



CLACKMANNANSHIRE FIELD STUDIES SOCIETY

The CFSS was formed in October 1970 after attempting to revive the Alloa Society of Natural Science and Archaeology established in 1865. The society's aims are "to promote interest in the environment and heritage of the local area" and it has some 100 members.

In winter there are fortnightly lectures or members nights, from September to April, beginning with a coffee morning and concluding with our AGM. In summer, from April to September, there are four Saturday outings, a weekend event and Wednesday Evening Walks fortnightly from April to August.

CFSS has run and participated in various events on David Allan and at Alloa Tower, is associated with the Forth Naturalist and Historian in publishing, and with the annual Man and the Landscape symposium – Conserving Biodiversity and Heritage and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs are the 26th and 27th.

Research projects have included- Linn Mill, Mining, and Alloa Harbour; these have been published as booklets *Linn Mill, Mines and Minerals of the Ochils*, and *Alloa Port, Ships and Shipbuilding*. A recent project is *Old Alloa Kirkyard, Archaeological Survey 1996 – 2000* further work is in progress. Other publications include *David Allan, The Ochil Hills – landscape, wildlife, heritage walks; Alloa Tower and the Erskines of Mar*; and the twice yearly *Newsletter* with 5 yearly contents / indices.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in, or desire to support the aims of the society in this field of Local Studies.

The society has a study / council room in Marshill House, Alloa. This has a small collection of books, maps etc. which members are encouraged to use for reference or study.

L. Corbett, EK. Roy, E. Crane or R. Snaddon, D Clark should be contacted for access.

Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society

Newsletter

68

NB – this CFSS Newsletter 68 includes a brief report on the 27th annual Man and the Landscape symposium, Nov. 2001 – Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

**Vol. 30
Part II**

April 2002

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EDITORIAL

At the time of writing the Winter Programme is almost completed, a very successful one with audiences averaging 50+. As is the custom Isobel Grant Stewart faithfully reports our activities in the local press. This keeps the work of the Society in the public eye and is greatly appreciated, thanks to Isobel, the Advertiser and Wee County News for this service.

By this time you ought to have received the summer programme. Usually the Wednesday Walk events commence on the second Wednesday in May, but, on this occasion, to accommodate Col. Bobby Stewart, the outing to the Japanese Garden at Cowden has been moved to Saturday the 18th May, details on the programme. For the Clackmannan Tower visit on the 24th July it will be necessary to register your interest. Mrs Grove will lead groups of 30 at a time round the tower.

An extra outing to Wester Kitchside Farming Museum is being organised for Sunday 25th August. It is hoped to book a bus, cost £6 per head. As there is an Autumn Fair taking place on the 25th the normal free entrance for NTS members will not apply, instead a reduction of 20% on the entrance fee of £3 Adult, £1.50 Concession. Picnic and Cafe facilities are available and it is up to participants to decide.

On 23rd March, Dick Clark had arranged for the attendance of a group of members to the University conference launching the prestigious 'Thistle and the Rose' summer exhibition of Historic Scotland at Stirling Castle, which was visited in the evening. FNH journal and symposium will be reporting. Thanks go to Dick Clark for his efforts in obtaining concessionary rates for members.

Keeping CFSS 'in the Forefront' we are engaged on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, submitting papers for Wildlife Corridors, with Clackmannanshire Rangers, Burial Grounds Action Plan and Historic Buildings Action Plan produced by Dick Clark and myself. This is a wideranging plan taking in the diverse habitats within the county.

Elizabeth Crane and Dick Clark have undertaken to represent the Society on the newly formed Tourist Association for Clackmannanshire. CFSS input will be to help with the production of relevant guided walk leaflets and also to update existing ones.

Hope to see a goodly number at the summer outings and look forward to some fine summer days.

Date for submissions for the October Newsletter is 15th September.

Betty Roy

Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society Summer programme 2002

Meet at Alloa Health Centre car park –Wednesday 7 pm, Saturday 9.30 am
(except where otherwise stated)

Wednesdays

- May 15 **first May event transferred to Saturday the 18th**
- 29 Dollar to Glen Quey
Guided walk with Philip Gordon of the Woodland Trust's new Glen Quey Nature Woodland. See map / walk in CFSS book *The Ochil Hills*
- June 12 Torwood Castle and Tappoch Broch - with Geoff Bailey, historian, archaeologist
- 26 Canal walk to the Millennium Wheel - with Maurice Watson, CFSS / SWT.
Alternate meeting place 7.30 p.m. Lock 16, Falkirk
- July 10 Black Devon Wetlands - with EK Roy
Meet at Alloa Tower car park 7 p.m.
- 24 Clackmannan Tower - with Doreen Grove of Historic Scotland
Limit of 30 visitors in tower at any one time
- Aug 7 Tour of Tullibody & Churchyard - with Chris Calder
- 21 Rumbling Bridge & area - with Susan Mills

Saturdays

- May 18 Historic Japanese Garden – guided walk with Col. Stewart of Arndean
NOTE: meet at 2.15 at Arndean by Dollar, a shared event with a Garden Society from Motherwell.
- May 25 Perth and environs - with EK Roy
Including Errol brickworks, David Douglas memorial, Scone, Black Watch Museum and Greenbank Gardens
- June 22 Conic Hill, Loch Lomond - with Ken Mackay
Alternative meeting place Balmaha Visitor Centre 10.15
- July 20 Arniston House and Soutra Aisle
Dundas family seat (entry £5 / £4) and Soutra historic garden and hospital (p.m.) with Dick Clark
- Aug 17 Falkland Palace & environs - with Dick Clark
(Palace and grounds NTS £5 / 3.75)
- Sept 14 Coffee Morning, Spiers Centre, Alloa 10-12

Weekend Field Trip: April 26 – 29

3 nights DB&B Great Western Hotel Oban – fully booked – programmed by Bob Monk

Most outings require shared transport, stout footwear and suitable clothing .

On Saturdays bring packed lunches.

Visitors are welcome for most events!

Inquiries: EK Roy 01259-213954 or L Corbett 01259-215091

Stirling Field & Archaeological Society –

Summer outings (Tuesdays) meet at Smith Museum 6.30pm.

April 16 – Cambus Pools - leader Henry Robb (473618)
May 14 - Broomhall (Culross) - leader Michael Green (472152) Entry £3.
June 11 - Touch Muir - leader Paul Sorowka (464578).
July 9 - Sheriffmuir Archaeology - leaders L. Main & R. Barth (850271).
August 27 - Coldoch Excavations - leaders D. Wooliscroft & R. Barth (850271).

THE FORTH NATURALIST AND HISTORIAN

The 27th annual Man and the Landscape symposium on 17th November 2001 was themed this time 'Loch Lomond and the Trossachs' and attracted 150 people and a range of displays. Some comments received !! - "...a great success... speakers good hit the right tone for their audience enjoyable occasion with an appealing blend of natural and local history" "each year ... attended we have experienced ... speakers ... who have taught us such a great deal ..."

The programme is detailed in *Newsletter 67*. The morning featured both a presentation and fine charring by Lady Isabel Glasgow, Scottish Council for National Parks; Peter Maitland on freshwaters; Mike Steward on forests and wildlife. The afternoon chaired by Ian Grieve of the University's Environmental Sciences, had presentations on archaeology - Loma Main; on Trossachs writers and artists - Louis Stott; and a finale by the inimitable Tom Weir.

I am very pleased to say that this symposium series will continue, launch the annual journal and probably be on 16 November 2002 with the same venue, with content influenced by being just after the third World Summit on environment / sustainability / climate.. 'Rio + 10', in Johannesburg 26 Aug - 4 Sept; and maybe by Treefest 2002; International Year of Mountains; and Historic Scotland's Thistle and the Rose.

The FNH Board is very grateful for the help of CFSS members over the years at these symposia, and for the reporting on them in Spring Newsletters.

Lindsay Corbett

REPORTS FROM WINTER LECTURES

Menstrie Glen - Robin Kelsall .

8/10/01

The Thistle and the Rose

This is the programme of the conference of 23rd March 2002 to launch the major Historic Scotland exhibition at Stirling Castle. The Thistle and the Rose 1502 – 13 commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Treaty of Perpetual Peace in 1502 resulting from the marriage of James IV of Scotland and Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII, of England.

Organised by the University History department there were six presentations in the day –

- The political context of perpetual peace – Norman Macdougall
- Stewart and Tudor court literature – Priscilla Bawcutt
- Stewart and Tudor court music – Andrew Ashbee
- Renaissance Queenship – Joanna Laynesmith
- Margaret Tudor's Book of Hours – Ishbel Barnes
- Stewart and Tudor architecture – Richard Fawcett

In the evening was a special tour and viewing of the Thistle and the Rose Exhibition at Stirling Castle.

To the History department's organisation and sponsorship were added sponsorings by the Alumni Projects Trust, Faculty of Arts and Forth Naturalist and Historian.

Lindsay Corbett

A large number of members heard Robin Kelsall of Friends of the Ochils, speak on Menstrie Glen at the first meeting of the winter session. As a resident of Menstrie since the age of five, Robin recalled his first experience of the locality's attractions on climbing Dumyat and viewing the panorama from the top, with Manor Powis pit and steam train still in existence.

However he was speaking about an even earlier time, in the 18th century where there was no Forth Bridge nor any heavy industry to be seen. Menstrie Glen was a busy agricultural scene with 27 farms.

An entrepreneur, James Wright, had left very full notes of all his activities in the glen which helped to give a very full picture of the Ochils situation. The Wrights had been in Dunblane since the 1600's and James inherited the Loss farm from his father. He married the daughter of another farmer, Mr. Drummond of Balhaldie; his wife had been named Jacobina in honour of Bonnie Prince Charlie, who had spent the night at Balhaldie on his way north to Culloden. In 1753, the young married couple moved to the fine farmhouse which had been refurbished at a cost of £1000. At that time, there were many small farms, possibly non-viable which Wright absorbed into the estate. In 1764 as a 'gentleman farmer, he bought Argyll's Lodging in Stirling. He died of apoplexy in 1769 and was buried in the Church of the Holy Rude.

The third asset to an overview of Menstrie Glen were the aerial maps made by the RAF following the last war, on the Ochils.

In the 10th century, Crown lands were given to Campbell of Argyll and Jerah, one of the farms, became the property of Cistercian monks at Culross. Another farm, Fosakie, is mentioned by John Prebble in his book, Glencoe, as the home of Major Robert Duncanson, who was involved in the 1692 massacre.

Robin Kelsall emphasised, referring to the maps, how the landscape had appeared in Wright's time. There was a lime tree avenue to his home, and dykes to divide Loss and Ashentool. Head dykes separated the rough grazing of the shielings from arable land where oats, bere, flax, hemp and barley could be grown. Most dwellings were poor with turf roofs supported by "cruck trusses", the byre adjoined the living quarters.

Twenty five years ago, only the stone foundations could be seen. Until the late 1950's there were residents in Jerah. Mr. Burns was remembered as a farmer there by several in the audience (reminiscing on the plentiful supply of hazel nuts from trees around there). A post box on top of Dumyat was serviced twice weekly by postman, William Kennedy, until WWII. This was an entertaining study of a long-vanished rural community, by a fluent speaker.

**The River Devon From Cambus to its source
-Russell Young. 22/10/01.**

Russell Young of Kinross presented a spellbinding illustrated talk. The three phases of the river were revealed from its rise in the high plateau of over 2000 feet to its descent on to the carseland, and its final tidal stretch joining the river Forth. The "journey" shown along the banks of the river brought in many aspects; fish, wildlife, plant and tree species, the history of the surroundings, features of buildings, all of which were dealt with enthusiastically and concisely. One of the curious elements in the river's course is its change of direction, flowing east from Blairdenon, and then west at the Crook of Devon. The Scottish Ornithological Society had made a survey in past years, which, in the case of the Devon, involved a six mile stretch; this is then repeated at five year and ten year intervals, for comparison. The variety of birds is surprising: sandpiper, moorhen, sandmartin, etc., are fairly common, the rare falcon - the merlin is seen, as well as the kingfisher, woodpecker and buzzard (see FNH journal vol. 4 pp. 50 – 64).

Three fish farms and a dam provide an element of variety to the river's flow; the spectacular 70 foot high Cauldron Linn with its three 'drops' is also a feature which attracted Victorian travellers who came by train to Rumbling Bridge to view the double-storied bridge and picnic nearby.

Russell Young is concerned about pollution in the river and on its banks, left by defiant picnickers and fishermen. Salmon and trout may however be caught; he had an apocryphal tale of three men, who, in 1901 or 1902, caught and landed, with some difficulty, a salmon of over 100 lbs! This would beat any record of fishing prowess. Names mentioned were John Erskine of Alva House, who wanted a canal to the Forth and the Haigs of Blairhill who owned a private pumping unit at the side of the Devon to create electricity for their house.

After this study of a river course, members felt as if they had enjoyed a leisurely trip through a charming area of Scotland. What a pity it is not appreciated more widely by tourists and locals!

Treasures of Rome - The Rev. Father Brian Reilly. 12/11 /01

A packed meeting viewed the built heritage of the Eternal City as the Treasures of Rome were revealed by Father Reilly of Glasgow. Two periods of its history were featured; the early Christian time, as shown in films such as 'Gladiator' with emperors building chiefly for their own glory; and the remarkable Renaissance, a flowering of art when painters, architects, sculptors flocked to serve the noble families of the area. The first group of slides focussed on such buildings - the Colosseum, the Forum, the house of the Vestal Virgins and the Column of Trajan (but there were many more to have survived to this day, even if ruinous). The skill of early engineers and builders was apparent.

The second group showed the equally remarkable palazzos, piazzas, statues culminating in the richly adorned St. Peters, the mecca of tourists through the centuries. Father Reilly felt the one jarring note was the Vittorio Emanuel Monument, an enormous edifice set amid the splendour, it was inappropriate and unsightly. His pithy comments and anecdotes enlivened the commentary to carry us forward on our 'walkabout' in Rome. And, one for Trivial Pursuits, the only three notables, except for the Popes to be buried in St. Peters, are the Royal Stuarts - James Third, Charles Third and Henry Ninth - all of whom might have been British kings had it not been for the Hanoverians.

Clackmannan Tower - past, present and future, Doreen Grove, Historic Scotland. 26/11/01

Local residents may have wondered over the years, what, if anything is being done to ensure the well-being of Clackmannan Tower. All was made plain when Doreen Grove of Historic Scotland described the building's misfortunes and the efforts which have been made to stabilise and restore it.

Associated chiefly with the Bruce family, whose last member died in the adjoining mansion house in 1791, the building soon fell derelict, stones being taken from the house to build houses in the town.

The tower was meanwhile being affected by the mine workings of Alloa Coal Company, and by the 1930s cracks developed. Although in 1928, a Royal Commission had found Clackmannan Tower to be "the most interesting tower in this locality with its commanding situation overlooking the Forth crossings" it seemed doomed. In 1948, a whole section fell away, but in 1955 the "stitching" of the fabric began under the auspices of the Department of the Environment, and by 1960, it was structurally stable due to the work of skilled masons.

The policy of the present-day Historic Scotland is not to restore an Ancient monument, but to repair damage. The main 17th century door has been re-erected, wall walks have been maintained, electricity will be installed, a temporary roof has been put over it as protection against frost, wind and water as well as vandalism. Slides showed the extent of damage and repair; one was taken from the ground floor up five storeys, a cross-section of a mediaeval building and how it had been built. A five-year plan is in progress which was somewhat delayed by the "foot and mouth" crisis. Facilities for staff will have to be made nearby. There are plans to show groups - society members round some time in the future. Historic Scotland, which believes in minimal intervention, feels in this case that Clackmannan Tower was worth the effort.

Members Night. 10/12/01.

A well-supported Members' night at the final meeting of 2001, the interests of several people.

Margaret Ferguson's slides of a three-centre holiday to Nepal revealed the Hindu temples and burning ghats of Katmandu, as well as the excitements of a National Park, where she rode on an elephant; and the majestic scenery of the Anapurna Range, with a flight in a small plane to view Everest.

Bill Templeton's contribution featured the Hebridean islands of Gigha and Colonsay. The former lies three miles off Kintyre, and has a roll-on ferry service from Tayinloan on the mainland. The Gulf Stream has given Gigha a mild climate. Recently, the island has been bought by the islanders, and

they hope to make a success of 'going it alone'. Achamore House built in 1884 still exists, sheltered by trees and a ridge. The island of Colonsay, reached by ferry from Oban, was associated with the Inchcape family. At low tide, it is possible to walk across to Oronsay, where there is a 14th century priory. Amazingly, Colonsay has a 14-hole golf course. By total contrast, some slides of the Millenium Forth-Clyde Canal Wheel at Falkirk were also shown.

Richard Brennan, last manager of Paton & Baldwin, screened a series of slides showing the Kilncraigs Mill complex. Having been 21 years in Alloa, Richard was the ideal guide through the group of 1904 office, the 1936 building (both to be preserved) 1914 warehouse, the dyehouse, and so on, as well as such features as the old hydraulic presses which squashed down the yarn into bales. There were unusual views from the roofs of the buildings, never to be seen again, including the Brothie Burn running through the main spinning shed. A sluice once existed there which used to power the former water wheel.

Alistair Maxwell-Irving showed an attractive series of slides taken at the city of Bruges. Although many buildings are genuinely old, (the Market Hall dates from 1240, for example) it had been in decay until the 'British colony' set about preserving it in the 1850's - the Town Hall now dates from the 1890's. The many canals gave it the title of "The Venice of the North" - these were constructed to transport merchandise in mediaeval times.

Methven Castle, the destination of a CFSS trip, was the focus for Elizabeth Crane's presentation. An enterprising architect, Ken Murdoch, has been restoring this 17th century tower house on the site of a property belonging to Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII and wife of James IV of Scotland. Pictures illustrating the conversion and the amazing results were much admired.

Ken Mackay also presented a series of slides featuring Kilncraigs Mill, as well as the industrial buildings of the long-time demolished Youngers Brewery, and the recently demolished Tullis Tannery. The aerial views of Alloa taken from postcards showed an unique aspect of the towns working life.

Dick Clark gave a short series of slides taken in the Sutherland area. This included the chapel at Balnakeil, a view of Sandwood Bay with An Buachaille, a souterrain at the side of Loch Eriboll and the best Scottish example of a wheelhouse. Ardvrech Castle where Montrose was a prisoner, also featured.

History of Wester Kittochside - Duncan Dornan. 14/1/02

Kittochside is a new name in the list of National Trust for Scotland properties: its other title is The Museum of Scottish Country Life, which is situated at Stewartfield Way, East Kilbride. The large number of CFSS members who attended the first talk of 2002 were treated to a fast-paced summary of its history, its present situation and the plans for its future, by Duncan Dornan, Principal Director of the Museum.

Wester Kittochside farm - the total property included the steading, farmhouse and all the contents of these. Ten generations of the Reid family had owned the land since the 16th century, and changes in farming practice were revealed in the layout of the farm. An important factor is that the farm will be worked using 1950's techniques and equipment, but there are many more attractions. An Exhibition Building has been completed with the National Museum's rural life collections from the Edinburgh site. One of the prime exhibits is the Brech of Randall Mill, the oldest known surviving threshing mill in the world, dating from 1804, and used to thresh grain for making flour, a process performed manually in earlier times. Andrew Meikle of East Linton was the inventor. For other enthusiasts, there is the farmhouse which has its original furniture.

Around 1567, James Reid had bought a parcel of land from Muir of Weir, a landowner of the district. His house, although impressive, had only four rooms, but a fine facade, copying the wealthy tobacco merchants in the area. Later, the house was enlarged.

There are three sections to the property. To the south, there is the modern Exhibition Building, cafe and shop; north of this, the Events Area, where since July 2001 there have been special 'happenings' such as Highland Games and a Food Festival. Farming is also an activity.

This museum is a partnership between the NTS and the National Museums of Scotland, as normally, NTS properties require endowment before acceptance. Members enjoyed the illustrated talk, and hope to visit Kittochside, individually or perhaps, collectively.

Bede' s World - an early medieaval experiment - Susan Mills. 28/1/02.

Museums were once more under the spotlight when an attentive audience heard the story of a Benedictine monk, historian and scholar of the 7th / 8th centuries, and his remarkable feat of writing the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, a history of England down to 731. He also translated St. Johns Gospel into Anglo-Saxon. He is known to us as the Venerable Bede, a title given to him in the 9th century by the Roman Catholic Church.

Susan Mills, our Museums & Heritage Officer, showed a deep knowledge of the life and times in those far-off days, when Christianity had just reached Northumbria, and the young Bede, aged seven, entered the monastery at Monkwearmouth on the river Tyne, opposite to Jarrow. A follower of Benedict, this wealthy English nobleman visited Rome and returned, after study, on a mission to convert his own people. He was given land in Northumbria by the king to build an abbey at Wearmouth; later, a monastery, of similar design, was built across the river at Jarrow.

This was not the whole story; for ' Bede' s World' (with which Susan had been associated since 1986) was set up in the mid. 70s, and shows the lifestyle of that period, with houses built of wattle and daub, farm animals such as Dexter cattle, Tamworth pigs, Soay sheep - all rare breeds now - have been introduced to set the scene, where once there were industrial buildings and storage tanks.

Due to early plans, it has been possible to restore Jarrow monastery; now owned by English Heritage. St. Pauls Church, a place of worship still, is another restoration, and Jarrow Hall is another building which has been recreated. This was two talks at one time and the members were given much to think about.

To get there - Bede's World is down the A1, through the Tyne tunnel, signposted and can be visited every day.

The Road to Santiago - Ken. Gray. 11/2/02.

There was, once more, a mediaeval theme to the CFSS meeting when Ken. Gray presented his talk "The Road to Santiago". This was the story of a modern pilgrimage, in 1997, which reflected the walks of faith undertaken by Christian believers hundreds of years ago. In this instance, the destination was Compostela in Northern Spain, where relics of Saint James were reputedly to be found. Instead of the cloaks, broad-brimmed hats, staffs, and cockleshell motifs of earlier pilgrims, the modern-day pilgrims had outdoor wear, rucksacks and cameras.

The group of 13, only three of whom were under 50 years of age, were greatly helped by a green-and white minibus to transport luggage and the assurance of comfortable hostleries at the end of the day. Four hours pilgrimage took up each (early) morning, with two to two-and-a-half hours each afternoon, but this was at a slow pace, with time to pause and picnic, or muse over some new piece of information supplied by the leader - Tony, and the tour manager.

The spectacular landscapes of Galicia reminded Ken. Gray in many instances of Scotland - in fact, of our own Ochils district. As they moved through the landscape from town to town, Burgos, Leon and so on, the beautiful baroque architecture, in some cases of Moorish influence, came in for comment. A 'pilgrim' passport had been issued when they started the walk and stamped at each 'passport' office along the route, these offices were sited in churches.

A delightful aspect of the talk was the stories of legends told by Ken. Gray - the cock and hen which miraculously came to life and flew off the bishop's table, defying his power; the innocent, hanged man who survived, by being held up by angels. One could feel the faith and belief of our mediaeval ancestors; how our sins would be forgiven, by the pilgrimage to Santiago.

Slides had depicted the dramatic scenery and fine buildings; Ken. Gray had also found a neat link to home. At the very start, he had taken a cupful of soil from St. James' Garden in Cambuskenneth -and he had left it at the shrine to Apostle James in Santiago, Spain.

Counting the Sunny Hours (sundials). - Ken. Mackay. 25/2/02.

Despite unpleasant weather, a packed room of CFSS members enjoyed an evening full of novelty with a talk given by Dr. Ken. Mackay on sundials.

Initially exploring the beginnings of man's fascination with the sun, which is the central body of the solar system and the largest object in the sky. This study led to man's interest in time - length of year, weeks, days, which took centuries to formulate, although early structures such as those in India or South America, seem to show a familiarity with the principles of time. Going back to its simplest beginnings, Dr. Mackay illustrated with an orange pierced by a stick and marked into segments, how the divisions of time were estimated. At the Equator the sun is seen to be directly overhead at noon at the time of the equinoxes. Napier of Merchiston, in 1615, introduced trigonometry, and produced his tables by using a plaster model. 360 degrees are equal to 24 hours, each hour representing 15 degrees. An early pictorialised reference of a sundial is on a 1000 A.D. cross.

An uncle of the speaker's had been much involved in the restoration of sundials, and we were shown a striking picture of a mural at Kirkcudbright on the wall of his house. Many other examples of these 'time-keepers' were shown, notable that at Drummond Castle, Crieff with many dials and gnomons, (upright post) and Auchenbowie House where an obelisk had been cut down to a sundial, as often happened. Above the Queen Anne Gardens at Stirling Castle, there is a 'silent' sundial on the Mary, Queen of Scots mural, (It will never tell the time; its gnomon is the wrong way round). In fact, there appear to be frequent examples of sundials in unexpected places on old buildings. In France, there are 'sundial' shops such is the popularity of these decorative structures. Alloa, of course, has its own 1695 dial at Tobias Bauchop's house in the Kirkgate.

In September last year, Dr. Mackay travelled to Wormsley House in the South of England to help set up an 8 feet tall obelisk-type sundial at the home of Paul Getty (the Second, I believe). This was modelled on one designed by Andrew Somerville, and the copy was made using adjusted measurements. Getty's passion for cricket was shown in positioning of world-wide grounds -- Delhi, Barbados, Johannesburg and Melbourne, as well as three crickets and eleven cricket balls in the crest. This was a talk full of interest.

STONE IN OUR LIVES - David Marshall. -11/3/02

'The Story of Stone' was presented by David Marshall from the Stirling Stone Group, which has a national office in London, and boasts a turnover of more than £10 million a year, a massive share of the market in all types of stone masonry, both internal and external.

The original speaker, Bill Revie, was unable to be present, however Mr. Marshall spoke in detail of the five sections of their work - Stone Design Ltd., described as 'Taming Nature'; Stone Quarries Ltd, '-Harvesting Nature; Construction Materials Consultants in revolutionary stone techniques; Toffolo, Stirling, involving the slabbing of marble, granite, slate and limestone for shopfronts and flooring; and Stirling Stone itself which links the others in supplying a need for 'new build' or restoration work.

Stone is one of the oldest building materials and easy to 'win', but cost prevents its use every time. It is extensively used in the U.K. (grey granite from Aberdeen, red sandstone from Dumfries, limestone from the Cotswolds, Portland stone - much in evidence for public buildings in London; all these reveal its diversity, here in Britain. Nowadays, stone has often to be imported from Spain, Portugal, Italy or China (which has many workers, but little mechanisation). The quality of the material is often dubious. Italy has the best machines but if they fail there are delays in having them repaired.

Many slides showed 'before and after', or the logistic of shaping and installing stone, of measuring and fixing slabs. The new Royal Scottish Museum in Chambers Street, Edinburgh and the Sheriff Court are examples of new build but many older properties have been restored to order.

Historic Scotland would like to open quarries here, but this would not be financially viable. Tradesmen - stonemasons for instance, are also unobtainable. Many houses built now are only supposed to last for 40 or 50 years at most. Alloa's connection with Stirling Stone is a slabbing unit at our old harbour, which uses a multi-bladed wire saw to cut sections. This was a well-received talk, marking the final meeting of the 2001/2002 session.

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A 600 Year Old Mystery

Was an English King, Richard II, buried in Stirling? In 1399 Richard II was deposed by his cousin Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, became Henry IV. Richard was imprisoned in Pontefract Castle, and allegedly died of starvation in 1400, because he refused to eat. Was he starved to death on Henry's orders? Henry certainly wanted to be rid of him, in case he should become the centre of attempts to restore him to the throne of England. Henry went to great lengths to display the body, or rather the face only, to crowds all the way from Pontefract to Westminster, to convince the people that Richard was indeed dead. The body, said to be Richard, was not buried in Westminster Abbey beside the other Kings of England, but was taken to Kings Langley in Hertfordshire, for burial. This was more out of the way, to reduce the chance that the tomb would become the focus of pilgrimages to honour the dead king. Almost at once stories began to circulate that Richard did not die, but had escaped, first to Wales, then to Scotland. Someone, perhaps Richard, or maybe a man closely resembling him, was given hospitality by Donald, Lord of the Isles. A little later, the so-called 'Mammet' (or puppet) king was brought to Stirling Castle, and taken into the care of Robert Duke of Albany, who treated him with all respect due to a king. He was, of course, a useful bargaining counter for Albany. The young James I was captive in England, as was Albany's son Murdoch. When Murdoch was released in 1413 by Henry V, Albany retained the Mammet, and Henry continued to hold James. Albany had no desire for James to return to Scotland - neither did Henry, son of the usurper Bolingbroke, want someone claiming to be the rightful king to return to England to stir up trouble.

In 1417 Albany claimed 100 merks annually for his expenses of looking after King Richard of England in proper style, in all £733 - 6s - 8d. There is, however, no record that he was paid.

In 1419 the Mammet died. It was recorded by Bower that 'Richard II, King of England, died in the castle of Stirling in the aforesaid year and was buried on the north side of the High Altar of the church of the Friars Preachers' (the Black Friars).

The exact position of the church was uncertain until recently. In 1904 when building the flats which now form 64 Maxwell Place, Bailie Ronald, Master of Works for the Town at that time, when digging the foundations of an outbuilding, discovered a substantial masonry wall with buttresses. He believed this was likely to be part of the church of the Blackfriars, and reported it to the Stirling Natural History and Archaeological Society, the forerunner of the present Field and Archaeological Society. Certain members disagreed; in particular Mr Shirra argued that the priory of the Blackfriars was at the other end of Friars Street, on the corner of King Street.

After more than two years work in Stirling Archives Cathie and I were able to show the extent of the lands of the Blackfriars in Stirling. Our findings were published in 1996 in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. We were able to prove that Bailie Ronald had been correct. In 1994 we approached the owners of the flats of 64 Maxwell Place for permission to investigate whether further remains of the church existed in the garden behind the flats.

We were given permission to dig in the derelict garden (providing it was just the two of us!). Eleven weeks later, and having removed and put back about 30 tons of soil, we were able to establish the outlines of the church. We reported this in various talks, including one to the Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society, and a written report was published in the Glasgow Archaeological Journal for 1996-7. We did not excavate the area where the High Altar would be expected to be, as we only aimed to discover the size and shape of the church. Shortly afterwards we realised that the church was very like St Margaret's Church, dated c. 1072, which was found under the nave of Dunfermline Abbey. In other words, this church was very old; it was not built by the Blackfriars, but was given to them when they came to Stirling in 1233. We reported this discovery in the Forth Naturalist and Historian, vol. 21. (A Stirling Church), and previously on Blackfriars in vol 20, 1997.

At the present time the site of the church of the Blackfriars, together with whatever may remain of their priory, which would seem to extend under the Post Office at least as far as the Fubar Club, forms part of the Station Square development in Stirling.

This presents a marvellous opportunity to solve (perhaps!) the mystery of what may have been the death in 1400 or the survival to 1419 of a king of England. A careful area excavation within the perimeter of the church revealed by our excavation should uncover the site of the High Altar. We anticipate that it will have been cut through by a series of drains from not only the present flats, but also those from the previous building on that site. Nevertheless, to the north of these drain trenches the burial place should survive because it should be lower, even though here the bedrock is fairly close to the surface. In the course of our excavation we recovered about 200 scattered human bones, in addition to most of an almost intact female skeleton. If bones can be found north of the expected site of the altar there is a good chance that they are those of the Mammet.

Modern methods of DNA analysis could then be applied to the bones, and if the DNA pattern can be matched with those from known ancestors or descendants of Richard II it will be possible to prove whether the Mammet was an imposter or not.

Richard II was the son of the Black Prince. He lies in his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. Will anyone be allowed to take a small sample of his bones to make that comparison? Or could samples be obtained from the remains of Edward 111, Richard's grandfather, buried in Westminster Abbey? There seems little prospect of tracing descendants after so long. It was argued that the Mammet was an imposter, Thomas Warde of Trumpington. Maybe present day Wards, if any still live in Cambridgeshire, would be willing to let their DNA be sampled, but the chances of big variations in 600 years would be somewhat worrying! It is a very exciting possibility that such an ancient mystery might be resolved by modern scientific archaeology. After all, we have had the recent example when the Duke of Edinburgh provided a sample of his DNA to match with those from the remains of the family executed by the Ekaterinburg Soviet. It was thus proved that they were indeed the bodies of the Russian royal family.

KENMUIR - PART THREE

As stated in the previous episode the next occupant of Kenmuir is an Alan Watt who is a "spirit merchant" of Stirling Street, Alva and whose premises are now the "Cross Keys" (famous in present day times for their bar meals much appreciated by all who go there!) The price paid was £550 which Mr Watt paid instantly to the trustees and, mistake on my part - Helen is still living as she now gives up her right to life rent with a formal acknowledgement. Kenmuir was sold at the same price as Daniel had paid, property prices had not gone up very much in thirty years! One might be forgiven for deducing that a spirit merchant must make a lot of money to be able to hand over the cash at a public roup BUT Alan had borrowed from the trustees of the William Hunter and Margaret Guild Fund. These trustees were the ministers of the Established Church, the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Alva and the sum borrowed was £356, the details are very complicated but briefly the portion of the loan plus 5% interest must be paid at Whitsun and Martinmas at the Union Bank of Scotland, (now just the Bank of Scotland) Alva. The Building Society precursor?

The details regarding boundaries and previous owners are as before but it does mention that our original proprietor Robert Bernard was a clerk. If Building Societies had not yet been set up the Insurance companies were, as he had to take out insurance for "loss of fire" with the Northern Assurance Company or some other company that the trustees thought fit. Names are coming into the various documents not only the above ministers but witnesses to the "mortgage". So if anyone is researching prominent citizens of Alva and Alloa - give me a call.

It would appear that Alan Watt died in 1915 but his will had been written and amended (more than once) before then - Briefly his wife is to carry on the business not only at Alva but any other premises he may have an interest in at the time of his death. Not only does she get the said premises but also the use of the furniture, utensils and fittings in these establishments so long as she carries on the business/es However she must pay all the financial charges related to these business/es eg feus, taxes, rates, etc. and keep everything in good repair. She is also to be given the whole stock in trade and the contents of the house - furniture and moveables, as well as life rents of some properties for her support.

So far so good BUT if she remarries the life rent support and the right to occupy the premises shall cease and she is to only get £100 at Martinmas or Whitsunday and that's that! A strong reason to remain a widow. It finishes with a thought-provoking clause that she must educate and maintain HIS children while in their minority and living in the family with her or are able to maintain themselves - were they not her children as well - an insight into the Victorian mindset.

There is a lot of detail regarding his children's legacy eg his daughter being subject to "jus mariti" that being the right of a husband to his wife's property except for clothes and jewellery, therefore the poor, married daughter has no claim on his estate nor does his wife (in case she remarries) but it goes directly to his male descendants. There are six pages relating to this will and it shows Alan's concern that no other male from outside the family will receive any part of his property.

These arrangements were to be supervised by a group of trustees but alas as time goes by - they have all died. George Guthrie, I am taking a huge leap in faith here but would appear to be his son-in-law and married to Martha, his daughter, dies as the last remaining trustee. Their son John Guthrie and Alexander Thompson, Spirit Merchant in Erskine Street (could that possibly be the No 5 Inn?) are appointed to carry out the fiduciary duties but alas A. Thompson dies - is there a jinx on this appointment of trustees?

CODICIL 1904 The residue of the estate is to go to Martha Guthrie Watt (her husband, George Guthrie, a Trustee has recently died) as her own absolute property in ARMADALE, UPPER BEAUCLERC STREET (another change of house name and road) - she is also to have the piano and the grandfather clock.

CODICIL 1910 Alan's wife has died (jinxed again - I know it is thought to be a good and honourable thing to have all your financial matters well looked after but everyone else is dying off and poor Alan has yet again to change his will- must have cost him a fortune!) and the Trustees on Alan's death are to hand over to daughter Martha all the furnishings, plenishings and effects of every kind which may be in or around the house - in other words she gets the "lot" of the moveables. He is not so generous to son

William who is living abroad who has his share of the estate "expressly revoked and cancelled" - what DID he do wrong?? There are two other sons Alexander and Alan so the property is to be divided amongst the two sons and daughter.

In my ignorance I thought that heritable meant just the house and that went to Martha but in the last codicil he goes on to talk about the residue of his estate to be shared between the three children and the previous provision in the earlier codicil still stands - is there a lawyer about!

It all ends for Alan in 1915 when he departs the cares of this world - the only surviving member of the family is John Guthrie, his grandson. What happened to the other two sons - well it is the time of the Great War and I must take a walk and have a look at the names on the War Memorial.

The sum borrowed from the Fund (£356) is paid back to the Church Trustees from the Estate in 1918 and then John Guthrie, a butcher from Glasgow, is free to sell Kenmuir, or I should say Armadale.

KENMUIR - PART FOUR

The next family to inhabit Kenmuir are still in living memory - Betty Roy's mother knew of the Misses Paton. The house was sold to Walter Paton, a manufacturer in Alva for £525 in 1918 - property prices are DOWN. Walter has purchased the house for his sisters three of whom will stay in Armadale (Rachel, Agnes, Bessie) and the fourth (Mary) in Carlisle. The document then goes on to describe the property as before and including the right of way to L'Estrange Avenue. The document is drawn up by John Reed, solicitor in Alva but the signatures are witnessed by two book-keepers from Glasgow. There is no further documentation until June 1938 when a Decree is extracted by H.M. Chancery recording that "the late Rachel Paton, residing at Armadale, thereafter named Kenmuir - at last the name of the house as I know it - died at Alva **on or about 18/10/1922**. and her fourth share in the estate is passed on to brother, William. How extraordinary for an official extract to be so vague about the date of death.

In 1938 the Misses Paton sell Kenmuir (formerly known as Armadale) to James Ian Paton of Lethangie, a woollen manufacturer, for the sum of £800 at last the property is rising in value! In the description of the boundaries Old Stirling Road now becomes Ochil Road. By the way this is the first document that is typed instead of handwritten and states that it is so! Negotiations again take place for the sale of the house in 1945 to a Mrs Dodds whose solicitors have written concerning the feu of a piece of the ground which is leased for use as a garden. James Ian Paton sells the property to Mary Adamson Robertson or Dodds from Skelmorlie for the sum of £2650. . Betty tells me that the Misses Paton moved across the road to the cottage at the foot of Robertson Street The boundaries are as before but this time fixtures and fittings - electric light fittings, gas fires, stair rods and blind rollers - this is more in keeping with our modern system where these items are listed.

The item of interest is the disposition and settlement documentation drawn up by Mrs Dodds, dated 5/11/1958 and registered in 30/10/1962. The estate is bequeathed to her two daughters living in Morpeth - Isabella and Elizabeth now Easton (I have in my possession the rates book that a Dr Easton had in her possession) and her son James. However there appears to be a younger son John, who has £500 extracted from the estate and put into an investment trust fund and the income is to be used for John, however on his death this sum is to revert to the estate. Is there a mystery here? Is it just that John is too young to handle money or is he handicapped or perhaps too lavish?? It further states that Kenmuir and its contents are to be kept as a family home for the use of the two daughters and son James, the residue of the mother's income is to be used for the upkeep of the property. However the house can be sold if it is deemed necessary and the money to be divided four ways - John's share is to be invested for him and only the income to be paid out. If the other three members of the family die, and John is still surviving, the capital is to be shared out amongst the grandchildren equally. This trust disposition is the first to be signed by neighbours - Mrs Robertson or Lawton of Eastmillbank Ochil Road and Mrs Forrest or Morrison, Greenhead, Alva. This Notice of Title becomes active in 1963 and they become the owners of Kenmuir.

However before she died Mrs Dodds had applied to a firm of Architects in Dundee to have the property converted into flats and was passed by the Dean of Guild, D. Hunter on 25/7/1962. There is also a notice of redemption of feu received by Mrs Jean Gray, another famous Alva name, on behalf of Alva Estates.

I have heard that there was a single gentleman who lived in the lower flat and the upper flat was let to a series of students. One day I answered the door and there was an Italian couple there asking if they could look round at the garden as he had rented the upstairs flat when he was at Stirling University. After he had shown his wife round the garden I invited them in and it was only when he saw the interior of the downstairs cupboard with its eau de nil paint that he exclaimed with joy - he said he had been very happy there and the paint colour brought back those memories.

And now the story draws to a close as apparently the gentleman tenant was run over and killed at Blackpool and Dr Easton decided to sell the house, the successful buyers being Mr & Mrs McKay who really wanted the lower part of the garden where the rose garden and tennis courts were in order to build a bungalow. So they immediately put Kenmuir on the market and my offer was accepted and so Lizanne and Julie, the three cats, the Westie, Gregor, and Bobby the horse moved in!

Downstairs was a little bit more complicated as the Taylors from Tillicoultry never actually moved in and sold it on to a Mrs Harper who died after a couple of years and her daughter sold the flat to Frances Liddle and her mother. I have now stayed in Kenmuir for twenty one years and find it a very "happy" house.

A brief owner's chart would look like this:

1810 Thomas Bernard leased and then feued from James Johnstone
1849 son Robert Inherits and dies in] 853 - property is inherited by the Bernard family and then sold
1855 Dr J. Bruce Thomson purchase for **£510** and sells in
1857 for **£535** -to William Archibald
1861 it is sold on to Daniel Ross and Trustees for **£550**
1890 sold by Public Roup to Allan Watt for **£525**
1915 sold after Allan's death to Walter Paton for **£800**
1918 given the life rent to his sisters
1938 sold by James I Paton to Mrs Mary Dodds for **£2650**
1963 Kenmuir converted into two flats for renting
1980 Flats sold to Mr & Mrs Taylor for **£17000** and Mrs E Lumsden for **£20000**

PREVIOUS NAMES - Strude Cottage, StrudeBank, Armadale and Kenmuir

Old Stirling Road, Courthill Road, Upper Beauclerc Street and Ochil Road
There is a little snippet which may interest you:

In the 1881 census the inhabitants of Strudebank (Kenmuir) are the Rosses Daniel (44), Margaret (14), John (11), Hector (7), Liston (5) and two, I presume servants - Margaret McDevon and Elizabeth Reid. Daniel's wife, Helen, comes from Tasmania and she is three years older than her husband. In 1982 a check for encumbrances on No.26 Ochil Road, (ie the lower flat) was made and the only debt outstanding was that of money due to the Johnstone Estates by Daniel Ross who is now living in Tasmania signed 3/12/1902. The summons was executed on 15/12/1902 but there is no further news of the Ross Family. William and David Ross (?Brothers to Daniel) as the Marriage Contract Trustees had been given rights under a Notarial Instrument to sell Kenmuir at a public roup or by public bargaining but why was this necessary? Prominent citizens such as James Drysdale, and David Lawrence of Alva, Rev Dickson of Dumfries and John Cunningham of Stirling when asked to participate as Trustees to the provisions in the marriage contract all refused.

