

EDITORIAL

Betty Roy

The session 2007/2008 is nearing its end and members of your council are gratified by the attendance at the winter talks. From this it can be assumed that the topics chosen have met with your approval.

Jack Archibald has undertaken the job of writing an account of the twice monthly meetings for the local papers. I have had good feed back from members who, owing to health matters, do not attend the meetings – they enjoy reading of our events in the local paper.

Unfortunately, owing to holidays, I was unable to attend the first October meeting and also the first November meeting. These, the Bo'ness Potteries and the R.S.P.B. presentation had good reports.

Nicola Kalinsky, depute director of the National Portrait Gallery, presented a most informative talk on the work of Alloa Artist, David Allan. Ms Kalinsky was conscious that she was speaking to a local audience that had knowledge of the artist. However, as amateurs, there was a great deal we did not know, especially on various styles and techniques adopted by the artist. Personally, I found I was introduced to aspects of Allan's work that opened up a whole new "canvas".

The second November meeting by husband and wife duo, Keith and Nesta Nicholson dealt with the development of Elcho and Hutingtower Castles. An in-depth historical account was given by the two speakers using a laptop presentation.

John Harrison's exposition on the subject "The Community and the Castle" was delivered in his unique style and was much enjoyed by the audience.

On Monday, 28th January, Chris Calder of the Tullibody History Group shared her experiences from her World Trip in 90 Days. It was obvious the trip was full of interest and also showed how arduous such an adventure could be. WELL DONE CHRIS!

Into February now, Susan Mills Heritage Officer, presented an account of the type of bondage endured by miners well into the 19th century. This was a well-researched talk using a number of original text to develop the theme. The local miners were, in the main, upstanding members of their society. The foregoing is verified by the owners of the mines having enough trust in their miners that they were included in the Bailies Court with a view to dealing with any miners who indulged in anti social behaviour.

Geoff Bailey, Archaeologist and Vice Curator of the Callendar House Museum in Falkirk, shared with us his research on submarine warfare during the first world war. This was a fascinating subject that illustrated the various disguises undertaken by the "Q" ships (merchant ships) to hide their cannons etc. Many were hit but on the whole these manoeuvres were successful.

The penultimate talk was a most informative account of the architect's role in the preservation of historic buildings and structures. The areas Stephen Newsom was involved in were the Cross, Tolbooth and the Stone of Mannan in Clackmannan – these have been made stable. The Johnstone Mausoleum in Alva and the Old Kirk in Tullibody have also received conservation work. We are fortunate that we are living in an age when public money is available to undertake these conservation projects.

This is the time of the year when the summer outings are organised and I put forward a plea that more members will join us on these events. The Wednesday Walks, interest based, are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. These are not a route march, but provide a pleasant walk suitable for most levels of fitness. The Saturday outings, held monthly, are farther a field and visit sites of historical or environmental interest.

May 16th to 19th is when the Spring Field Trip will take place, this year to Lochgilphead – included will be visits to the Kilmartin Glen area and Dunadd Fort among others.

Thanks to Jack and Sadie Archibald the book sales show a profit and this brings in added income. Unfortunately there is still a small uptake for the Tea and Coffee served by Sadie Archibald and Irene Taylor. We would like to continue with this service and hope there will be a greater uptake next session. The speaker, once finished with the presentation, is always grateful for tea and biscuits.

It has been suggested that we undertake a recording of the gravestones in the Greenside cemetery. This burial ground was opened in 1866 from a bowling green/garden on the Mar & Kellie estate. Many of the burials on the site contain the remains of ancestors interred in the Kirkgate part. If you are interested in helping with this please contact 01259 21 39 54.

**Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society
Summer programme 2008**

Meet at Alloa Health Centre car park –Wednesday 7 pm, Saturday 9.30 am

(except where otherwise stated **)

Industrial Visit Graham's Dairy Monday 28 April 2008 2 pm

Wednesdays

- May 7 Kings Park Circular (Jack & Sadie Archibald) Contact: 01259 215873
- June 11 Forest Mill Circular (Betty Roy) Contact: 01259 213954
- 25 Jupiter Garden (Betty Roy) Contact: 01259 213954
- July 9 Tilicoultry to Dollar via Harviestoun (Marilyn Scott) Contact: 01786 832248
- 26 National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh (Eddie Stewart) Contact: 01259 21687
(* ** * NOTE: this is a Thursday daytime outing * ** *)
- Aug 6 Glendevon Kirkyard & Tormaukin (Betty Roy & David Hunter)
Contact: 01259 213954
- 20 Arndean (Eddie Stewart & Jack Archibald) Contact: 01259 216878

Saturdays

- May 23 Hill of Tarvit, NTS Scotstarvit, HS and the town of Ceres
(Jack & Sadie Archibald) Contact: 01259 215873
- June 28 Wemyss Caves with Anne Watters and Aberdour Castle
(Betty Roy) Contact: 01259 213954
- Aug 30 Inchcolm, S. Queensferry (Jack & Sadie Archibald) Contact: 01259 215873
- Sept 6 Coffee Morning, Speirs Centre, Alloa 10 am -12 noon. Tickets £1

Spring Weekend Field Trip:

16th to 19th May accommodation the Grey Gull Hotel, Ardrishaig.

**Most outings require shared transport, stout footwear and suitable clothing .
On Saturdays bring packed lunches.
Visitors are welcome for most events!**

Inquiries: Betty Roy (EKR) 01259-213954 Bob Snaddon (BS) 01259-214840
Eddie Stewart (ES) 01259 216878 Jack Archibald (JA) Marilyn Scott (MS) Susan Mills
(SM)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Dollar History Society

Programme 2008-2009

2008

09 September	Mr. John Harrison Local Historian	Stirling and The Crown 1603
14 October	Dr. Bill Inglis	The Stirlings of Keir
11 November	Dr. Douglas Watt Economic Historian	Darien and 1707
09 December	Professor Harry Dickinson Hon. Fellow of the History Dept., Edinburgh University	Thomas Muir and the Scottish Radical Martyrs of the 1790s

2009

13 January	Alistair Cruickshank Former Director, Royal Scottish Geographical Society	The man who ate his boots. Franklin and the North West Passage.
10 February	Lady Balfour of Burleigh	The Balloonist and the Housewife. A tale of spies in World War I.
10 March	Mr. Stephen Liscoe Fife Council Archaeology Unit	The Moat Pit Sir George Bruce's 16 th century coal mine at Culross.
14 April	Mr. Robin Kelsall of Blairlogie.	My father Moultrie R. Kelsall conservationist and other things
12 May	Annual General Meeting followed by Dr. David Breeze, Historic Scotland	The Antonine Wall A World Heritage Site (2)



SUMMER PROGRAMME 2008

EVENING OUTINGS

Meet at the Smith Museum at 6:30 pm unless otherwise specified.

- Tuesday 29th April**
Aberfoyle
An evening stroll to Doom (or Faery) Hill, via the cemetery to look at the grave of the Rev. Robert Kirk, who allegedly did not really die in 1692 but was spirited away by the Faery Queen who lived at Doom Hill
Leader: Henry Robb (01786 473618)
- Tuesday 13th May**
A Keek around Kilmahog
Looking at sites of past activity from forts to farming. Participants should wear stout footwear & be able to negotiate rough & steep terrain.
Leader: Pat Wilson (01877 330151)
- Tuesday 10th June**
Ardess History Trail * meet at 6pm
A Ranger-led evening walk along the trail (1.4km) to look at the remains of past settlements on Ben Lomond. A little bit of climbing (not very steep). Stout shoes & midge repellent essential
Contact: Henry Robb (01786 473618)
- Tuesday 8th July**
Whins of Milton – Royal George Mill
A walk by the side of the Bannock Burn, descending from the Whins of Milton Mill via Beaton's Mill to the 1822 Royal George Mill. Strong shoes & walking poles recommended.
Leaders: Ken Mackay (01786 461539) & Paul Sorowka (01786464578)
- Tuesday 9th September**
Old High School Telescope
A visit to the Observatory atop Stirling Highland Hotel with an explanatory talk before ascending (75 steps) to the dome. Warm clothing recommended
Leader: Ken Mackay (01786 461539)

WEEK-END OUTINGS

Meet at the Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road at 9:30 am unless otherwise specified. Bring packed lunch, weatherproof gear and stout footwear.

- Saturday 24th May**
Seton Collegiate Chapel & Newhailes
A visit to Seton Collegiate chapel, Tranent (building commenced in late 15c) followed by an afternoon visit to Newhailes House, Musselburgh (NTS)
Leader: Henry Robb (01786 473618)
- Saturday 21st June**
Loch Lomond
Visit to Maid of the Loch followed at 1pm by a 2hour boat trip.
Cost £12 payable on booking to Stirling Field & Archaeological Society
Leader: Michael Green (01786 472152)
- Sunday 20th July**
Out & About in Haddington
Visit to the area around Haddington, including Traprain Law in the morning and Lemnoxlove House & St Mary's Church, Haddington in the afternoon
Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)
- Saturday 6th September**
Neidpath Castle & Robert Small's Printing Works
A morning visit to Neidpath Castle, Peebles, followed by an afternoon visit to Robert Small's Printing Works at Innerleithen, to see how the printing industry worked in the early 20c. (NTS)
Leader: Henry Robb (01786 473618)

Transport is by private cars, sharing petrol costs

The Society exercises normal prudence in planning and conducting its outings; members take part on the understanding that they do so at their own risk
Please notify the Leader/Contact if you later find you can't attend an outing you have previously selected

The following represent an account of the 2007 – 2008 series of talks held in the Tommy Downs Room during the winter months.

THE BO`NESS POTTERY – Speaker, Robert Jardine. 30th October, 2007.

30 members were entertained by Robert Jardine, (member of the Scottish Pottery Society) gave an interesting slide show and talk about the Bo`ness Pottery. The pottery was in operation from about 1766 to 1963 and produced many different forms of pottery. The company started off making brown earthenware pottery, using local clay, but by 1789 it was producing cream-coloured and white stoneware using clay imported from Dorset and Devon.

Apparently, potters were very keen on liquor and spent most of their free time `tippling`. The various owners of the pottery seemed to die at a young age and the pottery changed hands many times. One owner was John Marshall, a wealthy corn merchant and J.P. who built a reading room for his workers in 1858. He was one of the few employers of that era who cared about the welfare of his employees. On Saturday 15th June, 1963, the building was gutted by fire, ending yet another era of traditional industry. (A little bit of information, Bo`ness is short for Borrowstouness.)

JOYCE REEKIE

DAVID ALLAN, ALLOA`S TALENTED ARTIST – Nicola Kalinsky, NMS.

At the meeting held on the 22nd October 07, Nicola Kalinsky of the National Portrait Gallery gave an in depth presentation on the life and work of David Allan, Alloa`s own artist.

David Allan was born in 1744, the son of the Shore Master at Alloa`s pier. Allan showed artistic talent at an early age. He gained entry to the Foulis School of Art in Glasgow as an apprentice engraver, under the patronage of Lord Cathcart of Schawpark. He was there for seven years.

He went to Rome and studied at St. Luke`s Academy, his patrons then being Lady Erskine of Alloa House, Lady Cathcart of Schawpark, and Lady Abercrombie of Tullibody. While in Rome, he concentrated on Historical Paintings and Local Scenes and won two coveted prizes for his work. Lady Cathcart`s brother, Sir William Hamilton, then Ambassador to Naples, was most helpful to David in acquiring a place at the Academy.

After spending ten years in Rome, he returned to London and there set up a studio. This venture was not successful, but, even so, he had his work shown at the Royal Academy. Eventually, in 1785, he returned to Edinburgh, finding a niche in the market for his work, painting the families of the Nobility in the grounds of their mansions, as well as painting everyday scenes of Scottish life. He then acquired a position at the Edinburgh School of Art, earning £100 per annum. Having this position gave him the security to set up a studio and was involved in book illustration, one of which was the Gentle Shepherd, followed by a commission to illustrate a publication of Robert Burns` songs.

David Allan died in 1796, the same year as Robert Burns, and within weeks of one another, although connected through their work, they never actually met in person. Allan is buried in the Old Carlton Cemetery, Edinburgh – a painter for all the people!

We were very privileged to be shown some of David Allan`s seldom seen sketches. His work hangs in Alloa Tower, Duff House, Banff and the National Gallery of Scotland, among others. We thank Nicola Kalinsky for a very entertaining evening, much appreciated by the members.

JACK ARCHIBALD.

THE RSPB in SCOTLAND. – speaker – Terri Cunningham (12th Nov. 07)

Aims of the RSPB—Protect, Improve, Influence, Support.

In the 1800s fashion demanded feathers for ladies` hats but was decimating the wild bird populations, including the little owl. In Europe, the Great White Egret supplied breeding plumes, but was slaughtered to get them. And in Scotland, the Great Crested Grebe suffered a similar fate.

The (Royal) Society for the Protection of Birds was started by the “ladies from Didsbury” in 1889, in particular, the Duchess of Portland who was the first president and remained so for 60 years. On Sundays, they would note who was wearing feather-trimmed hats to church and later send them a letter. Eventually, the feather trade declined.

Commercial collection of sea bird eggs, which were considered delicacies, increased resulting in an unsustainable harvest completely different to that in the Northern Isles of Scotland where birds and their eggs supplied necessary protein for a poor population. Pole traps were banned in 1904 (but are still used illegally today) due to the hard work of the society and in the same year they obtained royal charter and started up in Scotland. One half of all the RSPB managed land is in Scotland.

Loch Leven: Pintail breed here, but were at risk from egg thieves. In the 1930s and 40s `watchers` were employed to protect them. George Waterstone (of the stationer family) was the first Scottish president and known for his work with Osprey (the last one was shot in 1916, but made their own return in the 1950s). The birds were helped with artificial nests made of cart wheels acting as a platform placed in the tops of trees, although their preference is for the tops of dead trees. Access was hindered with barbed wire. He also publicised the location of the birds and opened up a hide in a garden shed – here 14,000 people visited. This is how the RSPB operates now to get people interested and involved. The Loch Garten Ospreys now have a 24hr watch during the breeding season and a new visitor centre which is ecologically sound made of local wood.

“Aren`t Birds Brilliant!” is the name of a new campaign. Highlights are the Hen Harriers on Arran, Red Kites at Doune and Herons at Loch Inver (100+ nest in treetops).

Volunteers are important for forest management, building rafts for Black Footed Divers and manning visitor centres. In 1967 the Loch Leven Vane Farm visitor centre

opened and was the first of its kind. It was especially interesting for children and the general public.

Abernethy is known for the Ospreys that returned in the 40s, ancient Caledonian pine wood and some Cairngorm high tops with red deer and Crested Tits. The entire habitat is managed so botanically, there are Ladies tresses orchids etc.,. Interestingly there are three species of Crossbill – Scottish (this is the only endemic Scottish bird), Parrot and Common. Capercaillie chased David Attenborough out of Abernethy forest, supposedly. Heather is burnt to allow Blaeberry to grow (shoots for adult Capercaillie) and provide invertebrates for the chicks. In the Cairngorm Tundra, Dotterel, Ptarmigan, Snow Bunting (SB) are found (try looking for the Snow Bunting at the bottom of the Aviemore ski slopes).

Corrimony has Black Grouse – these are forest edge birds.

Caithness & Sutherland areas of blanket peat once thought worthless, is important for Dunlin, Snipe, Golden Plover, Black-throated Diver and Greenshank. In the past tax credits were given to rich landowners to plant forestry requiring drainage and ploughing for the non-native Sitka Spruce. There has been a major campaign to protect the habitat of the Forsinard Flows which the RSPB has bought. Habitat restoration involves taking down trees (that did not do well in those conditions anyway) and damming ditches dug originally to drain the bog.

The island of Hoy has Giant Skua, Kittiwake, Guillemot and Razor Bill gulls.

On Orkney Storm Petrels nest in burrows, but use the hollows in Musa Broch too. They only land to breed and only fly at night, since they are so small and susceptible to predation.

Shetland has 90% of the UK population of Red Necked Phalarope.

On Islay the RSPB runs two profit-making commercial farms that are demonstrably good for wildlife. Choughs feed on invertebrates found in and under cowpats!

The Island of Coll Corncrakes need thick cover so farming methods need to be modified. Advice about subsidies, “corncrake corners”, mowing hayfields from the inside out and safe harvest dates have resulted in 1250 calling males (UK), 1245 are in Scotland.

Baron`s Haugh, near Motherwell, is within reach (30km) of a population of two million. There is vandalism, so they try to involve the local community to take an interest and police the site.

SNH decided to reintroduce White-Tailed Sea Eagle to Rum, Mull and Skye and also the East Coast. There are now 33 breeding pairs – a triumph since the 1900s persecution.

Hen Harrier reached 737 pairs in Scotland with 12+ pairs in England where they suffer serious persecution. Golden Eagle are five times more successful on deer estates than on grouse moors ... you guessed it ... persecution and poisoning.

Farmland birds are in trouble because they need mixed farming with hedges and trees rather than intensive cultivation with large fields and crop spraying. Skylark are down 75%, Lapwing by 46%. The Volunteer and Farming Alliance will survey and advise on good practice to maintain and increase biodiversity. So far 356%+ farms have been assessed.

Sea Birds! Lots of these are dying of starvation because of the lack of sand eels. RSPB pushed for a ban on sand eel fishing but there is a more complicated story since the sand eel population is in trouble in general due to sea temperature rise (one degree in the north sea so far).

Gannets --- 70% of the world breeding population is on the Scottish coasts.

RSPB is pushing for the management of the marine environment, sustainable fishing, law enforcement and a better understanding of the sea in general.

Campaigns --- (new) Homes for Wildlife.

Big Garden Birdwatch (showed Sparrows and Starlings declining).

International --- 100,000 Albatross die each year on longlines. There are 22 species in the world and 19 are endangered. There are cheap and effective solutions, ie, weight the lines, play them out at night, attach streamers to frighten the birds. There is a task force of 5 to teach fishermen, who also benefit, as the hook that might catch the bird could catch a Tuna instead.

80% of RSPB income comes from members, donations, legacies and shopping with 15% from grants. This allows them to be unbiased and impartial. This was an excellent talk, perhaps she will be back to tell another tale.

MARILYN SCOTT.

HUNTINGTOWER AND ELCHO CASTLE.- Keith & Nesta Nicolson.

At the meeting held on the 26th November, 2007, the speakers gave a presentation on the castles of Huntingtower and Elcho. Covering the history from 13th century for Huntingtower to the present day and the 15th century to the present for Elcho.

Huntingtower was originally one tower then another was built along side, three metres apart, and eventually were joined up by the insertion of another building in between. The building was originally known as Ruthven Tower, but was taken over by the state in 1600, owing to a misdemeanour by the then owners – the kidnapping of James VI, thereafter renamed Huntingtower. Various aspects of the construction and fine detail of the building were pointed out by the speaker.

Elcho Castle was built by the Earl of Wemyss in the 15th century, and, still held by that family, though now maintained by the state.

Elcho did not suffer the same fate as Huntingtower and it seems to have had a charmed life, mainly used by the Wemyss family as a fishing and hunting lodge. We were shown the layout of the castle with guest bedrooms having separate staircases from those of the owners, and also boasted 14 toilets – must be one of the earliest en-suites! The original iron grills over the doors and windows are still in place.

We thank Keith and Nesta for their presentation, this was a follow-up of a visit to the two castles in the summer of 2006.

JACK ARCHIBALD.

RUTHVEN RAID, 1582 and THE GOWRIE CONSPIRACY, 1600.

During the 16th century and fledging Protestant Reformation jealously guarded its position as the only religion to be worshipped by the Scots.

Records from that time relate the involvement of powerful nobles who indulged in violent raids to influence the thinking of the royals.

The family of “Ruthven” were staunch followers of the Protestant religion and being zealots were involved in plots towards that end. Patrick, 3rd Lord Ruthven, was one of the leading nobles supporting the Reformers and he also had a role in the murder of David Rizzio in 1566.

In August, 1582, Ruthven Castle was the scene of the “Ruthven Raid” when a group of nobles kidnapped the 15 year old, King James VI and imprisoned him in Ruthven for a period of 10 months (the 2nd Earl of Mar was also involved in these raids). At the time, it was felt that the Protestant nobles had to detach the young king from the influence of the Roman Catholic, Esme Stewart, Duke of Lennox. (It was a sister of Esme Stewart who married the 2nd Earl of Mar) (the 4th Lord Ruthven had been created Earl of Gowrie in 1581).

By 1584, the 1st Earl of Gowrie was ordered to leave the country accused of being involved in a plot to seize Stirling Castle, however the king changed his mind and instead Gowrie was beheaded in 1584, and his property forfeited to the crown. By 1586, the estates and titles were restored to the Ruthvens. It was not yet peace for this family. The third Earl of Gowrie on his return home from the continent, he and his brother, Alexander, were killed in mysterious circumstances in Gowrie House in Perth during what appears to have been another failed Protestant attempt to obtain full control of the sovereign. It appears the King was inveigled into the house on the pretence that a pot of gold awaited him there.

James extracted his revenge on the brothers, even in death. The bodies were taken to Edinburgh, and though dead, were indicted for high treason. Their whole estate to be forfeited and annexed to the crown, their bodies to be carried to the public cross of Edinburgh and there hanged, quartered and drawn, their heads and quarters to be sent to Stirling, Dundee, Perth as well as Edinburgh to be displayed. An Act of Parliament in 1600 abolished the name of Ruthven, and the Castle there after to be called Huntingtower.

The Tower and lands were then given over to the family of Murray of Tullibardine. James VI did in earnest wreck his revenge, it is difficult in the 21st century for us to understand how such indignity could be heaped upon dead bodies.

BETTY ROY.

THE CASTLE AND THE COMMUNITY – Speaker, John Harrison. 14th January, 2008, and dealt with the influences the Castle held over the town of Stirling.

His talk was in four parts, The Royal Period up to 1603, The Post Royal Period, 1603 to 1640, The Garrison Period 1640-1960 and the Tourist Period, overlapping with the garrison, from about the later eighteenth century to the present.

THE ROYAL PERIOD – when the Royal apartments were built at the castle and the court was in attendance. On various occasions the town had to supplement the suppliers and the hostelry enabling the court to function and the builders to be catered for.

THE POST ROYAL PERIOD – with the Union of the Crowns a downturn in the amount of people visiting the castle, due to the court no longer sitting there and the nobility giving up their houses with the result there was a fall in income to the town.

THE GARRISON PERIOD – with the arrival of a garrison at the castle the town again began to prosper with the needs of the army to be supplied. The soldiers also contributed to the prosperity by spending their money in the local taverns, etc.,

The late 18th century saw change in the other direction with the advent of tourism people came to see the castle, gardens, church and cemetery. With the arrival of steam, firstly by steamer on day trips up the Forth from Edinburgh, then the railway and the opening of the station, tourism moved on with leaps and bounds. Stirling had two places of interest then the castle in town and the Wallace Monument on the outskirts.

To-day it is the car that influences tourism with the castle being the central point. John Harrison gave an in-depth talk on a well-researched subject, much appreciated by the audience.

JACK ARCHIBALD.

A WORLD TRIP IN 90 DAYS –Chris Calder, Tullibody History Society. 28/1/08

This can only be described as a Magical Mystery Tour that began by a flight from Manchester to Madrid, after a short stay there she flew on to Lima in Peru and spent a few days enjoying the sites. Then to Cuzco, also in Peru, to make arrangements for one of the highlights of her trip, The Lost City of the Incas, Machu Picchu. It was then on to Lake Titicaca, the largest lake in South America, famous for the man made floating islands of reeds, also home to the local Indians.

Valparaiso and Santiago in Chile were the next ports of call with a great number of sites in between. A flight to Easter Island, in the Pacific, to view the monolithic heads carved by a bygone people and well worth the visit.

Auckland in the North Island of New Zealand via Tahiti was the next landfall. There hiring a car was essential to view the numerous beauty spots. Then on to Sidney, Australia, to take in Bondi Beach and the Opera House. From Sidney it was a flight to Bangkok in Thailand for a look round before proceeding to Hanoi in Vietnam. She spent some time in the country before embarking on a train journey from the north, back to Bangkok stopping at various places en route.

Another flight ensued, this time to Colombo in Sri Lanka where it was a case of taking in as much as possible. From there on to Mumbai (Bombay) for a look around before catching the plane back to the UK.

A trip of a lifetime completed in 90 days. Pictures shown and description of her holiday can only be described as first class.

JACK ARCHIBALD.

ANOTHER KIND OF SLAVERY – Susan Mills, Clackmananshire Heritage Officer. 11th February, 2008.

The speaker dealt with two periods in history at the time when the African slave trade was at its height

The first dealt with a collar that was found in the river Forth in the Parish of Logie and eventually found its way to the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. This collar had been the centrepiece of an exhibition displayed at Alloa Tower last year and arranged by the speaker. Research of the archives found that the collar belonged to one of four men who were convicted of crimes at Perth on 5th December, 1701. Two had been sentenced to serve penal servitude to Sir Robert Erskine of Alva. A document had been found relating to them being handed over to the estate of Robert Erskine. On the said collar was the name Alexander Steuart, one of the felons, also the name of Robert Erskine, his keeper. Donald Robertson was the other named felon mentioned in the handover document. After the handover, no record has been found of what happened to them, apart from the research made after finding the collar.

The second part of the talk was about the bonding of servants in the coalmines and salt pans, but mainly concentrating on the coalminers.

In the control of their masters they were virtual slaves as they could not change or move their employment without the authority of their masters. This bondage also covered the miner's family, wives and children also worked in the pits. During the 17th and 18th centuries the whole family worked in the pits, it is documented that children as young as 7 years of age worked alongside their family members. Women and young girls bore the brunt of the work, carrying on their backs large slabs of coal, up the quarter landings to the surface. We were shown the horrendous conditions they worked in. Things had to change with the coming of mechanization and the industrial revolution when more and more coal was required. Two local men, John Craig and Robert Bald, championed the miners' rights, especially in trying to get the women and children out of the mines.

The Serfdom Acts of 1775 and 1799 put an end to bonding of workers and that helped conditions greatly. A very interesting talk on part of our local heritage by Susan and much appreciated by the audience.

JACK ARCHIBALD.

“Q” SHIPS, SUBMARINE KILLERS” Geoff Bailey, Keeper of Archaeology & Local History, Falkirk. 25th Feb. 2008.

This talk dealt with one of the events of the First World War and concentrated on one of Britain`s answers to combat the German U-Boat menace.

As Britain had no defence against the U-boats and as they threatened to starve the country into submission, this was one of the ideas that came to the fore. Basically it was armed merchantman ships with guns for an offensive nature instead of defensive. The first were merchant ships commandeered by the Admiralty from the Merchant Marine. Their role was to sink submarines by luring them away from the convoys by various deception. They were successful to a point but to try and sink a U-boat by gunfire proved to be a difficult undertaking.

The Q ships were manned by two crews, part by the Merchant Marine and Part by the Royal Navy who fired the guns and anything to do with engaging the enemy. On board were a Captain and a Commander. The Captain was Merchant Marine, the Commander was Royal Navy. All this operation was very hush, hush until the end of the war.

Grangemouth with its dockyard played a big part in maintaining the Q ships which operated in the North Sea Area. The facility was also responsible for conversion of merchant ships and fitting six-inch guns, which was the main armament.

Grangemouth was the hub of various offensive measures mainly the making of mines. Large sheds were built on the dockside for that purpose. The mines were then transferred straight to the minelayers. The mission was to construct a barrage of mines from the North of Scotland to Norway to curtain the German Fleet from sailing into the Atlantic Ocean, however, this was not completed by the end of the war.

Geoff gave us an insight into one of the theatres of war of that period and the brave men who took part. We thank him for his well-researched talk.

JACK ARCHIBALD

AN ARCHITECTS ROLE IN CONSERVATION - Stephen Newsom, Aberdour.
10th March 2008.

After giving us an in depth interpretation of his role in conservation, the speaker went on to show us a presentation of work he had been involved in around Clackmannanshire, in recent years. Firstly it was the restoration of the Johnstone Mausoleum in Alva. This had been designed by Robert and James Adam in 1792, architects of great note in that era. The 16th century Mercat Cross and The Stone of Mannan in Clackmannan was another of his projects, with also the hope of restoring The Tolbooth at a future date. The Old Church in Tullibody was another, with a description of the work that had been carried out there.

More recent projects were shown out with the area, namely Kellie Castle in Fife and the Duke of Argyle`s Mausoleum at Kilmun in Argyle, each showing very different problems to overcome in the restoration process.

Two projects for the future were then shown, both in the planning stage, a church in Tillicoultry and one in Glenrothes, again entirely different problems to surmount. Tillicoultry Church built in the 1890s and the Glenrothes one in the 1940s and 50s.

It was an interesting evening and we are indebted to Stephen for coming along and giving an insight into such a diverse subject.

JACK ARCHIBALD

MEADOWEND FARM AND GARLET HOUSE EXCAVATIONS –24/3/08

Liz Jones, Headland Archaeology.

The final talk of the season dealt with the excavations carried out at the above properties. This came about with the construction of The Upper Forth Crossing and ancillary works for the new approach road.

Concentrating firstly, on the digs at Garlet House, built around the middle of the 17th century, with various additions over the years to the two and a half storey house. Also built during the later period was a row of cottages built at right angles to the main house. We were shown pictures of the buildings as they were in the early 20th century, before they were abandoned and also before the start of the dig. Images were shown of the remaining stonework with trees growing in the ruins. A plan was also shown of the trenches that had been dug during their time on the site.

Meadowend Farm excavations covered a much larger area, approximately 6 hectares and no buildings on site. Different sections of the site revealed different artefacts and a real cross section of life gone by, from the Pre-history Neolithic Period through to the Bronze Age and then the Medieval Times. About 100 holes were dug in the section covering the Neolithic Period and pieces of pottery were found which related to a time span covering a period from 4000BC to 2300BC. At another section of the site relics of Bronze Age were found, again it was mainly pottery, which, as before, was quite fragmented. Also from the Bronze Age remains were found of two circular huts one about eight metres in diameter and the other about 6 metres. We were shown an artists impression of what they may have looked like.

From the Medieval period remains of two grain kilns were found and once again we were shown what it may have looked like.

Many thanks to the speaker, Liz Jones for coming along and giving us a very informative talk on a fascinating subject.

JACK ARCHIBALD