Nick welcomed Phil and Ann Sutherland from Perth, Western Australia, although it was soon revealed, talking with Bev, that Phil originally hailed from her country of New Zealand! Phil and Ann had just turned up unannounced, seeking information about his Clyne Sutherland ancestry.

One of Phil's ancestors was Jane MacDonald, nee Sutherland, and her story is a most fascinating one. On September 4th 1839, she married James Anderson of Easter Brora and, the very next day, with his widowed father and two brothers, they sailed from Brora to eventually arrive in London, to board the *Oriental*, the first ever immigrant ship to sail for New Zealand. The *Oriental* sailed from Gravesend on the September 15th 1839, and arrived at Port Nicholson, Wellington, on the January 31st 1840. On board,

the Sutherland Estate, which he sub-let to tenants and collected their rents]. Reverend Ross's tack was at Greanan and he also had a dwelling there. Nick took Meryl to Greanan, which is the site of the former Strath Brora School and now the Scout Hut at the top end of Loch Brora. On the flat-topped hill next to the building is the ruin of Reverend Ross's dwelling, at that time of year deeply overgrown with bracken.

One of the many stories which survive about our Minister friend is that he loved his sport and, while preaching at the pulpit one Sunday, he proclaimed, "If the next Sabbath is a bad day, the service will be held as usual; but if it's a good day we'll be after the foxes!"

Nick had arranged to meet Bev Rea from Auckland in New Zealand at the Centre in early

there were 66 married couples, 29 single men, 3 single women, 17 children between nine and fourteen, and 9 between one and nine. There were 8 births and 2 deaths on the voyage.

After arriving, the newlyweds settled in Auckland but, sadly, Jane's husband died. In 1847, she remarried to a William MacDonald and they ran an inn together in Auckland and they had a son, Alexander, born there in 1849. Tragedy struck

again, and William died, so Jane decided to bring her son home to live with her mother and siblings in Brora. Sadly, in 1860, when Alexander was 11, he died having suffered from diarrhoea for a year. Having been on the first emigrant ship to sail for New Zealand, lost two husbands and sailed half way around the world back home and then lost her only child, Jane's story is an eventful, moving and tragic one. She passed away in Brora in 1878 due to 'Faintness due to the unhealthy state of the body prolonged into fatal syncope'.

Armed with this new information, Phil and Ann tagged along with Bev and Nick to Clynekirkton and paid an emotional visit to Alexander's headstone. Phil and Ann were much moved by the experience, even though they hadn't known about Jane's amazing story an hour before!

Finally, in late September, Jim Carrie and his son, Gordon, from Texas, USA, arrived at the Centre to find out more about where their MacKay ancestors lived. Nick showed them Altririe or Peatmoss, West Clyne, the house where Jim's ancestors, John MacKay [1830-1911] and his wife, Williamina Ross [1828-1913], lived and raised their family. Raymond Gunn is the occupant of Altririe now and Nick called on Raymond and introduced him to Jim and Gordon, who were able to see their ancestors' house close up at hand. Needless to say, a visit to Clynekirkton was next and Jim and Gordon were shown the faded stone on the MacKay family lair.

These were just a few of our genealogical visitors and all are so happy with the resources and information held by the Society and the time and the help given to them by volunteers to help fill in gaps in their particular quests. Most give a generous donation, or become members of Clyne Heritage Society, so that they retain an association and keep in touch with news from their cherished ancestral parish.



Jim and Gordon Carrie at the home of their MacKay ancestors.

Nurse MacLeod's Babies!

by Nick Lindsay

Between 15th August 1939 and 23rd June 1946, when she was Brora's District Nurse, Mary MacLeod, delivered 153 babies in the parish of Clyne.



Nurse Mary MacLeod.



9-week-old Rona MacAlister with her parents at Brora, May 1950.

The first baby delivered by Nurse MacLeod was Mary Victoria MacLeod MacRae who, as you can see, was named after our nurse. Her final baby, Mary MacLeod Thom, was again given Nurse MacLeod's name.

In those days, when a working woman got married, she had to give up work and this was the reason Nurse MacLeod delivered her last baby in 1946, when she married James MacLeod, of Brora, in Inverness, on the 20th July, 1946. As a leaving and wedding present, she was given a grandmother clock and a collection of money by the community, presented by her very first baby, 6-year-old Mary Victoria MacLeod MacRae!

With the help of her daughter, Rona MacAlister [pictured as a baby herself], we are beginning a project for an exhibition about the life of Nurse MacLeod in Brora during these war years.

With the help of Rona and Clyne Heritage Society member, Morag Sutherland, we are hoping to put a display of Nurse MacLeod's babies, along with her wartime story in Brora at the Brora Heritage Centre. We are trying to get as many pictures of the babies as possible for the display.

Whilst we know it will be highly unlikely to get pictures of all 153 babies, we want to get as many as we can, so, if you, or any of your family or friends, were born in Brora/Clyne Parish between these dates, then we'd love to be able to scan a photo of that bonnie baby or toddler, to be part of what will be a fascinating exhibition of a snapshot in time in our parish.

Please share this with as many people as you think might be able to help or contact us with any information about these select people.

93rd Sutherland Highlanders 1799-1815: The Battle of New Orleans

By W Nicol Manson

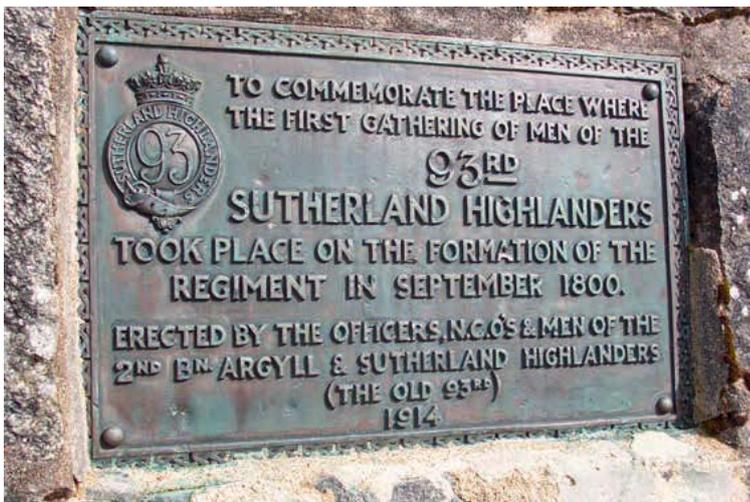
Originally from Brora, but now living in Orkney, Nicol is a long-standing member and supporter of the Society. A former Territorial Soldier, his passion is the military, especially Sutherland's own regiment, the 93rd. In October 2015, Nicol visited the scene of a famous battle in which the 93rds were present. This is his story of the visit.

The chorus of a well-known song, first performed by Johnny Horton in 1959, has the words:

*We fired our guns and the British kept a-comin'
There wasn't nigh many as a there was a while ago
We fired once more and they began a runnin'
On down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.*

Well, our ancestors from the Parish of Clyne fought in this battle and there is no way the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders would have 'began a runnin', so it was time to find out what the reality was.

So, during a two-month tour of South America, USA, and Canada with my wife and son, mid-August to mid-October 2015, we could not go to New Orleans without paying homage to the men of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders. It was also on the 200th anniversary year of their involvement at the Battle of New Orleans, on Chalmette Battlefield, where seventy-seven Sutherland men died in a disastrous campaign for the British Army and their ambitions in North America.



93rd Cairn Plaque, Strathnaver.

The 93rd Regiment of Foot, Sutherland Highlanders was raised in April 1799 at Skail, in Strathnaver, where a cairn was erected in 1914 to mark the event. Most of the men were from the Fencible Regiments, home defence forces raised to check the threat of invasion from France and Napoleon. Major General Weymss of Weymss raised the 93rd for his 16-year-old cousin Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland. Extra numbers were drawn in 1803 from the disbanded Reay Fencibles, Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles and the Scots Militia. Most of the remainder were added from the Sutherland estates in a process harking back to the old feudal system.

Assembled young men were looked over by General Weymss and likely looking prospects would be invited to drink a dram of whisky and take snuff from a large silver bound horn mull, no further attesting deemed necessary. This was the last instance of the old feudal clan form of gathering men to fight. After this ceremony, the men would be told where and when to assemble. Amazingly, without a single absentee on 24th August, 1799, 653 men assembled, of whom 259 had served in the Sutherland Fencibles.

From the start, the 93rd became the most solidly and characteristically Highland of all the Scottish Regiments. Most of the men were native Gaelic speakers, raised in the traditions of the family, clan and parish. The Regiment now became the 'clan' with the commanding officer as 'chief'. The Regiment wore what they called 'Sutherland Tartan', a version of the Government Sett, also known as Black Watch [Royal Highlanders], worn by the 42nd Regiment of Foot.

Formally gazetted into the army in October 1800, the 93rd were dispatched from Fort George, via Aberdeen, to Guernsey. In February 1803, they were sent to quell a brief rebellion in Dublin. During these years they moved about Ireland, becoming quite popular with the Irish people, because of their Gaelic language, high discipline and firm and steady conduct. The Regiment, during its history, would find itself many more times in Ireland.

In July 1805, the 93rd sailed to help recapture the Cape Colony from the Dutch. There, they won their first battle honour. While landing, 37 men were lost, still cheering madly as their boat capsized. In the ensuing battle, the 93rd advanced in line, pipes playing, fired one volley and charged. The enemy broke and ran. After limited skirmishing over the next days, Cape Town surrendered and the 93rd moved into Cape Castle, their home for the next eight years.

In their unfathomable wisdom, HM Government had decided to send an expeditionary force commanded by Admiral Hon Sir Alexander Cochrane and Major-General Sir Edward M Pakenham to seize New Orleans and annex the vast territory acquired by the United States from France in 1803, known as the Louisiana Purchase.

In August 1814, the 93rd sailed to Plymouth, England, thinking of home. Instead, on 17th September 1814, part of three Divisions under Major-General Sir John Keane [strength: 35 Officers, 42 Sergeants, 48 Corporals, 22 Drummers, 817 Privates] embarked for the coast of the United States in the ships HMS *Alceste*, *Bedford* and *Belle Poule*.

The fleet sailed on the 28th and made Barbados on the 18th November. On the 26th, the whole fleet of fifty, including the hospital ship *Gourgon*, left under Admiral Hon Sir Alexander Cochrane and anchored off Ship Island in the Gulf of Mexico. The Admirals' [whose greed for prize money is said to have prompted the whole expedition] objective was to turn the forts.



An illustration of the 93rd trows.

In his comments upon this ill-starred expedition, Sir John Fortescue caustically ascribes its inception to the greed, displayed by the Admirals [three of whom were Scotsmen], for prize money to accrue from the capture of a city worth three million sterling, and its failure, in a great measure, to the inadequacy of their transport arrangements. The bright spots in it are the bravery and endurance of the sailors [some of whom did not have their clothes off for forty days] and the gallantry and efficiency of most of the army.

For this expedition the regiment were ordered to wear tartan trows and Hummel bonnets in place of the kilt and feathered bonnets. The British troops landed nine miles downriver from New Orleans on 23rd December 1814. American Militia attacked at night and a chaotic battle ensued. Elements of the 93rd helped turn the US flank and, by dawn, superior discipline, training and the bayonet had prevailed over raw troops in the open; the Americans withdrew. Andrew Jackson would not dare to expose his rag tag army in such a way again. The Americans then withdrew behind the banks of the Rodriguez Canal.

Jackson's plan was to force the British to march through the stubble of harvested sugarcane fields towards his troops. The Americans enlarged the Rodriguez Canal, which bordered one side of the Chalmette Plantation, running between the Mississippi River and a cypress swamp. They then filled it with water, built a shoulder high rampart thick enough to withstand cannon fire and waited for the British to attack.

On 25th December, the British Commander arrived, Sir Edward Pakenham, the 'Hero of Salamanca', who was the Duke of Wellington's brother-in-law. Jackson had made his stand behind the makeshift rampart along the Rodriguez Canal, five miles forward of New Orleans. Pakenham's advance was halted on 28th December, 750 yards in front of Jackson's parapet. A probing advance was tried on 1st January, which withdrew, not knowing the American left flank had been turned. Had the probe been turned into an outright attack, the outcome of the Battle of New Orleans might have been quite different indeed.

On 8th January, after two unsuccessful advances, Pakenham ordered a third. Everything went wrong. The British concentrated their attack on the rampart end, assuming those were the weakest points, but the fire from Jackson's artillery and small arms tore through ranks with devastating effect. As the British assault against the rampart near the swamp began to falter, the 93rd Highlanders were ordered to

march diagonally across the battlefield from their position near the Mississippi river. The Regiment was exposed to raking fire and suffered heavy casualties. Pakenham went forward to rally his men and was mortally wounded. On the right, Lieutenant-Colonel de Moleyns lost his head and led the 44th in a panic flight, which spread to the rest of Major-General Samuel Gibbs' Brigade. A few gallant parties crossed the canal without ladders. Major-General Gibbs was killed.

On the left, three light companies, among them the 93rd stormed a redoubt on the river bank, from which the whole enemy line could have been turned. Most accounts of the battle state the British never even saw the Americans, as the defenders would merely throw their firelocks up onto the parapet and fire without exposing even their faces.

Colonel Rennie's Light Companies, considered as a forlorn hope, rushing through terrific fire, captured the advanced redoubt. They held on after Colonel Rennie was killed, until finding themselves unsupported, then having to withdraw.

The 93rd alone, pushed out into the centre, until they were only 100 yards short of the ditch. Their Commanding Officer, Colonel Robert Dale, was killed. His successor, Colonel Andrew Creagh:

"...this officer being unwilling to retire his regiment without effecting the object aimed at, although the men were literally mown down by the murderous fire of the enemy and the other column (i.e. the right) had given way, still endeavoured to advance, but at length was compelled to retrograde, taking care to keep his men together. This showed a fine noble feeling in him, and is equally honourable to his gallant Regiment, but unfortunately it tended only to swell the list of killed and wounded on this lamentable occasion".

The Sutherland Highlanders had no further orders and so stood in close order, "firm and immovable like a brick wall", as one American observer was to write, being slowly destroyed by the concentrated fire of the whole American line. With Major-General Sir John Keane wounded, Major-General John Lambert, the surviving General, after seeing the 93rd standing their ground alone in the murderous artillery fire and haphazard musketry, sent orders for the Regiment to withdraw. The total result was, for the British army, a disgrace and, for the 93rd, a tragedy.

The New Orleans debacle must be blamed on a series of mistakes, bad luck, failure to execute certain elements of the battle plan and the Generalship displayed at the time by Jackson. It should be noted that on the opposite bank of the Mississippi the British advance triumphed, driving the Americans from their line (they ran for two miles) and capturing artillery and colours. Ironically, lack of communication meant that neither side knew that peace had, in fact, been signed on 24th of December, 1814, two weeks before the battle.

The total British losses were 385 killed, 1516 wounded, 591 missing, a total of 2,492. A grove of cypress trees, under which the British dead were buried, has

been marked only recently by a bench seat and flagpole, on which flies the Union Flag. The Americans had 57 killed, 185 wounded, and 95 missing, a total of 337. Their leader Major General Andrew Jackson vowed to drive the British, whom he called "the common enemy of mankind", from American soil. His success at New Orleans launched him on the road to the White House.

The 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, originally 919 strong, had 64 killed, 423 wounded [of whom 62 had died up to 24th of January], and 81 missing, total 568. Wounded prisoners, all of whom had been well treated in American hospitals, were returned. By 2nd April, 2 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 7 Drummers, and 133 Privates had been invalided home with wounds received at the Battle of New Orleans.

At this time, many highland landlords had recently adopted the policy of improving their estates by letting their land out in large sheep farms, and necessarily involved the displacement of many small holders, and the clearing away of their houses. It is stated that on the extensive Sutherland estates, between 1811 and 1820, families, comprising 15,000 souls had to find fresh dwelling-places, hence not a few of these invalided 93rd soldiers reached their home parishes, only to find their ancestral dwelling had been swept away and, in some cases, were even in time to see it burning.

The British remained in camp for ten days and, by 30th January, were finally embarked and gone. After leaving New Orleans, the British captured Fort Bowyer outside Mobile, which surrendered on 11th February, with 13 killed and 18 wounded. It was here they learned of the Peace Treaty of Ghent, signed on 24th December 1914, but not ratified by Congress until two months later.

On 13th February the women and children, the sick and wounded of the 93rd were put ashore into tents, so that the transports could be thoroughly cleaned and, on the 26th, officers and men of the Regiment, who had been made prisoners and kept at Natchez, re-joined, nearly all without boots and shoes, which had been stolen by their captors, but otherwise they had been very well treated. After being encamped for about six weeks, eight companies and the women and children of the 93rd were embarked on 23rd March on HMS *Alceste* and HMS *Belle Poule* (the other two companies being detained, as the last of the troops to evacuate the island), and arrived at Spithead on 16th May.

Upon arrival back in Britain, the 93rd was helped back to strength with men from a short lived 2nd Battalion of the Regiment, which had spent its existence as a garrison in Newfoundland. It was not enough, nor soon enough, to enable the Regiment to take part in Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in June, though some officers of the 93rd were there with other units. It is interesting to note that New Orleans was the only defeat suffered by the old 93rd and it was the only time they wore trousers into battle.

Men from the Parish of Clyne who died at the Battle of New Orleans		
Pte Alexander Graham	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Pte Robert Mackay	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Pte Hector Mackay	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Pte Alex Sutherland	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Cpl Adam Sutherland	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Cpl John Sutherland	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Cpl John Sutherland	Died of wounds	12th February 1815
Cpl Donald Sutherland	Killed in action	8th January, 1815
Pte William Sutherland	Killed in action	16th January 1815
Pte John Sutherland	Killed in action	8th January, 1815

An engraved brass memorial in Dornoch Cathedral reads:

*Erected by the Officers
Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
In Memory Of
The Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers
93rd Sutherland Highlanders
who fell in action during operations before
"NEW ORLEANS"
between 23rd December 1814 and 8th January 1815;
killed wounded and missing
out of a strength of 962
Officers 16, Non-Commissioned Officers 22, Privates 535,
Total 573.*

The War of 1812, which culminated in The Battle of New Orleans on 8th January, 1815, is often remembered as America's second war of independence. From the American perspective, the conflict was the final act of the American Revolution. Although ending in a draw, the United States emerged with a stronger sense of national identity and renewed confidence.

New Orleans is a vibrant, happy place, fully repaired after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. On our two months holiday tour in 2015, we stayed at place called Algiers Point for four-and-a-half days. The Chalmette Battlefield is located five miles downstream from New Orleans. It is easily accessed by the Paddle Boat 'Creole Queen', along the mighty Mississippi river. The battlefield tour and the travelling back and fore from New Orleans took about two and a half hours. An amazing experience and thoroughly recommended.

Old Brora Post Cards

By Marianne Ross

Marianne lives in Bonar Bridge, although she is originally from Ross-shire, and she joined the Society for the first time this year, although she has attended the occasional talk in our annual syllabuses over the years. She visited our Wilkhouse dig in May last year and became an instant hit when she delivered a surprise Tupperware box of home baking for the diggers!

I joined Clyne Heritage Society as I am interested in the coastal history of all of our wonderful North East Coast. Indeed, I am currently recovering from walking the Navidale to Dornoch Bridge section – bit by bit of course! Oh, and you seemed a really friendly bunch...!

I've recently been to a postcard fair and picked up two cards which feature Brora – they may be super common or super unusual, I don't know, but they caught my eye and were cheap... just thought I'd pick up any the eagle-eyed Society Ebayers may not have come across!



Unfortunately, the stamp on this card has been removed, so the date has gone with it (although it probably dates to the 1920s/30s), but it was sent to a Mr H Evans of 3 Little Moore Street, Wolverhampton. The message reads:

Dear Harry, Just a line to let you know I am in the best of health, hoping all at home are the same. The weather up here is simply awful, I shall be glad when I return to England again. The Wolves have made a good start, let's hope they keep it up. Remember me to all at home and the Chapel. With best love from yours sincerely, Fred.



There is a date stamp on this card, over the Penny Red stamp of George V, of 13th August 1928. It was sent to Mrs Nancarrow at 11 or 4 (!) Farm Road, Crombie, Nr Dunfermline, Fife and the message reads:

Having a very lazy time up here. Very nice place. The weather broke down last week and it has been wet all day today. How are you keeping? I think of you often and wonder how you are. I am much better and am able to walk fairly well now. Yours, F McIntosh.

The East Sutherland boxes of postcards at fairs are a new interest for me since moving to Bonar Bridge. Previously, I only hung about the Ross-Shire sections. This means that I will, of course, be seeing all the Brora cards, as well as Bonar Bridge, so any more I see on my travels which feature people as well as views of lovely Brora, I will make sure I pick them up.



I actually found my own granny as a little girl on a postcard a few years ago – it still makes me smile when I look at it. It would be lovely if someone recognises someone in the beach scene here – fingers crossed!

My Family Ties With Clyne

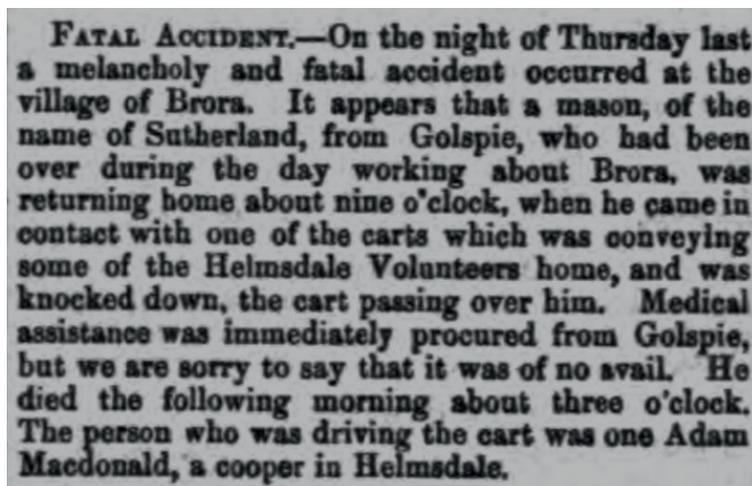
By Bill [William] Sutherland

Bill Sutherland sent an article about his Clyne roots to us recently, for inclusion in the Chronicle. Bill was born in London, England and now lives in Perth, Western Australia, having worked most of his life in several places around the world. We have since done a bit of subsequent research and have fleshed out some amazing detail about the life of Bill's Great Uncle, Benjamin Sutherland, which we expect will flabbergast him!

Bill asks that if anyone has connections to this family, either here or abroad, he would be very grateful to hear from you – you can contact the Society to be put in touch.

I have been researching my family ancestry for some years now and have traced my great great great grandfather, Angus Sutherland, a Weaver, who lived at Cavaick [the Bremner residence and now known as Cavaig], in the parish of Clyne. He married Helen Mackenzie and they had eight children, one of whom, Angus [junior], born on 1st October 1803 at Cavaick, Badnellan, was my great great grandfather.

Angus [junior] was a stonemason and married Mary Russell, from Elgin, on 13th February 1835 in Clyne and they had ten children between 1836 and 1855, when triplets were born, two of whom died at 15 days and 17 days. The other triplet, Wemyss, survived.



FATAL ACCIDENT.—On the night of Thursday last a melancholy and fatal accident occurred at the village of Brora. It appears that a mason, of the name of Sutherland, from Golspie, who had been over during the day working about Brora, was returning home about nine o'clock, when he came in contact with one of the carts which was conveying some of the Helmsdale Volunteers home, and was knocked down, the cart passing over him. Medical assistance was immediately procured from Golspie, but we are sorry to say that it was of no avail. He died the following morning about three o'clock. The person who was driving the cart was one Adam Macdonald, a cooper in Helmsdale.

Report on death of Angus Sutherland.

Angus [junior] died on 19th September 1862, from an injury of the spine and internal injuries sustained when he was knocked down by horse and cart in Commerce Street [the present day A9 in Rosslyn Street]. The contemporary report [Figure 1] from the 25th September edition of the *John O'Groat Journal* tells the sad story, although it is a little mixed up about Angus's home village.

Angus's eldest son, Joseph, also a stonemason, erected a memorial stone in 1871, to his father and his two infant brothers, who died so early in life. The stone is located close to the entrance gate in Clynekirkton Burial Ground and the inscription reads:

1871 – Erected in memory of Angus Sutherland, Mason, Cavaick, who died 23rd Sepr 1862. Aged 58 years. Also, his two infant sons, James and Angus, who died August 3rd 1855, aged three weeks respectively. By his son Joseph.



Angus Sutherland headstone.

Loos and Arras and became Clyne parish's most decorated man from the Great War, being awarded the MM [Military Medal], then the French Medal Militaire in July 1918. His highest accolade was being awarded the DCM [Distinguished Conduct Medal] for "*Conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He located the enemy by a daring reconnaissance at a critical period. Later, led a bombing party against the enemy and put them to flight. Although wounded in the head he refused to leave his company for twelve hours*". It was in this action, only six weeks from the end of the war, that he was sadly killed and was buried in Lowrie Cemetery, Havrincourt, SW of Cambrai, France.

Joseph's appointment as Temporary Postman was short-lived, however, as he actually enlisted for service in World War One as a Private with the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders in Inverness on 10th November 1915, when he was only 16, stating that he was actually 19! This seems quite odd, because his witness before enlistment was the local, well-respected tailor, Hector Sutherland and his medical examination was carried out locally by the doctor at Golspie on 5th November.

Somehow, this 16-year-old boy managed to convince the authorities and he was sent for training for the front to Ripon, in Yorkshire, arriving on 13th November, but it was discovered that he had lied about his age and he was discharged after serving 70 days. His character during this short time was described on his discharge papers as 'Good'. He was clearly a confident, if not a little cocky, young man, as he wrote

Two months after his mother passed away, Joseph, by then a 53-year-old Mason Contractor, married 24-year-old widow, Maggie Rollo (nee King) at the Manse of Clyne in June 1894. They proceeded to have seven children (six boys, then finally a girl!) between 1895 and 1906 at Cavaig. Their third born child, Benjamin Wemyss, who was born on 8th April 1899, became a Temporary Assistant Postman, as documented in the Edinburgh Gazette of 5th November 1915.

Joseph's older half-brother, James King Rollo, was a career soldier in the Gordon Highlanders and had seen plenty of action at the front by then. A Regimental Sergeant Major, he was wounded at Ypres,

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TERRITORIAL FORCE.

~~4 years' Service in the United Kingdom.~~
Duration of War

ATTESTATION OF

No. *3917*. Name *Benjamin Wymess Sutherland* Corps *3/4th Cameron's Higher A.P.C.*

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name and Address? 1. *Benjamin Wymess Sutherland*
Duration of War *Cavaig, Broxa.*
2. Are you willing to be attested for service in the Territorial Force for the term of ~~4 years~~ (provided His Majesty should so long require your services) for the County of *General Service* to serve in the? 2. *Yes*
3. Have you received a notice stating the liabilities you are incurring by enlisting, and do you understand them? 3. *Yes*
4. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Marines, the Militia, the Special Reserve, the Territorial Force, the Imperial Yeomanry, the Volunteers, the Army Reserve, the Militia Reserve, or any Naval Reserve Force? If so, state which unit, and, if discharged, cause of discharge 4. *No*
5. Are you a British Subject? 5. *Yes*

Under the provisions of Sections 13 and 99 of the Army Act, if a person knowingly makes a false answer to any question contained in the attestation paper, he renders himself liable to punishment.

I, *Benjamin W. Sutherland* do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

Benjamin W. Sutherland SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.
A. Hector Sutherland Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, *Benjamin Wymess Sutherland* swear by Almighty God, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity against all enemies, according to the conditions of my service.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

I, *Agnes Ross* do hereby certify, that, in my presence, all the foregoing Questions were put to the Recruit, above named, that the Answers written opposite to them are those which he gave to me, and that he has made and signed the Declaration, and taken the oath at *Inverness* on this *10th* day of *Novr* 1915. *Agnes Ross* { Signature of Justice of the Peace, Officer, or other person authorized to attest Recruits.

Benjamin's Attestation, 1915.

on the same papers under the 'Reservations' section that 'My Mother has not yet received the allowance which the Government grants her - in addition to what I allow her each week. I have not yet received my kit allowance'!

Proceedings on Discharge.

(When forwarded for confirmation the documents named on page 4 should be enclosed.)

No. 3917	Army Rank Private.
Name Benjamin Hymess Sutherland. <small>(The name must agree strictly with that on enlistment, unless changed subsequently by authority.)</small>	
Corps Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.	
Battalion, Battery, Company, Depôt, &c. 7/4 Bn. B. Coy. <small>(If attached to the Regular Establishment of the Special Reserve or Permanent Staff of the Territorial Force, &c., or to General Staff of the Army, it should be so stated.)</small>	
Date of discharge January 18th 1916.	
Place of discharge Ripon.	

1. Description at the time of discharge.

Age 16 years 8 months Height 5 feet 6 inches Chest measure- ment { girth when fully expanded 32 ins. range of expansion 2 ins. Complexion Fresh. Eyes Blue. Hair Dark Brown. Trade Postman. Intended place of residence { Cavaich House Broxa. Sutherlandsh. <small>(To be given as fully as practicable)</small>	Descriptive marks.
--	--------------------

(The measurements and description should be carefully taken on the day the man leaves his unit, but in the case of men sent home from abroad for discharge, the age and intended place of residence should be left blank to be filled in by the Officer who confirms the discharge at home.)

2. The above-named man is discharged in consequence of **Having made a mis-statement as to age on enlistment**
vide King's Regulations, Para 392 (vi)(a)

(The cause of discharge must be worded as prescribed in the King's Regulations and be identical with that on the discharge certificate. If discharged by superior authority, the No. and date of the letter to be quoted.)

3. Military character :—

4. Character awarded in accordance with King's Regulations :—

good during his 70 days service

To be filled in on the soldier quitting the Colours.

Certified that the above is an accurate copy of the character given by me on Army Form B. 2067* and that Army Form D. 489 was awarded in this case.

HTWK

Initials of Commanding Officer.

Army Form B. 2088 has been issued to*

Benjamin's Discharge, 1916.

In December 1920, Benjamin joined the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) as a Police Constable and was posted to Co Cavan, Ireland. He married Bella MacKenzie Gray in her home town of Keith on 18th August 1921. The RIC disbanded in February 1922,

1924 DECLARATION OF PASSENGER TO CANADA 520

1. NAME **SUTHERLAND Benjamin W.** Age **25**
(PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS, FAMILY NAME FIRST)

2. Sex **male** Are you married, single, widowed or divorced? **Married**
 If married, are you accompanied by husband or wife? If so give name of husband or wife **Unaccompanied**

3. Present occupation **Salesman** Intended occupation **Farming**

4. Birthplace **Braira** Race or People **Scotch**

5. Citizenship **British** Religion **Presbyterian**
(IF PROTESTANT STATE DENOMINATION)

6. Object in going to Canada **To take up Farming**

7. Do you intend to remain permanently in Canada? **Yes**

8. Have you ever lived in Canada? **NO** If you have, give Canadian address.....
 Port of first arrival in Canada..... Date.....
 Port of last departure from Canada..... Date.....

9. Why did you leave Canada?.....

10. Money in possession belonging to passenger **\$50**

11. Can you read? **Yes** What language? **English**

12. By whom was your passage paid? **myself**

13. Ever refused entry to, or deported from Canada? **no**

14. Destined to join my **brother in-law, who resides at Penkill Saskatchewan Canada**

(IF JOINING RELATIVE, FRIEND OR EMPLOYER (1) STATE WHICH AND IF RELATIVE GIVE RELATIONSHIP, (2) GIVE HIS OR HER NAME AND CANADIAN ADDRESS; (3) IF NOT JOINING ANY PERSON IN CANADA, GIVE YOUR OWN CANADIAN ADDRESS.)

15. Nearest relative in country from which you came.....
Bella Sutherland **wife**
(NAME) (RELATIONSHIP)
8, Wellington Terrace, Keith, Banff.
(GIVE FULL ADDRESS OF SUCH RELATIVE)

16. Are you or any of your family mentally defective? **no**
 Tubercular? **no** Physically defective? **no**
 Otherwise debarred under Canadian Immigration Law? **no**

(Before answering question 17 see the prohibited classes named in Immigration Booklet 30A which will be handed to you by Booking Agent.)
 I declare the above statements are true: I am aware that a false statement constitutes misrepresentation and that the penalty is a fine, imprisonment or deportation.

Signature of passenger **Ben. W. Sutherland**
 I hereby declare that the above is the signature of passenger and that I have handed passenger a copy of Immigration Booklet 30A.
 Booking Agent **Donald Gordon** **Albion**

Emigration to Canada, 1924.

all constables being discharged with a £50 14/- annual pension, a remarkably large amount after such short service.

With a safe pension coming in, he emigrated to Canada, sailing from Glasgow to Quebec on the SS Marburn on 1st August 1924. He stated on his disembarkation card that he was a Salesman and his destination was Penkill, Saskatchewan, to join his brother-in-law. He left his wife behind in Keith.

Bella died prematurely on 17th July 1933 from gastric cancer in a nursing home in Pitlochry; her usual residence at that time was at Station House in Ballinluig, Perthshire, where she was Housekeeper to her brother. It appears that she never joined her husband across the Atlantic, who was registered on her death certificate by her brother as a Motor Van Driver.

On 30th September 1927, we find Benjamin, by then a Police Officer, emigrating unaccompanied to the US, stating that he is going to join his cousin, George Sutherland in Chicago, Illinois. By 1928, Benjamin's 'wife', Manitoba-born Caroline 'Carrie' Beatrice Pockett, gave birth to their daughter, Donna, in Illinois.

The 1930 US Census shows that Benjamin, yet again, had a change of career, and was then a Sales Superintendent in a baking company. He is living with his wife, whom he states he married in 1928, and, Donna, in rented accommodation in Blackstone Avenue, Chicago. Donna sadly died in 1931, but the couple had another daughter, Barbara, born in Chicago in 1932 and another, Patricia, born in Detroit in 1933. However, as you will see, much of this occurred before the death of Bella.

The 1940 US Census places Benjamin and his family in their own property in 216th Street, New York, where he is then a Manager in the baking industry. He is earning over \$5,000 and still has his RIC pension. The family appear to be particularly well off, as there are only two other families on the census page with a similar income.

It appears that Benjamin and Carrie retired to Vancouver, where Carrie was brought up. He then turned himself to writing about the old country publishing two books under the pseudonym, Wemyss Cavaick, firstly '*By the King's Command*' in 1964 and then '*Uprooted Heather*', about the Highland Clearances in 1967. He also travelled back and fore to the UK, but always alone.

Benjamin eventually died on 1st September 1977 in Vancouver; Caroline outliving him, passing away in Vancouver in 1988.

Returning to my great great grandfather, Angus [junior], three of his daughters travelled down to London and found work as domestic servants. During my researches, I discovered that one of them, Jane, born at Cavaick on 25th July 1847, had an illegitimate child, whom she named John Sutherland. He was my grandfather. This had been a hidden family secret and scandal for over a hundred years but, personally, I'm quite accepting of this fact. John was handed over into the care of his married aunt, Johan [born at Badnellan on 22nd July 1836] in Greenwich and he eventually married and had five children of his own, one of whom was my father.

Today, I'm sure I must have some blood relatives in Clyne and it would be interesting to meet them and explore the land where my forefathers lived and worked.

If anyone has connections to this family, either here or abroad, Bill would be very grateful to hear from you.

Sutherland Estate Petitions 1871

By Dr Malcolm Bangor-Jones

Malcolm will be no stranger to you if you are a regular reader of *'The Chronicle'*. He is a regular contributor, having spent many decades meticulously and copiously researching Sutherland history at home and abroad. He has a particular interest in Assynt, where he was brought up and has now returned to live again on the family croft. Fortunately for us, Malcolm is also interested in East Sutherland historical matters.

Malcolm's article below deals with petitions from tenants of the Sutherland Estate in Clyne, which, when you have read them, goes some way to understanding how very difficult living conditions were for the tenants at that time.

NB Please note that Malcolm's transcriptions below are exact, and they include original spelling 'mistakes'. Modern day locations of each property, where known, have been added by the Editor for the interest of the reader.

The petitions which follow were submitted in 1871 to the commissioner to the Sutherland estates George Loch (he had taken over from his father James in 1855). The petitions come from the Sutherland Papers in the Staffordshire Record Office.

Petitions such as these from small tenants and cottars were often not written by the petitioner – every community had people who were prepared to undertake the task and who were familiar with the format. Some petition writers no doubt composed petitions for financial reward. It is evident that some petitions were more polished than others. The reports of the local ground officer, Robert Grant (who lived at Viewhill, the house on the right after the old Police house on the right as you enter Brora from the south), on some of the petitions have a more natural style.

Several of the petitions request help with buildings. The Sutherland estate was prepared to assist tenants with the building and repair of houses by providing timber and/or lime. However, such assistance tended only to be provided free to the 'deserving'.

Loch was normally based in London. The petitions were submitted, sometimes by the petitioner in person, to Loch when he came to stay at his northern residence of Uppat. The process of considering the petitions involved little or no involvement of either the Duke himself or the factor at Dunrobin, Joseph Peacock. There is one petition which was submitted to the Duke's Secretary but which, like the others, was considered by Loch. The arrangement no doubt suited the Duke of the time, but the willingness or indeed desire of Loch to judge who should be given help demonstrates his micromanagement tendencies.

John Gordon McBeath, Inverbrora [house now called Wayside, on the Doll straight]

The Ground Officer Mr Grant told me a few days ago that I would have to pay henceforth £2 of a yearly rental for the house in which I live. This is the first time that I was called upon to pay for the use of the house and I am not able to pay now than formerly. The case I believe stands thus. The house was looked upon as part of the Inverbrora farm during the time of Mrs Hood, the former tenant and as I was one of her ploughmen I had the house by order of The Duke free of rent. If it is your order that I should pay £2 a year now for it I shall try & do so though but very unable. But if I am to pay for it would not One pound be enough from a poor man like one. Besides I was out a good deal of expense in repairing the house this season.

John Sutherland, Watchman at Uppat

That your Petitioner has been engaged in watching the Deer on the farm of Uppat for the last twelve years that his health has been greatly impaired by exposure during the night and that he is unable to do anything for his own support. May it therefore please your Honour to submit your Petitioners case to the consideration of His Grace the Duke of Sutherland with a view to secure some small allowance for his support.

Ann McBeath, Doll, 22 September 1871 [bungalow now known as Brahan]

The bearer Ann McBeath begs leave to state that her brother having left the district he offered to slate the house for her, if Mr Loch would leave the piece of land attached to it in addition to their own land. The bearer will [pay] any rent for it and as her father is failing very much it would be of great help to them.

Memo: Uppat Oct 19. 1871

George Grant. Saddler in Brora, applies for one of the red tiled houses [what is now the shop, Cornucopia, and accommodation] in that place when a vacancy occurs – which he hears is soon likely to occur by Mr W Sutherland the Post Master going to his new house.

Widow Robert McDonald, North Muir [Mackintosh's, Ardachu]
24th Oct 1871

Humbly sheweth That your petitioner's house is in a very bad condition: the walls nearly giving way. Your petitioner therefore craves of your honor two bolls of lime for the repairing of her house, which, if you will be pleased to grant, your petitioner will ever pray.

Brora North Muir Report on pition No 107 Widow Robert

MacDonald

This House is old and in Bad Repair – and very much Requiring to be Painted with Lime – this Widow is very poor no Doubt – but these Repairs would Do better Earlier of the season

Robt Grant [Ground Officer of Clyne]

Brora Oct 27/71

Widow Andrew Sutherland, Doll [Morvern – Joey Ross's], 15th October 1871

[addressed to] *Mr Wright, Secretary, Dunrobin* [Secretary to the Duke of Sutherland]

Sir, I beg to inform you that the lot of Land adjoining the one I occupy, [meantime occupied by James McBeth,] which he had granted him two years ago upon the conditions of enclosing it, which he never did, and consequently his cattle &c are a continuall annoyance to me, and now as he has left it, and occupies another in Rogart, where he is comfortably married, consequently I beg of you the favour, to apply for me to His Grace the Duke of Sutherland to Grant me said lot, as it is attached to the small piece I occupy and for which, I have been previously applying, before he got it. And as it is now to let again, and my lot being so small, and having six of a family, and one of them an invalid, Sir I hope that you will take my request into your candid consideration, And if I get it granted me I will bind myself to enclose it and cultivate it and build a good house upon it. Which I cannot afford to do upon the small piece I now hold.

James Anderson, North Brora Muir, Septr 25th 1871

[addressed to] *George Loch Esqr. &c*

I trust that you will excuse the liberty, that I take to remind you, that five or six years ago, you were pleased to grant me timber and lime, for building a dwelling house, on part of the Muir to the west of Clynelish that was granted to me for a lot.

That owing to having a weak family, and being visited with trouble, and bereavements, I was, at that time, only able to build one half of the house and I only got timber and lime what I required for doing so.

That I was this year to endeavour to build the other half of the house, if you should be pleased to renew to me the grant of the timber and lime, that I would require.

Report on petition from James Anderson, 175 Clynelish Muir [site of Rowantree's house]

This mans House is leald and very uncomfortable for a numberous family the one Half only Built and Thatched with Divots, the other Half is much required.



175 Clynish Muir (now demolished).

This man Had been a Shoemaker in former years but sometime ago he turned his Hand to Building Dykes and I believe a good work man – but having a family to suport he Devoted his time to Labour for Hire – so that theres not much Done to the Lot in the way of Improvement

Robt Grant

Oct. 7/71

*Wm Macleod Crofter
Bruachcrobie By Brora Oct.
2nd 1871*

[addressed to] *George Loch Esqr. M.P.*

Sir, I beg hereby to acquaint you that I have built a new house and slated the same about seven years ago, but my circumstances did not enable me to complete the inside work. Would Your Honour be pleased to grant me the wood requisite to do so viz. 800 feet Ceiling, 600 ft flooring 400 ft partitions, 10 Sleepers [14 ft long]?

Report on Petition from William MacLeod no 188 Croft Haugh [site of 2 new houses at Crofthaugh]

This mans House was Rebuilt Some 7 or 8 years ago – got then Roofing – Tumber – only and some Lime and the House was never finished inside – Still Cold and unComfortable – and being in Scanty means – were not able to Buy the material required.

The time that this House were Slated there was not Such Encouragement Given for Slating as now

Robt Grant

Octr. 7/71

*Alexander Murray, Lady's Loch [house on corner of road opposite Billy Curly's],
23rd Sep. 1871*



Photocredit: Bill O'Brien

Ladies Loch, 1959–60.



Photocredit: Bill O'Brien

Ladies Loch, 2000.

*Unto George Loch, Esquire,
M.P.*

*The Humble Petition of
Alexander Murray, Tenant,
Lady's Loch, Clyne*

Humbly Sheweth

*That your petitioner's house
is in a very ruinous state, &
that your petitioner has no
means to get it repaired, as
he is a poor labourer for the
most of the year, with a large
family to support.*

*Your petitioner, therefore,
humbly prays your honour
will have the goodness to
order the necessary repairs
to be completed before the
winter sets in.*

**Report on Petition
of Alexander Murray
[Siedher][?] No 124
Brora North Muire
[Etheridge's, Ladiesloch]**

*This mans House is one of
the oldest Standing – and now in perfect Ruin – Requires to be Built from the
Foundation and I may Safely Say that the family is the Poorest in the District
that I Travell*

*The man is frequently Confined not able to Labour – and with a Small Lot – Rent
10/ – and 5 of a family under 12 years of Age.*

Robt Grant

Octr. 7/71

John Sutherland, Tenant, Aultcraggie, Clyne 9th Oct. 1871

[addressed to] George Loch, Esqr. M.P.

Humbly sheweth That your petitioner's lot was rent at four pounds, during his lease but that it is now raised to Seven pounds Stg. That part of the muir mentioned in the lease is now claimed and used as a common pasture by some other tenants, thus placing your petitioner under a double disadvantage. Your petitioner, therefore, humbly craves Your Honour may have the goodness to take your petitioners case into consideration with the view of lowering his rent, or, if this Cannot be done, granting him the boundaries mentioned in the lease, that he may improve, and bring under cultivation the remainder of the muir referred to in the lease as time and means will allow him.

Report on petition of John Sutherland (above)

In the first place the Tenant Complains of the additional Rent and Prays the Rent in future would be fixed at Six Pounds St £6 – this would Satisfy him, and would be a fair Rent for the Place.

The Waste Ground Referred to is an open space of Ground which Can hardly be Kept Entirely from Trespassing on – without any fence or Enclosure – and there is no one Cleaming a Right to this Ground but in Common – and should Remain as a Common until fenced in with a Dyke and this is not likely to be Done So Soon

Robt Grant

Brora Oct 23/71

October 21 – 1871

Timber for Repairing John Sutherlands house Aultchraggy Brora

24 joists 15 ft 7" x 2½"

10 Sleepers 13 6 x 2½

12 Standars 7 6 x 2½

10 7 5 x 2½

18 7 4 x 1½

24 7 3½ x 1½

80 Liniel feet wall plate 7 x 1½

800 Lupr. feet flooring

300 = 1 inch deals for doors

300 = $\frac{3}{4}$ in deals

80 = 1½ in deals for Stair

1000 = Lath

William Sutherland carpenter Clynelish

6 Bols of Lime

The Prefixed List for materials were Sent to me by John Sutherland after he Returned from Uppat

This House was Slated many years ago - and I believe that Roofing Tumber and some Lime was Given then but the in side of the House were never finished

Robt Grant

Brora Oct 23/71

Hugh Murray, Tenant, Doll (Linda Graham's, Ramscaig)

To Geo. Loch Esqr. M.P.

Humbly Sheweth

That your petitioner's barn, byre, stable & cartshed are needing a repair, as the roof is entirely gone. That when your petitioner got his present holding the houses referred to were covered with turf, and not watertight, which was the cause of the roof giving way, and were it not for the lightness of the tile with which they are covered it would not have stood so long.

That your petitioner is willing to slate the part adjoining his dwelling-house, and tile the rest of the said houses, provided you will be pleased to grant him new roof for the whole of them, and flooring for the stable & shed.

That your petitioner erected his dwelling-house at his own expense - paid for all the wood and lime used in the building, which cost him a vast sum of money: indeed were it not for the work your petitioner got for his horses at the time of the building of the Castle he could not have built it. It was the first slated house in the Doll district.

That since the time of the building of the Castle until the Railway was begun between Golspie and Helmsdale, your petitioner may say that he got no work for his horses.

That for the last two years your petitioner's youngest son has bene working at the Railway, and with the little money he has saved, he is anxious to buy slate and get the houses properly repaired, as he ventures to hope that he will be your petitioner's successor to the Lot.

Lt E Alan Mackintosh, World War 1 Poet with Brora Connections

By Dr Donald Adamson

If you have been keeping up with the Society's archaeological excavation at Wilkhouse, near Kintradwell in May 2017, then you will already know of Donald Adamson. A long-standing member of the Society, who completed his part-time PhD on transportation routes through Scotland, including cattle droving routes, in the 18th Century. He generously funded the excavation of the old inn at Wilkhouse, used by drovers on their way south from Caithness and North Sutherland. Amongst his many other interests is military history, with which his article below deals.

Arguably Scotland's greatest poet of 'the war to end all wars', Mackintosh stands comparison with the great, and much better known, poets of World War I.

Alan Mackintosh was born in 1893 in Brighton, the son of a prosperous businessman, Alexander Mackintosh, who was himself from a family of farmers from Beachan, Farr, near Inverness. Alan Mackintosh was educated at Brighton College, St Paul's School in London and Christ Church, Oxford, where he was studying Classics when war was declared in 1914. His father, Alexander, had rented Teaninich House, Alness for many years, and Easter Ross was the setting for family summer holidays. It is likely that it was here that Mackintosh learnt basic Gaelic, which is reflected in many of his poems, and the rudiments of playing the bagpipes.

Anyone interested in Mackintosh would be well rewarded by reading the excellent book *Can't shoot a man with a cold* by Colin Campbell and Rosalind Green. This book gives a short outline of his life and influences, as well as containing most of his important poems.

The purpose of this short article is to note some of Mackintosh's Brora connections.

When war was declared in August 1914, Mackintosh promptly applied to join the army and was speedily rejected on grounds of poor eyesight. He was a habitual wearer of pince-nez spectacles, although few of his photographs show him in these. It seems likely that he was sensitive on the matter. On 31st December 1914, he finally obtained his commission as a second lieutenant in the 5th [The Sutherland and Caithness] Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders. This was a battalion with a heavy representation from Brora, and indeed one of the Territorial Force companies was based in Brora before 1914.

Mackintosh joined the battalion at Bedford, but was posted to Golspie before the battalion [now 1/5¹ Seaforth Highlanders] went to France. He was posted to 2/5 Seaforth Highlanders, a reserve training formation based at the drill hall in Golspie, which was to send drafts of men to 1/5 Seaforth Highlanders in France. It would seem that Mackintosh was sent there to complete his basic training as a young

1 ¹ 1/5 shorthand for 1st Battalion of the 5th Seaforths; 2/5 2nd Battalion etc.

officer prior to being sent to re-join his battalion in France. As such, his time in Sutherland was a bitter sweet time, reflected in his poetry. One poem in particular reflects on death, *'The Waiting Wife'* with the lines:

*The hearth is cold and my house is lonely,
And nothing for me but waiting only,
Feet round the house that come into it never,
And a voice in the wind that is silent for ever,"*

It was at this time that he made regular trips to Brora to visit an attractive young widow, Mrs Forsyth, and her two young children, Ivy [9] and Edward [11]. Mrs Forsyth was the widow of Dr John Forsyth, a doctor, of Dores Road, Inverness, who had died of pneumonia in 1911, and the daughter of a landowner, Thomas Buckley. Her sister had married into the Sergeantson family, who were then resident in Brora, and valuation rolls show that she purchased Carrol House, Golf Road, Brora.



Alan Mackintosh on his appointment to 5th (The Sutherland and Caithness Battalion) Seaforth Highlanders.

During his time visiting the Forsyth's in Brora, he wrote one of his finest poems on a copy of Edward Lear's *'Nonsense Songs and Stories'*.

The flyleaf of the book is inscribed by Mackintosh with a poem *'Verses to Two Young Children'*, dedicated to Edward and Ivy Forsyth.

The poem was included in Mackintosh's first anthology of poetry *'A Highland Regiment'*, published in 1917 by John Lane & Co. However, it is dated 1912, which is either a mistake or, more likely, Mackintosh's attempt to prevent intrusion on the privacy of the Forsyth family, together with possible gossip about his relationship with Mrs Forsyth [who remarried a schoolmaster in Edinburgh in 1920].



Mrs Forsyth, Brora, and her two children, Ivy and Edward Forsyth.

Alan Mackintosh's transfer to France would not be long delayed. On 1 August 1915, the 5th Seaforths' war diary records that 2nd Lt E A Mackintosh joined the battalion, and was posted to 'A' Company, under the command of Major 'Faither' MacMillan.

Quickly Mackintosh was appointed 'bombing officer' whose role was to lead raids on the enemy trenches and use hand grenades to good effect. By May 1916, Mackintosh was an experienced officer and the obvious choice when 5th Seaforths were tasked with organising a major raid on the German entrenchments on 16 May

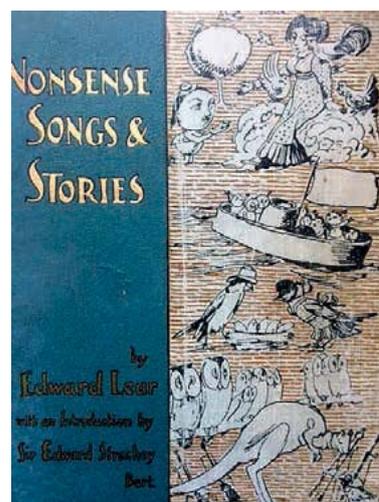
1916. Lieutenant Mackintosh was given fifty volunteers from the battalion, and was to lead the party, assisted by 2nd Lieutenant C E Mackay. Among this party were, undoubtedly, several Brora men.

A full account of the raid is given in a prose account, published posthumously in 1918, in 'War, The Liberator' by John Lane & Co. Mackintosh changes the names of the men involved but many are quite transparent, including himself as MacTaggart. The raid was regarded as a great success, with many Germans killed, but was not without cost. Two men were killed and had to be left behind in the enemy trenches, whilst Mackintosh brought back two badly wounded men, who subsequently died in hospital. A further twelve were wounded, and these included Sergeant J Sinclair (B Company) of Brora: wounded in head and right hand, but not deemed serious; and Private D Sutherland (A Company) of Backies, Golspie: wounded in right arm and deemed 'slight'. With 34 further men on the raid, there would have most likely been several other men from Brora present, but it is not possible to identify them.

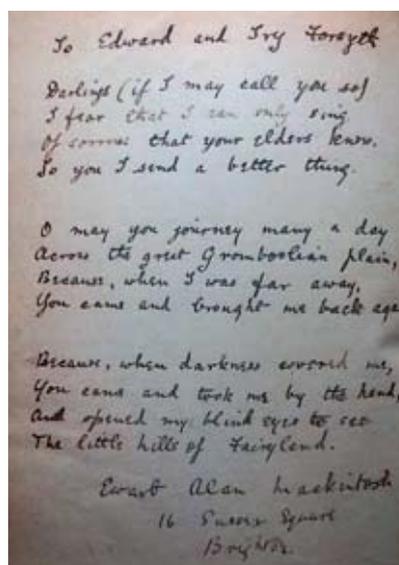
The raid resulted in the award of a Military Cross for Mackintosh but, perhaps, more importantly, one of his finest poems dedicated to Private David Sutherland of Dounreay. It is a magnificent poem, 'In Memoriam', and was so much appreciated by David Sutherland's family that the gravestone in the family burial plot in Caithness refers to it. It is clear that Alan Mackintosh was deeply affected by attempts to bring a legless Sutherland back with the raiding party, but this proved impossible and he had to be left behind in the German positions. Perhaps a few lines from the poem may illustrate the depth of feeling:

*So you were David's father,
And he was your only son...
Oh, the letters that he wrote you,
And I can see them still,
Not a word of the fighting
But just the sheep on the hill,
You were only David's father,*

*But I had fifty sons
When we went up in the evening
Under the arch of the guns,
And we came back at twilight -
Oh God! I heard them call
To me for help and pity
That could not help at all.*



Book given to Forsyth family, Brora in 1915 by Alan Mackintosh.



Poem to Edward and Ivy Forsyth by Lt E Alan Mackintosh, 1915.

I do not know anything more about Sergeant J Sinclair or Private D Sutherland, but I am certain that there are those in the Society who will be able to give more information on these local men who witnessed the action, and took part in the raid.



Lt Mackintosh in winter sheepskins whilst with 5th Seaforths.

Mackintosh was wounded in a leg and an eye by a shell blast in Mametz Wood on 30th July 1916. He was returned to England for treatment and recovery, and continued to write poetry. It was at this point that he found a publisher and published his first anthology in 1917. It was also in 1917 that he met and became engaged to Sylvia Marsh, a Quaker, who was a nurse at the Earls Colne Red Cross Hospital in Essex. Irrespective of his recent engagement to Sylvia, and having only partially recovered from his wounds, Mackintosh was keen to return to 'his Jocks'. On 3rd October 1917, he reported for duty, not to 5th [Sutherland and Caithness] Seaforth Highlanders, but rather to the 4th [Ross] Seaforths. The battalion was near Bapaume on the Somme.

On 21st November 1917, as part of the Battle of Cambrai, Mackintosh led his platoon of Seaforths forward to attack a German strongpoint at Cantaing Mill. He was easily distinguished, being tall and thin, with the distinct stoop of the short-sighted. Not for Alan Mackintosh the Mackenzie tartan and the stag's head badge of the rest of the Seaforth battalions, he stuck to the Sutherland tartan of 5th Seaforths, together with the cat's badge of the Sutherland clan, with the motto *Sans Peur*. He was shot in the head and died instantly.

Two lines from a Mackintosh poem, '*A Creed*' are on the frieze of the Scottish American War Memorial in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh:

*If it be life that waits I shall live for ever unconquered,
If death I shall die at last, strong in my pride and free.*

Thanks are due to Colin Campbell, co-author of the Mackintosh biography '*Can't shoot a man with a cold: Lt E Alan Mackintosh MC 1893-1917*' [Argyll Publishing 2004] for his assistance in compiling this article.

The Wilkhuse Excavations, near Kintradwell

By Nick Lindsay

The archaeological excavation of the 18th Century inn and other building remains at Wilkhuse, Kintradwell, around three miles to the north of Brora, drew to a close on Friday, 2nd June, 2017. In partnership with the University of Glasgow and Guard Archaeology Ltd, Clyne Heritage Society hosted the two-week long dig.

The site focused on the old Wilkhuse Inn and associated buildings and enclosures, situated close to the beach, on the old road from Brora to Caithness and well below the



The Wilkhuse footings before the excavation, from the raised beach.



Donald Adamson (right) with landowners Pam and John Billet.

present A9. The inn would have been well-used by-passing travellers, including drovers herding cattle from Caithness and North Sutherland to southern markets at Crieff and Falkirk.

The dig was instigated and generously funded by Clyne Heritage Society member and non-executive director of Guard, Donald Adamson, who, after retiring, completed a PhD in 2014¹, concentrating on 17th and 18th Century droving and trade routes. The dig was directed by Warren Bailie of Guard. Donald was particularly interested to compare this site with a droving inn site he previously investigated and excavated at Strachur, Argyllshire².

Wilkhuse is shown on William Roy's map of 1747-52, as well as an estate map made by John Kirk in 1772, which is depicted in 3D form, showing front and side windows, gable end chimneys and a slated roof.

1 <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5461/>

2 http://www.archaeologyreportsonline.com/PDF/ARO17_Tigh_Caol.pdf

There is a vivid description of the inn itself in Donald Sage's *'Memorabilia Domestica'*, when he visited in 1801, en route from Kildonan to Dornoch for his schooling:



Kirk's Map, 1772, NLS Dep 313-3583.

The morning of the day of our departure from under the paternal roof, to attend a public school, at last dawned upon us... We crossed the Crask, and stopped for refreshment at an inn below Kintradwell, in the parish of Loth, called Wilk-house, which stood close by the shore.

This Highland hostelry, with its host Robert Gordon and his bustling, talkative wife, were closely associated with my early years,

comprehending those of my attendance at school and college. The parlour, the general rendezvous for all comers of every sort and size, had two windows, one in front and another in the gable, and the floor of the room had, according to the prevailing code of cleanliness, about half an inch of sand upon it in lieu of carpeting.

As we alighted before the door we were received by Robert 'Wilk-house', or 'Robert tìghe na faochaig', as he was usually called, with many bows indicative of welcome, whilst his bustling helpmeet repeated the same protestations of welcome on our crossing the threshold. We dined heartily on cold meat, eggs, new cheese, and milk. 'Tam', our attendant, was not forgotten; his pedestrian exercise had given him a keen appetite, and it was abundantly satisfied.



De-turfing the Gilchrist building.

There are also several other historical references and it is likely that Wilkhouse suffered its demise in 1819, when it was subject to clearance by the Sutherland Estate.

The omens for the first day were good; in glorious sunshine, the 21st Century archaeologists strode down to the site, to be welcomed by a pod of dolphins playing just offshore. It was a truly special start to what would be a truly special dig, with the

The Wilkhouse Excavations, near Kintradwell

archaeology and weather both exceeding expectations.

The work commenced with an orientation exercise for the squad, introducing the site to the twenty volunteers. With two Americans, a Greek and a German [an A level student who had hitch-hiked the whole way!], together with other students from the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and members of Clyne Heritage Society, it was a bit of a league of nations and all worked out superbly well throughout the day; ages ranging from 18 to 75.

Trenches, the location of which had been pre-planned from a survey made in September the previous year, were marked out and de-turfing of the grass mounded walls began.

Almost immediately, in the topsoil of a trench in the old inn site, a 50mm sized piece of thin, clear window glass was dug up by first time volunteer archaeologist and Clyne Heritage Society member, Doll resident, Brenda Sealey. This was quite an amazing discovery, considering that this building dated from at least the early to mid-18th Century, when windows were an absolute luxury.

When the substantial walls were trowelled down, another quite surprising discovery was made – the stonework of the walling was lime mortared. The significance of this quickly filtered through the dig members; mortared buildings were a rarity for this



First piece of window glass.



Brora Primary School visit the site.

"My first experience of hands-on archaeology – really enjoyed it. Really well organised with advice and help for novices."

Christina Perera



Les Hannah, metal detectorist.



Double Tournois.

Primary School P5 pupils, again, in glorious sunshine. They were given a tour of the site and soaked a vast amount of knowledge from the dig.

The fine weather of the first week held over to the second week. Local metal-detectorist, Karl Major was joined by specialist Les Hannah, from Ayrshire, who arrived with his £3k machine and accessories and they immediately made an impact, discovering coins from the 17th century on his first morning. Over his two and a half days on site, he discovered around thirty coins, the earliest of which was a French Louis XIII Double Tournois of around 1610-1643. These dateable finds

"Dig being blessed with great weather. The archaeological team are very informative and friendly towards all visitors and volunteers."

Robert Bell

period, so this was a building which had been constructed at some expense.

Other first day finds included two matching sherds of exquisite 18th Century hand-painted fine porcelain, glass from wine or beer bottles, a butchered sheep's shin bone and a broken stone used for grinding in a grain quern.

The building around 100m to the SW of, and to the landward side of the inn was labelled the Gilchrist building, as the 1811 rent roll records a William Gilchrist occupying the other Wilkhouse dwelling. This lower status building showed no evidence of mortar in its construction, so it must have been built with a smaller budget or at a different time.

As the week progressed, more trenches were opened over key places and, on the Friday, the site was visited by Brora

The Wilkhuse Excavations, near Kintradwell

show that Wilkhuse was a long-lived site of importance where travellers spent time, way before the inn of the current dig was in existence.

The inquisitive Brora Primary P5s returned for a second time and were shown the progress made since their last visit. Then they enthusiastically took part in a range of archaeological operations and techniques, including trowelling in the trenches, sieving the spoil, drawing plans and sections, and metal-detecting.

At the end of the dig, many questions had been answered – yet many still remained! The inn building itself, dating probably from the early 18th Century, revealed itself as a high status, almost certainly estate-built, building. Its thick stone walls were mortared, enabling it to have the strength for an internal width of almost 5m, much wider than the narrower cruck-framed buildings, which were the everyday norm of the period.



Brora Primary School, second visit.



Parlour fireplace.

The inn's opposing gable end chimneyed fireplaces were features largely reserved for buildings of a century later and its lime-mortared internal plastered walls was a feature which was completely unexpected. The south gable fireplace was quite intricate in design and the plastered walls indicate that this was the parlour where Sage dined. You could even see the lower limit of plaster ended in a horizontal

"Thanks again for organising the last few weeks and encouraging me to take part in the dig. I really enjoyed it and learned lots. I'm certainly up for anything similar again." Alison Smith



The Wilkhouse domestic fireplace, with the orange ashes of the last fire still in situ.



A pleased first-time digger: CHS Treasurer, Catriona Sinclair.



Last day crew with time capsule.

straight line, indicating that a skirting board ran around the base of the wall. The north gable fireplace was clearly for cooking and the walls were bare, so this appeared to be the more functional domestic area.

The Gilchrist building was of a much simpler construction, as it had no mortar to bond the stonework of the walls, no gable end fireplaces and chimneys and no internal plastering on the walls. It had a central hearth, around which was a stash of whelks laid out on a flat stone – possibly the last meal of the Gilchrists before they were cleared in May 1819?

Adjacent to the hearth, there was also discovered an oval copper alloy plate with rivets, probably a repair to a vessel which, intriguingly, might have been for an illicit whisky still! Surprisingly, it did, however, have glazed windows, as small fragments of window glass were discovered during the excavation.

So, Wilkhouse revealed many of its 300-year-old secrets to a community excavation which was largely blessed with superb weather. In all, over the twelve working days, there were 51 different diggers who took part. The youngest, Henry Evans, aged 9, had travelled with his parents from Wokingham for two days towards the end of

The Wilkhuse Excavations, near Kintradwell

the dig and the oldest was well into their 70s. Needless to say, Henry now wants to be an Archaeologist when he grows up! They spent 261-person days on site, with an average of 21 people on site each day, with a minimum of 17 and a maximum of 32. Twenty-eight were local and 23 were from away, although five of those had local connections.

119 visitors made their way down to see the site, including the schoolchildren and Brora Scouts. Eighteen of the visitors were from away, including one passing Land's End to John O'Groats walker, the rest being locals.

The first day of the excavation began with the excitement of a pod of dolphins playing just offshore and the last day of backfilling was tinged with sadness. The team spirit, which had developed over the twelve days of the dig, was captured in a time capsule, ceremonially buried on site to be discovered by a future generation of archaeologists. It contained a copy of the latest edition of the Northern Times (which had a report of the first week of the dig), as well as a host of Brora memorabilia and personal items placed by many of the diggers.

"Thank you all so much for letting me take part in the dig at Wilkhuse – I enjoyed it very much indeed and learned such a lot!" Grace Ritchie

The visiting diggers had received a characteristic Brora welcome, both on site and in the village, and had genuinely fallen in love with the area; the local diggers took it in their stride! The archaeology had been special, pioneering and thoroughly intriguing and Wilkhuse, as it had been 198 years earlier in 1819, was left in splendid lonely isolation to the sheep.



Jim Conquer's model.

The preliminary results of the excavation have already been published, but the post-excavation analysis of finds, again generously funded by Donald, has yet to take place. Once completed, the full report and results will be published online and all finds will be coming back to Brora to be displayed at Brora Heritage Centre in due course.

Warren and Donald made a return visit at a Society speaker evening slot on Thursday, 16th November, to present a preliminary digital report, which was attended by a packed audience of sixty-five. A model-maker friend of Donald, Jim Conquer, accompanied the

speakers and he brought along an incredibly detailed 4' x 4' scale model of the site, which he presented to the Society and will be on display at the Brora Heritage Centre this year.

All these volunteer numbers, as well as visitors and the bumper talk audience show that there is a real appetite for anything to do with our local archaeology.

Highlights of the dig? There were many. The enthusiasm and great humour of the whole team, which gelled from Day 1 and continued with new members arriving throughout the dig. The banter between the Gilchrist trenches and the Wilkhuse trenches. The two visits made by Brora Primary School P5 class. The visits made by the other 60 or so members of the public. Home-baking provided by Kevin Grant, Marianne Ross, Fiona Ross and Gerry Wood. And finally, the weather – only two showers of rain over the entire twelve days. Amazing.

The writer's personal archaeological highlights were:

1. The Double Tournois coin from the reign of Louis XIII of France of around 1610-1643 was, arguably, the most impressive single find, by metal detectorist, Les Hannah.
2. The lime mortar screed on the inside of the parlour walls of the Wilkhuse Inn.
3. The impressive fireplaces in the gable ends of the inn, with the ash from the last fire after Robert Gordon and his family were evicted in May 1819 still in situ.
4. The several fine pieces of window glass, dressmakers' pins, the bone comb and the bone button found in the inn trenches.
5. The delight of the volunteers at the experience of the dig – and especially when they found an artefact!
6. The experimental consumption of Wilkhuse wilks!

Oddly, very few artefacts which you would normally associate with an inn – beer and wine bottles etc – were discovered. It is probable that the Gordons kept a tidy inn and may have disposed of their rubbish straight into the nearby sea.

Anyway, Wilkhuse is now silent again, having swapped the bustling activity of the last twelve days. The only sounds to be heard and sights to be seen now are the terns and oystercatchers, parading up and down the beach once more... and maybe a glimpse of the ghost of old Robert Gordon of Wilkhuse.

The daily dig blog can be accessed on Facebook at Wilkhuse Archaeological Excavation, near Brora.

Great thanks are due to the sponsor of the excavation, Donald Adamson, and also professional archaeologists Warren Bailie and Kevin Grant, and the entire team of volunteers.

First-Time Archaeologist: My Take on the Wilkhouse Dig

By Janet French

Before May 2017 my experience of archaeology only came from being an avid viewer of Channel Four's Time Team and most of the episodes were old repeats. So I was a true 'armchair archaeologist'!

In August 2016 I visited Brora and Doll along with other members of my family (my brother Mark has visited many times) to see for myself the place where my two times Great Grandfather was born. He was Alexander Ross. His father Thomas Ross had been the school master on the Doll. We were accompanied by and shown round by Dr Nick and Ellen – they both have been instrumental in helping us with our family history. During this visit, to the old family croft on the Doll, Nick told us of the forthcoming archaeological dig in 2017 at the site of the old drovers' inn, Wilkhouse, at Kintradwell. I must have made an 'interested response' as Nick and Ellen were quick to say come and take part.

After returning home to Swindon, England and thinking about the idea I was keen to take up the opportunity. So, May 2017 arrived and I travelled north again to Brora. Fortunately for me I was invited to stay with Nick and Ellen at 'Sunnybrae' for the duration of the dig so I was well looked after.

How was it volunteering on the dig? I was excited especially thinking about what might be uncovered as we excavated but also apprehensive as I was not sure what would be involved (being a complete novice) could I stand the pace!

So...Day 1 – up very early! Breakfast very quickly! Put on appropriate clothing and in Scotland that means prepare for every kind of weather in one day! Pick up a packed lunch (fortunately for me already made by Dr Nick). Be driven to the site for an 8am start! As soon as I got there I knew I was in for an amazing time. For a start the weather turned out to be beautiful, the sun shining and shimmering across the glass-like sea which was immediately below the site. The sweep of white sand at its edge was filled with sea birds. Then, as if by command, a pod of dolphins swam across the horizon. It was perfect... but then I was reminded of the task in hand – 'Janet, there is work to do'.

The professional archaeologists introduced themselves to everyone and we all shared who we were and how we had come to be there. Some were university students of archaeology and some just volunteers from the area with an interest in their local history and part of the Clyne Heritage Society. I couldn't even claim to have travelled the furthest as in fact one of the students hitch-hiked from Germany to take part – quite remarkable! Right from the start it felt like we were a team and everyone was very friendly and helpful to one another. This would be one of my enduring memories of the whole time on the dig.

The site was an uneven, thistle-ridden sheep field and the only evidence of a



Turf-cutting.



Front wall line appearing.

building were some larger lumpy protrusions in the grass. These were the remains of the walls of Wilkhouse Inn. The professionals had decided the extent and positions of the first trenches to be dug. They were measured out and we started with cutting and clearing the turf until bare earth appeared. The hard work had started!

Once the surface of the remains appeared it became clear that it would be an enormous task. The spread of the buried 'tumble' of the building stones was quite wide and it would be a day or two before we would reach the target of uncovering the base of the walls that were still intact. Mostly from now on we were only to employ the standard archaeologist kit provided – gardening gloves, a small trowel for scraping, a soft brush, a small shovel and a bucket! Fairly slow progress was made and I was glad when lunchtime arrived – a relaxed half hour or so sitting at the edge of the field taking in the

sea view – then it was back to work until 4pm.

This was the daily routine for cleaning and clearing the fallen stones in the coming ten days – scraping, brushing the excess soil into the shovel, filling one's bucket and tipping the earth onto the spoil tip. The task was made harder by the fact that most of the stones were intertwined with invasive bracken roots.

As we excavated, lower and lower, levels were taken using a dumpy level, as well as photographs taken and accurate drawings made to document the layout of each trench. The standing wall remains gradually emerged and things got more and more interesting as small 'finds' were made. There was great excitement from the professionals as it became clear that the walls had been sealed with lime mortar

which is unusual for a building of this age at this time and in this area – also there was evidence of the use of roof slate and window glass.

I was fortunate to be working mostly on Trench 1 working alongside some American archaeology students studying at Glasgow University who supported me in my inexperience. We were digging to uncover the entrance to the Inn and the threshold area surrounding it.

On Day 5, having lifted each day smaller stones that surrounded it, I gradually uncovered a very large stone which may have been a lintel or upright for the door frame. After it had been recorded in its position, it took three strapping strong chaps to move it aside. Other finds came in the form of china fragments, clay pipes, whelk shells, glass, bone fragments and indistinguishable pieces of metal. At this stage each bucket of earth had to be put through the sifting machine – a great piece of kit. It was amazing how small items could be missed just relying on the naked eye to see them in the loose, sandy soil. In fact, the most remarkable things missed by me before I tipped the spoil into the machine were two dressmaker's pins! I got very excited on Day 8, with my trowel, I unearthed a thin brass ring and a very small bone button buried close to the doorway.



Uncovering a huge stone in Trench 1 in the search for the doorway return.

In other trenches discoveries slowly emerging were fireplaces, stone and earth floors and clear evidence of some walls being 'plastered'. Metal detectorists uncovered old coins, a thimble and cauldron fragments – all building up a clearer picture of the people and the place in years past.

Everyone worked so hard and the enthusiasm for the task never faltered – I think for me, 'a first-timer', other volunteers and even the most experienced members of the team – it is a rather addictive pastime.



The threshold to the inn, uncovered on Day 8.



Here I am cataloguing my 'finds' from Trench 1.



Final measuring and drawing of the domestic fireplace.

Sometimes it was noticeable to others that I was so enthusiastic to uncover more 'finds' that I found it hard to be patient when the important recording and drawing work had to take place. I had to be reminded 'treasure hunting' was not really the main aim of the investigation!

However, by Day 9 the time allocated for the whole dig was fast disappearing but there was still more to do on the penultimate day. By now we had hundreds of finds and many still needed listing, and map drawing of the trenches was finished off.

I was still scraping away with my trowel hoping for that last find – and when it did come I didn't even realise what I had found until it was pointed out to me. In a random collection of bone pieces in my finds tray there was part of a 'bone comb'. I was thrilled and amazed when it was said it could be 'of Viking origin' and then somewhat deflated

when it was corrected to 'they are notoriously difficult to date'!

As an ex-primary school teacher, one highlight for me was the visit to the dig of some of the local school children from Brora. They were keen to see for themselves what was happening and were particularly rigorous trying their hand at the sifting machine.

Also, I was thrilled that, on Day 10, we had a visit from George MacBeath – one of the most famous and longest lived local residents. I had met George on my previous year's visit to Brora when exploring the area of some of my ancestral roots. He was keen to see the new discoveries made in local history.

One special event for the dig group was going for an Indian meal at 'Sid's Spice' in Brora – a brilliant evening for all and a time to relax together socially. I must say the restaurant was one of the best I have been to – the food and service were excellent.



My bone comb.



With George MacBeath.



The lunchtime view...



My young archaeologist assistant, Henry Evans, aged 9.

I will always remember this trip and dig. A great deal of hard work had been done by a really committed bunch of people coming together from all over Scotland, England, Germany and America etc, mostly not known to each other, but who worked to one aim and achieved much. The weather was good for almost all of the ten days – I can only remember one day of rain. In the main the sun shone and sun screen and a hat were essential – who says it always rains in Scotland?

The scenery and wildlife all around us was beautiful. I met some wonderful friendly people in and around Brora, in addition to those there for the dig.

After digging for ten days I found muscles in my body I never knew I had. All a result of excessive amounts of trowelling, brushing and digging – I ached all over – but I was heard to say, on the day I left [for a week's rest on the west coast at Balchladich, near Lochinver], that taking part in the Wilkhouse dig was one of the best things I had ever done. I really meant it – and now when I watch *Time Team* I really do understand what they are talking about! So, Dr Nick when is the next dig? I will be back!

Clyne War Memorial: Centenary Tributes

In partnership with the Friends of Clyne War Memorial Association, the Society has been marking the 100-year anniversary of the deaths of those people commemorated on the war memorial's Great War plaque, with tributes on both groups' Facebook pages.

In 2015, there were twelve men who were commemorated, in 2016, there were fifteen and last year, a further eleven tributes were published. When all commemorations have been completed, it is the intention to collate them all into a small publication, so that their memory will live on in perpetuity.

One such tribute from May is reproduced below:

*Thomas Matheson – May 3rd, 1917
June 17th, 1896 - May 3rd, 1917 – aged 20*



Thomas Matheson.

Thomas was born at Gartymore in the parish of Kildonan, on 17th June, 1896. He was the seventh child of twelve born to Thomas Matheson, a Plasterer, originally from Kildonan and Elspeth 'Elsie' Sutherland, from Kinloss in Morayshire.

Probably after the death of Elsie's father in 1907, the family moved from Gartymore to live with Elsie's mother at 75 Glaslochan, Dalchalm, Brora. After leaving school, Thomas [junior] worked for his father as a Plasterer.

In October 1915, just over a year after the outbreak of the war, Thomas enlisted with the Lovat Scouts in Brora, during one of their recruiting campaigns in Sutherland. He trained with the Lovats at Aldershot and Ripon.

It's not known when, but Thomas transferred to the 5th [Service] Battalion, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, who had originally arrived at Boulogne, in France, on 10th May 1915, five months before Thomas enlisted. They saw action at the Battle of Loos in 1915 and the Battles of the Somme in 1916, before the Arras Offensive in which Thomas would have served, in March 1917.

On 15th April 1917, the Camerons were removed from the front line after a successful advance during the six-day First Battle of the Scarpe. In the days leading up to May 3rd, the day of the new offensive which would later be known as the Third Battle of the Scarpe, they were billeted in Ternas, around 15 miles to the west of Arras. Far from the front, they

spent their time training for this next push. On 27th April, they were transferred by train to Arras and moved up to the Black Line, then, on the 28th, up to the Blue Line, where they remained until the 30th.

On 1st May, they moved into position behind Green Line, north of Fampoux, 3 miles east of Arras. You can just imagine the pressure on the men, awaiting the battle, as they moved at 10.30pm on 2nd May to assembly positions at Cuba Trench, facing Greenland Hill, near Gavrelle to the north east of Arras.

At 3.45am on the morning of 3rd May, 1917, Thomas, as one of the 5th Camerons, which was part of 26th Brigade, 9th [Scottish] Division, attacked Greenland Hill. The attack was an unmitigated disaster for the British Army, which suffered nearly 6,000 men killed for little material gain.

The reasons for this are explained by Cyril Falls in the Official History, Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917:

“The confusion caused by the darkness; the speed with which the German artillery opened fire; the manner in which it concentrated upon the British infantry, almost neglecting the artillery; the intensity of its fire, the heaviest that many an experienced soldier had ever witnessed, seemingly unchecked by British counter-battery fire and lasting almost without slackening for fifteen hours; the readiness with which the German infantry yielded to the first assault and the energy of its counter-attack; and, it must be added, the bewilderment of the British infantry on finding itself in the open and its inability to withstand any resolute counter-attack.”

The official war diary of the Camerons details the day of Thomas's death, seemingly glossing over the terrors which they went through:

“At 3.45am, the 5th Camerons, with the 8th Black watch on left and 4th Division on right, advanced to attack the German position, but owing to the fact that it was still pitch dark and that there was very heavy machine gun fire from the Chemical Works, the advance did not succeed. A second attempt was made later, with no better results. The shelling of our own front line by our own heavy artillery made the confusion worse.

During these two attempts, all the officers with the exception of 2nd Lieuts Dufton and Gallie were either killed, wounded or missing [Lt Riach returned to our line in the evening from a shell hole in which he and a few men of A Company spent the day]. 2nd Lieut E S Dufton reorganised the men in the front line, which, except from activity from hostile snipers during the day, was left pretty quiet by the enemy – but received a good deal of attention from our own artillery. The enemy shelled Chili Trench during most of the day and evening. We were relieved about midnight by the Argylls and we moved back to the trenches near the sunken road N of Athies.”

It was in this day's action which Thomas was killed and missing. *The Northern Times* reported that Thomas, along with his officer and 4 others, was attacking a German trench, when he was hit and killed on the spot. His body was never identified and, as such, is commemorated on the Arras Memorial to the missing, along with almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7th August 1918 and who have no known grave.

Thomas was also commemorated later by his family on the headstone of his sister, Williamina, in Clyne Cemetery, along with his older Royal Engineer brother, Alexander, who was to die from wounds at Aubigny, near Amiens, three months later. He is also commemorated on the Clyne United Free Church War Memorial and the Cameron Highlanders Roll of Honour.

Elsie Matheson, the mother of Thomas, Alexander and Williamina, who are all commemorated on the Clyne Parish War Memorial, was invited to unveil the Memorial on Christmas Day 1922, as she had lost 2 sons, a daughter and a son-in-law, the most losses suffered by a family in the parish.

Thomas Matheson, late of Park Terrace, Brora (now of Dornoch) is the nephew of Thomas, Alexander and Williamina. The Society is grateful to Mrs Pamela Teska for supplying these and many more images of the family for the archives.



Clyne War Memorial unveiling.



Matheson family headstone.

Guided Walk Along the Drove Road from Clynekirkton to Oldtown, Gordonbush, Strath Brora

By Nick Lindsay

The weather held fair on Sunday 8th October, 2017, when an amazing turnout of thirty-six people attended Clyne Heritage Society's guided walk along the Drove Road from Clynekirkton to Oldtown, Strath Brora, as part of Highland Council's annual Highland Archaeology Festival. This year is the twenty-fourth year of the popular festival, with the Society holding festival events since 1999.

Meeting at Brora Heritage Centre at 10.30am, the walk leader, Dr Nick Lindsay explained the plan for all cars to be driven initially to the end of the walk at Oldtown. Half of the cars would be left there and all of the group would squeeze into the other half of the cars and be driven to the start of the walk at Clynekirkton.

Transport operations completed, the walk commenced in fair sunshine at the old church ruin at Clynekirkton. The Drove Road (also variably known as the Old Coffin Road or the Garlet Road, which describes its topography in Gaelic as Rough Slope) was the main thoroughfare from Strath Brora to the parish church, well before the village of Brora existed and before the Clearances (1809-21) and the English names it is known by today shed some light on its use.



The group on the Coffin Road overlooking West Clyne.

The gentle walk along the track took the group behind the West Clyne crofts and overlooked those of West Clynesh, or London Street. It was explained that this name had nothing at all to do with the UK capital, but was another anglicised corruption of the Gaelic 'Sraid Lunndan' or Green Wet Street.

The first proper stop was made after around $\frac{3}{4}$ mile at Cregan a' Chorp (the Body Stone), where coffin-bearers from Strath Brora,

en route to funerals at Clynekirkton, would take a refreshment break, usually the uisge beatha (whisky), having placed the coffin on the flat stone to prevent the soul of the deceased departing into the ground. Examining the top of the stone closely, the group were shown some man-made marks cut into the surface. It was an Ordnance Survey Bench Mark, and is one of several made by surveyors during a levelling traverse along the Coffin Road and back over the top of Socach Hill in the early 1870s. It denotes a known height, this one is 546.6ft above sea-level datum and can be seen on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1872.



The group on the Coffin Road overlooking Loch Brora.



Part of the group at Killin Broch.

Crossing over the Bealach, superb views of Strath Brora and its loch, Carrol Rock and Ben Horn came into view and Killin Broch was soon reached. Commanding a magnificent view overlooking the strath, lunch was taken at the spectacular 23m (75ft) diameter pile of stones, with a 1.5m high cairn on top, which would once have been a towering Iron Age circular fortification, standing up to 15m (50ft) high.

To build this size of structure, there must have been plenty of labour available to quarry and transport the necessary building material and also to build the broch. The group marvelled at the feat of engineering, and the organisation and planning which must have been crucial to the success of the project. It was incredible that there was a knowledge of how to construct such an enormous building

and, when completed, it would have been a striking mark on the landscape, denoting power and wealth, directly across the Strath from another broch at Carrol.

After visiting a solitary Standing Stone, the next stop was a large rock, into the upper surface of which had been carved four small cup marks, more generically known as 'rock art'. There is much conjecture regarding their origin, and they generally occur throughout Atlantic and Mediterranean Europe, with a fine concentration in the Highlands of Scotland, on natural slabs or erratics, ie large boulders dumped by glaciers as they melted during the last ice age, but their purpose is unclear.

The group were led through the township of Sallachy (Willow Place), a little-known old township set high above Loch Brora, and shown the enigmatic remains of several buildings, including longhouses and corn-drying kilns. The township is enclosed by a low, linear turf and stone bank, which is part of the complicated and extensive head dyke system, extending for over 4km. It separates the living areas and cultivatable

land [infield] from the common grazing of the open hill [outfield]. The dyke also acted as a barrier from water draining from the hill, as it had a ditch on its uphill side, which carried the water away from the areas of cultivation.

In the Post-Medieval period, from around AD1600 onwards, at the end of what is referred to as 'the Little Ice Age', the climate became warmer again. Thus, higher places, such as

Sallachy, became more favourable for permanent habitation once more. It was often the case that the familiar and already established shieling grounds (summer dwelling and cattle grazing) were used as places to construct a permanent dwelling or two, along with areas suitable for cultivation of oats, bere, kale and potatoes.

The only map evidence we have to tell us that this township actually existed was made by David Aitken in 1772, to record the boundary between the estates of Carrol and the House of Sutherland during a dispute over its exact position. It appears that Sallachy was inhabited then as there are cultivation strips marked on this map, however, the very comprehensive Old Parish Registers, which record the details of 3,200 births and marriages in over 100 locations in Clyne parish between 1782 and 1855, do not have a record of Sallachy, indicating that it was probably uninhabited by 1782. It may be that the township had been cleared by Captain Sutherland for the wider outreaches of his newly established Killin Sheep farm, which had already been started by the time the map was made, as the boundary dyke, built in 1771, is clearly marked.

As a direct result of the removal of the people from their ancestral townships, when the great sheep farms were created for incoming sheep barons, circular, stone-built sheepfolds began to spring up throughout the land. The group visited the one at Sallachy, still standing mostly to its 1.8m original height. Thus, they are typically dated to the Post-clearance period, ie early 19th Century and were constructed for the protection of the sheep from the elements, although this one may be contemporaneous with the existence of the early Killin Sheep Farm. The stone used in its construction would undoubtedly have been robbed from the nearby broch.

Evidence for the earliest settlers at Sallachy was seen next as a distinctive low circular wall, which the group were told is the tell-tale sign of the site of a Bronze or Iron Age roundhouse or hut circle. This one, which may have been later re-used as a sheep pen, has an internal diameter of 9m and it has an entrance in its south-south-east quadrant.



Investigating the cup-marked stone.

At the north end of the township are a collection of mounds, which would normally be interpreted as clearance cairns, heaps of stones cleared from an area of cultivation, exactly as modern-day farmers do when ploughing their fields. However, the group were shown that at least two of these cairns had 'hollow' centres, having been excavated in search, literally, of buried treasures. A Golspie Minister from 1866 to 1914, the Rev James M Joass, was a keen antiquary who was sponsored by the Society of Antiquarians to go about the countryside excavating archaeological features. He opened up many a cairn and excavated several brochs in search of antiquarian relics, many of which are displayed in the small museum at Dunrobin Castle. It was explained that it wasn't an unusual sight to see Joass's 'hollow' cairns on the local hills. The two cairns examined were probably burial cairns, dating to the Bronze Age.

It was back to the Coffin Road for the final few stops, where a recent muir fire had exposed clearly another hut circle which was magnificently located opposite the impressive Carrol Rock. On top of a nearby knoll, the group were shown a cist burial, [pronounced kissed!], a stone-lined coffin, set into the ground, into which Bronze Age people placed their dead in a crouched position.

The recent fire had done the group a further an archaeological favour. Perhaps the most recent archaeological discovery in the Highlands had been exposed by the fire which had burned off the deep heather. A rectangle of boulders marked the foundations of a building measuring 9m x 3.5m. Set on an exposed ridge, high above the loch, the group tried to imagine how tough life would have been for its inhabitants.

The final glance at archaeology was at another, previously unrecorded hut circle, set on a natural platform, but buried in deep heather, where the fire had not reached, on the way back down to Coffin Road and the short walk to the cars.

It had been a great day out, with people being shown the hidden archaeology of a very special area and, most importantly, the weather had stayed fair.



The group at the sheepfold.

Veteran Remembers

by Samuel Grant, edited by Nick Lindsay

Continuing the series of articles by Samuel Grant, born in November 1879, the eldest of seven children to George Grant, Saddler and Ironmonger and Catherine Murray, in Commerce Street (now Rosslyn Street) in Brora, which appeared in *The Northern Times* in 1958/59.

Samuel Grant's working life started in 1898 as a clerk with the late Mr Archibald Argo, County Clerk of Sutherland. But he stayed there only a few months when the urge to seek his fortune in the south saw him on the road to London, where he began as a clerk with the city's School Board. He finished up in the same service with London County Council. In between, Mr Grant was with the Royal Naval Air Service in the First World War.

Brora's Free Church Minister Had Great Prestige

[The Northern Times - 26th December, 1958]

The Highlander traditionally 'has' religion, and years ago Brora was no exception. There were two churches, the Church of Scotland (the Established Church) and the Free Church. The former was situated in a remote part of Clyne and was attended by many of the aristocratic and county families. The minister, the Reverend John Spark, also had a glebe, a large manse and garden and helped the community in many ways. The original church became dilapidated and a new one was built near the village. The old Clyne churchyard adjoined the church precincts, and was in continuous use until the cemetery nearer the village was provided.

The Free Church minister was the Reverend John Murray, a preacher of outstanding dignity and independence. He was a robust Christian.

Mr Murray preached in both Gaelic and English and had great prestige in the parish. He travelled in a pony and trap driven by a coachman, and often preached as far away as Gordonbush.

So well was Sabbath observed in those days, that long country walks were taboo. If people walking to Gordonbush heard the minister's gig in the distance they hid in the bushes until he passed.

Mr Murray did a good deal of useful secular work for the parish. He was liberal in contributing to our schoolboys' football club, and respected by us accordingly!

It may be interesting to add that the Church's present pitch-pine seating was carried out when I was a schoolboy, and at the present day everything about the building, except the lights, seems exactly as it was then, including the lower pulpit for the precentor.

In many respects, Sunday was observed as a whole day religious festival, as it is still in some remoter parts of the Western Highlands. Sunday morning devotion for a band

of earnest Christians began with a 'meeting' for prayer and praise in the vestry at 10 am, an hour before the English service.

In the afternoon there was Sunday School under Mr Janetus Mackay, a keen worker in Christian projects. A devoted band of young ladies took the classes. From a small boy's point of view, it served to pass the time, and we could look forward to an annual prize-



The Institute, above what is now Cornucopia in Rosslyn Street.

giving and a soiree in the vestry, where a choir, under the leadership of the precentor, entertained us; and we were supplied with tea and a 'baggie' of cakes and prizes.

For adults there was a meeting of the YMCA in the upper room of the Institute, now serving as a county library [above what is now Cornucopia, on the corner of Gower Street and Rosslyn Street, Ed.]. Then there was a religious meeting of prayer and praise in the Temperance Hall which had just been built.

It may be of interest to recall the economic position in the last decade of last century of the average citizen, and its bearing on the general ambition for his family to acquire a sound education. To make a living and bring up a family was often a struggle, and there was an inborn urge, at whatever sacrifice, to give the children an opportunity to 'rise' in the world. The experience of even harder times in the childhood of the parents intensified this urge.

Money did not circulate freely, and shopkeepers, depending in the main on agricultural prosperity, did not see much actual cash until the May or November term days.

In many homes with large families, provision for a basic ration was made by purchasing in the autumn a half barrel of salted herring, about half a ton of potatoes, and a sack of oatmeal. The butcher was visited for a bit of meat for Sunday's broth.

Despite this hard living, there was always generosity for any good cause.

A clay pipe and tobacco at 3d per ounce was usually the only luxury for many, except at New Year time, when non-teetotallers had saved up a little for 'a dram'.

There was no Welfare State. Now the standard of living has increased immensely, and the educational ladder can be climbed by the lad or lass o'pairts without much financial difficulty. It was different then. The student from a humble home got his university education the hard way, but he usually made good in the end.

The Capaldi's of Brora Story

By Morag L Sutherland

In 1932, Alfredo Capaldi, an Italian born confectioner, arrived in Brora and took over a vacant shop in Fountain Square. With family backing, he set up what was to become a nationally famous brand of Italian ice cream and an institution in the village, still surviving to this day. Sadly, Alfredo died only 5 years later, but he had already laid the foundation for his extended family to operate the Brora business until 1984.



The Capaldi Cafe in Kingussie.



Capaldi's Opening Advert in the Northern Times 2nd June 1932.

Bernardo served in the Italian army, who were on the side of the Allies during WW1, from 1916 to 1919, and after the war he took his family to Edinburgh in around 1920. Sadly, Marianna died of an ectopic pregnancy in August 1921.

Bernardo married for a third time in 1922 to Emilia Cassinelli in Edinburgh and, by 1925, they were running an ice cream shop in Lauriston Street. By 1929, Bernardo and his

Alfredo was born in Picinisco, a beautiful village in the mountainous province of Frosinone in central Italy, around 100 miles from Rome. His parents, Bernardo and Angela Perilli had married in 1906 and Alfredo was born a year later on March 5th. His younger sister, Serafina, went on to marry a local boy Giuseppe Crolla, and they came to Glasgow and ran Crolla's ice cream business there, so there is a family link between the Capaldi and Crolla ice cream businesses in Scotland.

Alfredo's mother died in 1913 and, with a young family of three by then to bring up, his father Bernardo remarried in 1914 to Marianna Di Marco and they began a family, which included Ezio Vittorio (Victor), Luigi and Antonio (Tony), all of whom were to play a part in the Brora ice cream business over the years.



Alfredo and Bertha's wedding in Kingussie.



Alfredo in the doorway of the Brora Cafe.

family had moved to Kingussie, where he opened the Roma Café on the High Street, with a billiard hall behind it.

Bernardo then began to look for other business opportunities in the Highlands. He finally settled on a Fruiterer's and Confectioner's shop under the Grand Hotel in Fountain Square in Brora in June 1932, taking over from a William Wiseman. Capaldi's continued to operate these businesses, with the addition of an ice cream parlour and café, which was run by Alfredo, or Valfie as he was known in the family.

Valfie was a first-class billiards and snooker player and he was soon recognised as the best player in Brora. He was friendly with Fred Davis, one of only two players ever to win the world billiards and snooker titles, the other

being his brother Joe. Davis used to visit them in Brora and they played exhibition matches in the village billiard hall, in Gower Street, now the Scout & Guide Hall.

Bernardo became a naturalised citizen in 1936 and continued to live in Kingussie with his Emilia. She died in 1950, and he in 1952 and they are buried together in the graveyard in Kingussie.

On his arrival in Brora, Alfredo stayed in the Grand Hotel [now the Braes], but soon after took lodgings with Margaret Leslie, who had been a widow since 1927, and her family at Hunter's Cottages [now Belmont] on Victoria Road. It was here where he met and fell in love with one of Margaret's daughters, Bertha, who was born in Brora in 1913.

Alfredo and Bertha were married on 23rd January 1935, in St Columba's Roman Catholic Church in Kingussie and Alfred Bonfazio, known as Freddie, arrived on the 26th November. The newlywed couple ran the café and shop together, which was, by then a flourishing and popular business.

The Capaldi's of Brora Story

Being a Highland Presbyterian community, shops in Brora didn't open on a Sunday, but things were about to change. Alfredo bucked the trend, no doubt to the dismay of many, but, effectively the Capaldi shop was open all hours for the locals and passing trade, especially once folk got cars.

Sadly, Alfredo became ill with influenza and died of meningitis in Cambusavie Hospital in Golspie on 18 January 1937, at the age of only 29. He left behind his distraught 24-year-old wife, and their only son, who was less than eighteen-months-old. Alfredo was buried in Brora Cemetery and, in traditional Italian style, has his photo attached to his headstone.

With the support of Alfredo's family and her own, Bertha continued to run the café and ice cream parlour, but life gradually became more difficult for her. In 1939, the 2nd World War began and, after Italy joined the Second World War on the German side in June 1940. British Italians became persecuted in places, so Bertha changed hers and Freddie's surname to her maiden name of Leslie by deed poll.

During the war and in the post-war years, Bertha found it hard to cope running the business and, by 1950, she was struggling financially. In 1953, her estate was sequestrated and Alfredo's half-brother, Ezio Vittorio (Victor), took over the Brora business, with Bertha moving to Glasgow to help run Victor's café there. A few years later, she moved to London, where she built herself a new and successful career in the hotel business. She died in 1999 and was buried with Alfredo in Brora.

In 1959, Victor moved the business from under the Grand Hotel to Riversbrink in Rosslyn Street, premises formerly occupied by the late Dr Walter 'Faggie' Johnstone, then for a short while the National Bank of Scotland. This is the present-day Harry Gow's bakers shop.

Victor, whose wife, Elizabeth predeceased him in 1974, died in 1986. According to their daughter, Evelyn, her Dad never recovered from her mum's death and handed



Alfredo's tombstone in Clyne Cemetery – note his photo.



Victor and Elizabeth Capaldi.



Evelyn Capaldi outside the Brora Cafe in Fountain Square.

weighed everything before it went into the mixer. I could hardly believe how accurate Victor was without the use of scales. I averaged out the weight of the ingredients used and then sent the details to the Ice cream Alliance technical department to check if the mix was balanced. The result was a further 2 pounds of milk powder should be added, to make a fully balanced recipe. Not bad considering Victor never weighed anything!"

Mike Small ran a very successful operation, expanding the business, making changes to the production and creating employment in the village. Early in 1993, production was moved from the shop to a custom-built unit at the Factory Park, off Stafford Terrace. They supplied ice cream wholesale to shops and hotels from Orkney to Aviemore, Elgin and Nairn in the east and west to Skye.

They bought a delivery van with a freezer and dry goods section and put an ice cream van on the road for the East Sutherland coastal communities and inland to Lairg. A garage was built onto the premises to house the ice cream van and a small shed, from which the Sunday papers were sold, was demolished to make way for this.

By the mid-1990s, Capaldi's was making ice cream cakes for many varied occasions as varied as the 50 flavours of ice cream – a far cry from the original vanilla flavour.

In late 2005, the Smalls sold the enterprise they had built up from the Capaldi family to Culloden Foods Ltd, which owned Harry Gow's bakery. They continued to make and supply their outlets with the famous brand of Capaldi ice cream products and sell from the Rosslyn Street shop, along with their bakery products.

The most recent stage in the Capaldi's story occurred in June 2017, when Ian Campbell and his daughter, Lorna, bought the Capaldi business from Culloden Foods, returning it to local ownership once again. The famous ice cream remains

The Capaldi's of Brora Story

on sale at Harry Gow's and also at a new outlet in the village – Brora Heritage Centre.

Jennifer Cowie was employed at Capaldi's from October 1988 to March 2015, so witnessed the the entire period of ownership of Mike and Lorna Small and then the transfer to Harry Gow's.

She recalls that once the business was bought by Mike Small, he redesigned the shop layout and put in new units. Mike, Lorna and her sister, Margaret, worked in the shop and Jennifer was taken on, but her hours were worked around her family – she did not work the holidays. The opening hours were from 10 in the morning till 9 at night in the summer and an hour less in the winter, closing at 8pm.

After school, Ian Small and Alan Yates came in and worked evenings and weekends and they covered the summer holidays too. John Campbell, the former baker, was taken on to be the ice cream maker at the industrial estate and that allowed Mike to concentrate on the paper work.

Jennifer's son, John, designed the shop logo for the Small's, as part of a project in a Computer Aided Design class, taught by Norman Dunsire. GF Sutherland informed Jennifer of this; she had no idea John had done this!

As the years moved on, other school pupils were employed and Nikki Etheridge was the last Saturday girl Jennifer worked with.



Capaldi's Shop, in Rosslyn Street, as many of us will remember it in February, 2011.

When Harry Gow's took over the business, once again the shop was closed and refitted and this time the emphasis was on the bakery section as its primary product. Ice cream was secondary and there was no sale of sweets, crisps or cigarettes. Initially, there was no Sunday opening and that is still limited to July and August for the tourist season. And the shop hours were reduced from 9am to 4.30pm, so it was quite different from the original.

Old Clyne School: The Way Forward

by Nick Lindsay

Recap – As you will almost certainly be aware, the Society negotiated a deal with Scottish & Southern Electricity (SSE), the company which constructed and now operate the Gordonbush Wind Farm in Strath Brora, to gift the Old Clyne School, at Knox’s Corner on the A9, plus £1M, for the Society to renovate and operate as its Heritage Hub. When complete, the Old School will house the Society’s museum and collection store, and there will also be a café, shop, project room and education room.



Artistic impression of the future Heritage Centre.

Our dream is close to becoming reality! With many frustrating delays, hiatuses and hold-ups, we have finally become the owners of the Old Clyne School and have £1M in our piggy bank. Just before Christmas, the Minute of Agreement and Standard Security Contract were signed and returned to SSE, through our Solicitor, Nigel Jones, of MacKenzie & Cormack in Tain, who is generously working on a pro bono basis for us, as a charity.

As we go to press, we anticipate receiving the deeds and money at the end of March. Whilst securing the property and cash will fulfill our immediate ambition, this, frustratingly, as Winston Churchill so famously once stated “... *is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning*”!

We will have to spend the first tranche of our money on getting final plans drawn up by an architect and to get that design costed. With that information, and our cash in our back pocket, we can approach funders, principally the Heritage Lottery Fund, for any outstanding balance over our £1m.

That funding application process can take around a year and, if successful (we have a good case and we have already had positive dialogue with them about our project matching their funding streams), then the renovation and kitting out phase will also take around a further year to complete. This makes a minimum opening timescale of around Spring 2020.



S-shaped spiral staircase in the east end of the Old Clyne School

This date is demoralizingly distant in the future, however, as they say, Rome wasn't built in a day (but it might have been quicker than the Old Clyne School!). We are still as keen and determined as we have ever been, even more so as we now have something tangible, that is actually ours, to work with.

Of course, our asset is also our liability, given the deteriorating state of the building. We informed SSE about its state in the Autumn and, still owning the property, they paid for superficial work to make it wind and watertight again, ahead of the winter. We have confirmed with our insurance company that our existing policy covers the building and the site. During renovation, insurance will be covered by the lead contractor.

Having operated the Brora Heritage Centre (BHC) for the last two years, we have learned a massive amount about running a heritage business, including discovering what our heritage offer to the public should be. The information and knowledge gained from this positive experience will feed directly into our plans for the Old School, indeed, it has already altered some of our previous thinking, so operating BHC has been incredibly beneficial all round.

We have gained invaluable experience in offering our heritage to the public, both in person and also online, and understanding, from feedback, what our visitors actually want and like. We have gained experience in employing and managing staff and volunteers, in retail and catering, in financial management, in marketing and in customer service. We have made many friends from our visitors, who have sung our praises on our Facebook page, on Trip Advisor and in our own Guest Book.

So, the hard work begins now, but stay with us and, in two years or so time, come and see the fruition of our dream!

More Chronicle News

CHS Christmas Pop-up Shop

The Brora Shopkeepers' Christmas Night was held on the night of Friday, 8th December, to coincide with the Christmas Lights Switch-on at the school. As in the previous year, the Society was kindly offered the use of the former Post Office premises in Rosslyn Street to set up a 'Christmas Pop-up Shop', by Mary Stewart, one of our Brora Heritage Centre Officers, owned by her and her husband, Andy.

It was another fine, but cold night, and there was a great spirit about the village, with customers taking advantage of the late-night shopping in the village centre shops – as well as the mulled wine and prosecco on offer at each of the venues!

The Society had taken along goods from the Heritage Centre, including books, gifts and crafts and the tables in the ex-post office were manned by Wendy Armstrong, with Ellen and Nick Lindsay.

Although not as busy as the previous year, the Society sold over £110 worth of goods and took almost £36 on the raffle of a bottle of Rum, donated by CHS Member, Violet Hastings, which was won by Angela Sutherland from Dalchalm.

A Successful Appeal!

The Society put out an appeal for contributions to the Chronicle at the start of the year and we are very happy to report we received several articles, all of which are reproduced here. So, a huge thank you to those who contributed and let's hope that even more people can be encouraged to contribute next year.

Publication

A new small book arrived in the shops in Brora in October last year. '*Samuel Grant's Memories of Brora*' is a series of eight articles which were published in *The Northern Times* in 1958 and 1959. They were written on his retirement by Samuel Grant, the son of a saddler, who grew up in Brora, before moving to Golspie when he was 17.

His articles describe in fascinating detail his childhood memories of his native village in the late 1880s and early 1890s, including school, the shops, pastimes, religion, food, travel, crofting and fishing. These accounts represent a collection of memories unlike anything anyone has first-hand experience of today – a bygone era of simple lives and simple pleasures.

They have been transcribed as they first appeared in 'The Raggie' and edited and illustrated by the Society's Chairman, Nick Lindsay.

The 36-page book is available for sale at Cunninghams and Cornucopia in the village and also in season at the Brora Heritage Centre, price £3.50, or by post from the address on the rear cover at £4.75, including postage and packing.

Society Board 2018-19

The new Board begins after the AGM on Thursday 15th March, 2018. Members have been served with the AGM papers either by e-mail, post or hand-delivered. Members were invited to express any interest in serving on the Board, and these had to be returned by March 5th. No nominations were received.

The whole Board have indicated a willingness to serve again if nominated and may be re-elected en bloc at the AGM. The provisional Board for 2018-19 (if elected) will consist of:

Position	Name	Position	Name
Chairman	Nick Lindsay	Webmaster	Denise Ferne
Vice Chairman	John Alderson	Member	Joan Baxter
Secretary	Andrew Bridges	Member	Wendy Armstrong
Treasurer	Catriona Sinclair	Member	Alex Campbell

During the last year, Sandy Mackintosh retired from the Board on health grounds. He first became a Committee member in March 2008. Sandy was a very popular member during his 10 years' service and was always very shrewd. He didn't say a lot, but took everything in, in a considered fashion and then gave the benefit of his experience in his own succinct style, but, as many will know, he was never short of an entertaining tale to tell too! We thank them him for his service and hope he and Lily, who retired as tea-lady from the talk evenings, enjoy their 'retirement'!

Society Accounts 2017

This is the place in the Clyne Chronicle where we usually publish our annual accounts; however, as we became incorporated as a Limited Company of February 15th last year, the Society is unable to use the services of a local independent examiner and now must have the accounts audited by professional Chartered Accountants. The Board have decided to use MacKay & Co in Golspie, as they have been very helpful in the lead up to our incorporation. The accounts have just been deposited with them.

This means that we have had to go to press prior to receiving our final accounts and are, therefore, unable to print them here this year. They will, however, be presented by our Treasurer, Catriona, in draft form at our AGM on March 15th.

The Society opened two new bank accounts last year (one a Current Account and one an interest-bearing Savings Account), both with the Clydesdale Bank in Brora. The Society's holds two other accounts, both with the Bank of Scotland in Golspie, one being for general day-to-day operations and the other for Brora Heritage Centre. The new Clydesdale accounts were opened in readiness to receive the funds from SSE, ring-fenced for the renovation of the Old Clyne School; the savings account will hold the money and transactions relating to the Old Clyne School project will be operated from the current account.

In Memoriam



Brora Variety Group Minstrels – 1970: Back Five (L-R): George MacBeath, Les Hill, Mary Coghill, Neville Gazey, Don Sutherland; Front Seven (L-R): Vicki Ross, Anne Ross, Marigold MacLeod, Sylvia Gazey, Dora MacBeath, Janet Hadden, Eddie Bokas.

It is with sadness that we remember the passing of Don Sutherland, Dalchalm, Brora.

Don was a stalwart of the community for his entire life, being a leading light in Scouting, Drama and Bowls, to name but three spheres of life in Brora.

He was a strong supporter of the Society, having been a member, along with his wife, Anne, since 2006. He will be greatly missed by the community and, especially, at the annual Burns Supper at the Scout and Guide Hall in Brora, an event with which he became completely synonymous.



County Bowls Triple Champions L-R: Don Sutherland, Bill Tough (Skip), Clifford MacDonald.

Winter Series of Lectures: 2018-19

The Society is always very grateful to the speakers, who all come and give us the benefit of their knowledge of their own free will. Attendances were again very healthy during the last full year (2016-17), peaking at 65 for Drs Annie Tindley and Iain Robertson in June 2017 for their talks about Gordonbush Estate and averaging exactly 50.

The Society is also very appreciative of the members who attend and frequently donate very generously to the raffle. Next winter's provisional talks are below:

Date	Subject	Speaker
18th Oct	<i>The Jellicoe Express</i>	Robert Foden Local historian, Kirkwall
15th Nov	<i>The Far North Line, then, now and...</i>	Mike Lunan Former Convener of the Friends of the Far North Line
21st Feb	<i>James Calder (1773-1846) – The Cromarty Radical</i>	Dr David Alston Museum Mentor, Cromarty Courthouse Museum
21st Mar	<i>Clyne Heritage Society's Coming of Age: What we have done and what we will do</i>	Nick Lindsay Clyne Heritage Society
18th Apr	<i>The Kilt at War: the Mystique and Tradition of the Kilt and its Practicality in the Great War</i>	Dr Tom Greenshields Military historian & author, London
16th May	<i>The Iron Duke: land reclamations and aristocratic decline in Sutherland, c1869-1884</i>	Dr Anne Tindley Senior Lecturer in History, University of Newcastle

Our 2018-19 speaker syllabus programme starts in October with Robert Foden, local historian, from Kirkwall, Orkney, talking about *The Jellicoe Express*, the troop train which rattled through Brora on its journey from London to Thurso during World Wars 1 & 2. In November, the former Convener of the Friends of the Far North Line, Mike Lunan, will continue the railway theme with his talk on *The Far North Line, then, now and...*

Our syllabus begins again in 2019, when Dr David Alston, Museum Mentor at the Cromarty Courthouse Museum, will tell us the fascinating story of *James Calder (1773-1846) – The Cromarty Radical* in February and he is followed in March by Clyne Heritage Society Chairman, Nick Lindsay, celebrating Clyne Heritage Society's *Coming of Age: What we have done and what we will do*. April sees Dr Tom Greenshields a military historian and author, from London, treating us to a riveting talk on *The Kilt*

at War: the Mystique and Tradition of the Kilt and its Practicality in the Great War and our speaker syllabus draws to a close in May, when Dr Annie Tindley, Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Newcastle returns to speak about *The Iron Duke: land reclamations and aristocratic decline in Sutherland, c1869-1884*.

Remainder of Winter Series of Lectures – 2017-18

Date	Subject	Speaker
19th Apr	<i>The History of Hospitals of the Highlands</i>	Jim Leslie History of Highland's Hospitals Project
17th May	<i>Photographic Archive Night</i>	Nick Lindsay Chairman, Clyne Heritage Society
21st Jun	<i>A Selection of the Society's New Archives on Display</i>	Open Night

All talks take place on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the Brora Community Centre. Admission is free and refreshments are provided, also free of charge.

Publications

The Society's most recent publication, Wendy Sutherland's '*Unfolding Land: Impressions of Strath Brora*' is available in local outlets such as Cornucopia and Brora Heritage Centre and the Dornoch Book Shop at £5.00. It can also be obtained by post from Clyne Heritage Society, Sunnybrae, West Clyne, Brora, Sutherland, KW9 6NH [plus £3.00 for P&P].

Norman Gibson's '*BRORA – time and change in a Highland village*' [£5, plus £3.00 P&P] is a beautifully illustrated publication, re-creating photographs of the village which had appeared in a previous publication of the 1920s or 30s. The result is a fascinating selection of colour images of modern day Brora, alongside its original black and white counterpart from the old publication.

We also have a limited number of copies of the late John Owen's '*Coal Mining at Brora 1529-1974*', priced at £7.50 [plus £3.00 P&P]; the definitive history of our unique, now disappeared industry.

The '*Clyne Heritage Society Journal*', is a timeless collection of papers on the talks presented during the 2004-05 lecture series. This illuminating and interesting research publication is available from the above address at £1.00 [plus £2.80 P&P].

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* Good Friday – end October

The Clyne Chronicle is the magazine of Clyne Heritage Society. It is compiled and contributed to by volunteers; usually, but not exclusively, from the Society.

The Editor welcomes all contributions for future editions and feedback from readers, with the purposes of informing and entertaining readers and recording aspects of the life and the people of Clyne and around. However, the Editor would remind readers that the articles are the views of many different people, and readers' views on those articles should take into account the stated sources for all articles and comments.

Please support The Clyne Chronicle! Thank you.

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