

EDITORIAL

After completion of the Winter Lecture Series, members can look forward to spending time in the open air. This Society is unique in that we engage in twice weekly meetings from October to March and no sooner is this completed than we again take part in fortnightly events on Wednesday evenings, a weekend away and four Saturday outings. No other Society in the district produces such a full programme. Mostly we find new areas to explore, though sometimes walks require to be repeated, but nevertheless we find renewed enjoyment in these.

The Council of the Society contribute willingly to produce these programmes, however some input from members would be appreciated. Perhaps you could lead a walk, or suggest one, also information on speakers you have heard elsewhere is always welcome. Articles for the newsletter are definitely needed. Formerly members would write a short piece on an outing they had enjoyed, or some local anecdote, a personal experience, for instance. There are so many stories of a local nature that could be included in the NL and we should like to hear of them. It does not matter whether the account is short or long as it would add another dimension to the Newsletter.

Once again I would make a plea for one or two of the members to consider joining the Council – some new blood is badly needed.

The Summer Programme commenced with the Annual Field Trip. This year south of the border to Northumbria focussing on the Roman and Anglo Saxon periods – more on this later. Twenty five members attended and it goes without saying that these trips are most enjoyable and educational.

This year, of course, the weather was exceptional and it is a change to be able to stand around, talk and also enjoy the countryside and all it has to offer in vegetation and landscape. However, in spite of that, it was sometimes felt that a good shower of rain would freshen the air – are we difficult to please!!

The walks have, on the whole, been most enjoyable though in some cases lengthy, however it is a bonus that some of us are still able to take part and enjoy the company as well as the interest that is imparted during the walk. This year The Earl's Walk was included in the programme, a walk that takes one from Alloa Tower, along the river Black Devon to Clackmannan Tower, then south and west to return to Alloa. This walk takes three hours of solid walking.

Unfortunately, the early part of this walk going eastwards from the boundary of the Mar Policies has lost its sylvan character, owing to the housing development that is taking place south of “Focus”. How much more of an urban sprawl can we expect to see before the semi rural aspect of the County of Clackmannan is destroyed.

The Saturday excursions included visits to Drymen – led by the Drymen Historical Society and Ken Mackay, Bill & Nessie Calder from Buchlyvie checked out the feasibility of this visit as well as arranging the visit to Inchmaholme island on the Lake of Menteith. The canal trip, organised by Jack & Sadie Archibald, included a visit to Colzium and Lennox Estate where there is a small, but interesting garden with a number of unusual plant species. Torryburn and Valleyfield introduced the party to the vast estate of the Prestons of Valleyfield as well as the interesting site of Preston Island. This was well researched by Eddie Stewart. Of a different nature was the final outing of the year visiting two castles – Huntingtower and Elcho – both different and both worth a visit. From the large orchard at Elcho, members arrived home with a supply of plums and apples, free of charge, and I am sure that some of the preserves arising from these shall grace the tables at the Annual Coffee Morning.

I look forward to seeing good attendances at the Winter Lecture Series, and I hope that you find the programme provided of interest.

BETTY ROY

AGM 2006 - CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

During Session 2005/6 the Society has experienced mixed fortunes. Membership has slipped slightly, though it is encouraging that we have recruited six new members. Unfortunately some long standing members have not renewed due to ill-health or having passed away. It is with sadness that we record the death of Dorothy Wright and Jackie Wilson — both were long-standing members. Our condolences have been sent to the families.

The Membership stands at 110 and we are fortunate in having a loyal membership who have supported the Society over the years. It is now time that we make every effort to recruit some younger people able to take an active part in the running of this very worthwhile organisation. I could go on for hours if I listed the activities and campaigns undertaken by CFSS, e.g., the campaign and protest to save the port

area at the docks from becoming a car-breakers yard. I also find it amusing to learn that the Council are promoting public “clean-ups” while CFSS for years undertook litter pickup sessions without help from the Council.

Planning bulletins have been scrutinised over the years and this keeps us abreast of what is going on. Unfortunately we are losing the services of Fraser MacKintosh for this very important work. Fraser and his wife Irene are moving to Bo’ness at the end of April, and needless to say we are all sorry to see them go. Susan Mills is at present scanning the Planning matters, though with the heavy schedule she has it would be a help to recruit someone else to keep us informed on planning.

The Council of the Society met 10 times over the session when of course the running of the Society is discussed. Disappointment was expressed over the low turnout at the Wednesday Walks, though the Saturday outings did fair a little better. Bad weather was a factor in preventing people coming out. I should like to stress that the outings are arranged to provide an interest in the area visited, and the walks programme is usually geared to low level walking. All outings do require a great deal of research by the leaders. However the Bus Trip to the Scottish Parliament did attract a contingent of 39, and for the Spring Weekend to Portpatrick, places were taken up immediately when venue was announced. The happy trekkers of 28 voted the Portpatrick event an outstanding success — wonderful weather, beautiful scenery, interesting sites and above all an excellent hotel.

The Society belongs to the members and we always welcome suggestions for walks and talks and a note to any member of Council would be appreciated.

The Winter Talks were, on the whole well attended, though numbers were slightly down from the previous year. Newsletter No. 76 is now available, some of the talks have been written up and printed. Unfortunately it is not always possible to persuade someone to write, but once you start, it is amazing what can be achieved.

It is a sign of the age we live in!! For the first time in 36 years, we could not organise an Industrial Visit. However, we were fortunate in obtaining the services of a professional carpenter — John Donaldson of Livingston has been appointed by Historic Scotland to research, explain and reproduce replicas of the “Stirling Heads”. These unique Medieval carvings once adorned the ceilings of James V’s Palace at; Stirling Castle. This was an excellent talk, delivered by a competent speaker. Anyone any ideas for a 2007 Industrial Visit?

Thank you to Sadie Archibald for making sure our meetings are reported in the local newspapers.

You have already received the Summer Programme and we hope you will find some of the outings to your liking. Some are old favourites, but well worth repeating. Thirty six years is a long time and sometimes it is difficult to find new places to visit. The first Saturday outing is on the 6th May to Drymen — a guided tour has been organised led by the Drymen Heritage Society, then on to Buchlyvie led by Bill Calder, and finally to Inchmahome Priory at Arnprior. Good weather would really make this a visit to remember.

The Spring Weekend is to Hadrians Wall country, 24 members attending. We are fortunate in having Susan Mills joining the group. Susan, and her friend Adam Whitford, are experts on the history of the area and shall deal with The Wall and Anglo Saxon Northumberland.

This year we have had a rest from organising projects, though some have taken part in research and projects undertaken by others. Eddie Stewart and Dr Roy Sexton undertook a research project on the Alloa Inch and some other reclaimed sites on the Forth. A talk was given by the researchers at a CFSS meeting. The work is written up in FNH Journal and Eddie put up a display board at the Man & the Landscape Symposium. Some members assisted at the Symposium.

Jack Archibald and Eddie Stewart represented the Society at Scottish Archaeology Society's conference in Meirose. Jack and Sadie Archibald attended the meeting in Tillicoultry that dealt with the proposed Wind Farm at Burnfoot Hill Farm on the Ochils. Sadie Archibald and Joyce Reekie represented the Society at the Community Health Partnership meetings. Thank you to those, it is always good to keep in touch with other organisations.

Contact has been made with the Historic Scotland Adopt a Monument Scheme with a view to restoring and researching the Old Tillicoultry Graveyard — more later. We are presently looking to publish the research papers relating to the personalities buried in the St Mungos Kirkyard. The two town walks ought to be printed soon. Through The Heritage Trust we hope to have a plaque erected in the Alva Kirkyard to commemorate Dr. Robert Erskine, physician to Czar Peter the Great of Russia. To complete this, the publication of a book entitled *Jacobites & Bonanzas* should add to the information on these Erskines and the Silver Mines.

To finish off I would like to voice our concern at the lack of movement regarding the establishment of a County Museum. At great expense the Patons former mill

shop was made wind and watertight some two years ago. Unfortunately the Council has not yet made up its mind to provide the funding necessary to allow the project to go ahead. The Patons building was gifted by Coats Viyella to Alloa when the Patons complex was sold — not a satisfactory situation.

BETTY ROY

ROBERT MONK, DIED 1ST AUGUST 2006.

It is with great sorrow that we have to record the passing of a well-respected member and friend. Bob Monk died on the 1st August after a short illness.

Bob and his wife, Lisbeth, were members of the society since 1981, and during those years served the Society well. Bob considered that membership of an organisation carried some responsibility and commitment to support the said group. Before long, Bob joined the Council and served well for over 10 years.

He was always willing to take part in the many activities of the society, and for a number of years attended to the booking of hotels for the annual field trip. Personally, I enjoyed the reconnaissance trips on those occasions.

Recently as part of the WW II Exhibition, Bob's wartime experiences were recorded. An interesting war he had had, flying a spitfire and towards the end of the war had landed at the front when the Belsen Concentration camp was liberated. These experiences he had related to one or two members who found the narration of great interest.

Bob will always remain in our thoughts, especially for his quiet humour and gentlemanly manner. Our deepest sympathy goes to Lisbeth and Lesley. The world is a poorer place without Bob Monk

Betty Roy

CFSS WINTER PROGRAMME 2006 / 2007

Meetings are held in Alloa Town Hall (Tommy Downs Room), unless otherwise stated, on Monday evenings -2nd and 4th of the month- 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Members of linked societies and other non-members are welcome, though non-members would be expected to join for subsequent visits.

2006

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9th **COFFEE MORNING** – Spiers Centre, Primrose St., Alloa
10am – 12 noon

OCTOBER

Mon 9th **THE BROCHS:** a Scottish phenomenon Irwin Campbell, Buchlyvie

Mon 23rd **PLUMBING THROUGH THE AGES** Andrew Lumsden, Kincardine

NOVEMBER

Mon 13th **ROBINSON CRUSOE ISLAND** – excavations at Juan Fernandez Island
Dr. David Caldwell, National Museums of Scotland

Sat 18th 32nd **Man and the Landscape Symposium** at Stirling University.
The City of Stirling
... information at <http://www.fnh.stir.ac.uk>

Mon 27th **PICTISH ART** Graham Cruickshank M.A., FSA Scot.

DECEMBER

Mon 11th Member's Night - **IN DAYS GONE BY**
2007

JANUARY

Mon 8th **FROM THE CLYDE TO PHILADELPHIA**
- the diary of Robert Nisbet Andrew Muirhead, Alva

Mon 22nd **CANALS OF LOWLAND SCOTLAND** Mr. & Mrs. Milne, Falkirk

FEBRUARY

Mon 12th **CROATIA** – then and now Jean Teasdale, Inverness

Mon 26th **PROGRESS OF THE CLACKMANNANSHIRE**
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN - joint meeting with SWT
Speaker TBA

MARCH

Mon 12th **ON THE BANKS OF THE ALLAN WATER**
– including mills on its banks Ken Gray, formerly Bridge of Allan, now Stirling

Mon 26th **CONSERVATION OF SOME CLACKMANNANSHIRE**
TREASURES Nic Boyes, Stone Conservationist

APRIL

Mon 9th **AGM** Cheese & wine

Dates for your Diary

Dollar History Society

12th. September 2006 'The Easy Trip' Escaping behind enemy lines WW2	12th. December 2006 Understanding Sauchie Tower	13th. March 2007 The Haldane Family
Speaker Mr. W.R.Knaggs The Royal Air Force Escaping Society	Speaker Ms. Susan Mills Museum and Heritage Officer Clackmannanshire Council	Speaker Mr. Martin Haldane Of Gieneagles, Perthshire
10th. October 2006 Arthur in our Area	9th. January 2007 The Medieval Environment	10th. April 2007 Lord Cochrane of Culross 10 th . Earl of Dundonald 1775 – 1860 (Part 1 **)
Speaker Mr. Stuart McHardy Historian, storyteller and folklorist	Speaker Dr. Richard Oram History Department University of Stirling	Speaker Mr. W. Wolsey Kincardine Local History Group
14th. November 2006 History of Paisley Shawls (Please bring along any shawls you have for display and discussion)	13th. February 2007 Cambuskenneth	8th. May 2007 Annual General Meeting
Speaker Professor T.G.Smout Professor Emeritus University of St. Andrews	Speaker Mr. K.E.Gray Formerly of Bridge of Allan Local History Group	Followed by Stirling Old Bridge Speaker Mr. Craig Mair

** Mr. W. Wolsey will return on 9th. October 2007 to give part 2 of his talk on Lord Cochrane

The Clackmanan Society

Chairman of Council

H McLaren
722454

President

H Livingstone
214773



Treasurer

JTCurrey
219287

Secretary

J M Banks
217611

The Clackmannan Society *Clackmannanshire*

2006/07 Syllabus *(All meetings in Clackmannan Church Hall at 7pm)*

Visitors Welcome

Saturday 21st October

‘The New Railway Project.’

(By a representative from First Nuttall)

Saturday 18th November

‘Stone, Cross, and Tolbooth’

(By Steven Newsom. Architect)

Saturday 20th January

‘The Diagio Archive’

(By Charlotte McCarthy)

Saturday 17th February

‘Clocks of Clackmannanshire’

(By Bob Lindsay)

Saturday 17th March

‘Members Night and AGM’

*(A relaxed evening providing
an opportunity for members
to show slides from their own
collections)*

JMB Secy.

Kincardine Local History Group

(www.kincardinehistory.co.uk)

October 2006

Oct 11th **The Glass Works of Alloa** Jim Banks 'Junior

Oct 25th **Old Bo'ness** Geoff Bailey

November

Nov 8th **People & Places of Dunfermline over the Last 100 years
Part II** George Robertson

Nov 22nd **Bannockburn Proved** William Scott

December

Dec 6th **The Falkirk Tryst** Ian Scott

Dec 20th **Contemporary Scotland** Ken Gray

January 2007

Jan 10th **A lighthouse History** Alan Laing

Jan 24th **James IV Dockyard at Airth** John Reid

February

Feb 7th **Poor Houses and Poor Relief in Scotland** Rev. A Ramage

Feb 21st **Culross & the Abbey** Anne MacDonald

March

March 7th **Stirling Heads the Ceiling of Kings Presence Chamber**
John Donaldson

March 21st **Members Night & AGM**

Stirling Field & Archaeology Society



WINTER PROGRAMME 2005/2006

Meet in the Smith Museum, Albert Place, Stirling
At 7.30pm

Tuesday, 11th October

WILDLIFE OF THE GALAPAGOS
David Shenton (SWT Clyde Area)

Tuesday 8th November

**A DESCRIPTION OF THE BATTLE OF
SHERIFFMUIR, NOVEMBER 13TH 1715,
BASED ON EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS**
Bill Inglis (Council of the National
Trust for Scotland)

Tuesday 6th December

HERITAGE ENGINEERING
David Bates (Director, Heritage
Engineering-retired)

Tuesday 17th January

**JERASH IN JORDAN
WHAT LIES BEHIND A ROMAN
CITY IN THE EAST**
Dr Warwick Ball (Eastern Approaches Travel)

Tuesday 14th February

**THE RENAISSANCE PALACE
STIRLING CASTLE**
Doreen Grove (Principal Inspector of Ancient
Monuments, Historic Scotland)

Tuesday 14th March

**Annual General Meeting
& Members Night**

Scottish Wildlife Trust

STIRLING MEMBERS CENTRE

All talks will be held on the first Tuesday in the month
(*except Jan 2007) at 7.30pm

New venue The Attic Studio in The Tollbooth, Stirling.

This is in Broad Street just below the Castle.

Tuesday 3rd October 2006

Climate Change: The Challenge to Our Environment

Speaker from WWF Scotland

Tuesday 7th November 2006

Butterflies of SW Scotland

Richard Sutcliffe, SW Scotland recorder.

Tuesday 5th December 2006

Bumblebees

Dave Goulson, Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Tuesday 9th January 2007

**Fish invaders from the South : A Threat to
Scottish Fresh Waters**

Colin Adams. GU Rowardennan Field Station

Tuesday 6th Feb 2007

Plant Life's Work in Scotland

Deborah Long, Plant Life

Tuesday 6th March 2007 + brief AGM

Birds in Gardens

Stanley da Prato

Tuesday 3rd April 2007

Bats & the Millennium Link

Neil Middleton Bat-ML

CFSS WEEKEND TO HADRIAN'S WALL AND NORTHUMBERLAND – 19/22 May 2006.

Twenty Five members embarked on an exploration of the Anglo/Scottish frontier – an area of romantic tales and bloody battles. The road south was via the A68, formerly the Roman Dere Street and historically one of the main roads south.

It is well known that the Border area had a turbulent past – the scars still remain in the gutted abbeys of Melrose, Dryburgh, Kelso and Jedburgh laid waste by English invaders in raids from the 13th to the 17th centuries. However the Border Reivers were also responsible for much of the unrest on both sides of the border.

A most welcome lunch stop was at Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre. In warm sunshine we enjoyed the facilities there, though we did spend longer than intended resulting in not enough time in Jedburgh. Not everyone visited Jedburgh Abbey, an attraction that deserves another visit. The Castle, once the favourite residence of Scottish Kings, was destroyed in 1409 on the dictum of the Scottish Parliament because the English seemed to be getting more advantage from it!! The former county prison, 1823, is now on the castle site – this is now a tourist attraction. All did visit the Mary Queen of Scots House where the Queen had stayed in 1566. The building is now a museum and well worth a visit.

A highlight of this part of the journey was a visit to Smailholm Tower. Seen from a distance its situation on a crag above the Eden Water is quite dramatic. Built in the 16th century the tower was a favourite haunt of Sir Walter Scott whose ancestors, the Scotts of Harden, purchased Smailholm in 1645, though they abandoned this rocky summit in 1700 for the new farmhouse of Sandyknowe. It was to Sandyknowe that Scott came as a “wee sick laddie” in 1773.

The three upper floors in the tower house a permanent exhibition of costume figures and tapestries illustrating the “Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border”. Having visited Smailholm on previous occasions, these tableaux always hold a freshness and an interest. They are the work of Anne Carrick, the tapestries by MacDonald Scott, funded by the Saltire Society and presented to the Secretary of State for Scotland for permanent display in Smailholm.



Queen of the Fairies

Sad is the tableau “The Lament of the Border Widow” depicting the widow carrying her dead husband to his burial place.

“I took his body on my back,

And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat,

I digg`d a grave and laid him in,

And happ`d him wi` the sod sae green”



Smailholm Tower

It is impossible here to deal with all of these displays, though a listen-in by the ghost of Walter Scott would have enjoyed the discussions engaged in by the “Weekenders”.

After crossing the Border, we stopped at Otterburn to visit the site of the Battle of Otterburn, 1388. The battle, commemorated by the Percy Cross, resulted in the death of James, 2nd Earl of Douglas, who had led a victorious army of Scots against the English. Douglas was mortally wounded at the height of the battle and not wishing his men to lose heart instructed that his body be hidden behind a bush so that no word of his death reach the English. His death has been made famous through an anonymous poet who wrote “The Ballad of Chevy Chase”.

“My wound is deep, I am fayn to sleep,
Take thou the vaward of me,
And hide me by the bracken bush.
Grows on yonder lilye-lee.”

After a night of fighting, Percy surrendered and Douglas`s body was discovered in the morning. The irony of this is remembered in the last four lines of the Ballad.

“Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loon,
Nor shalt thou to me,
But yield thee to the bracken bush.
Grows on yonder lilye-lee.”

Thus it was Percy surrendered to a dead man!!

The Saturday part of the weekend was devoted to Hadrians Wall and the Roman settlements. After dinner on the Friday evening, Dr. Alan Whitworth of the English Heritage Museum in Carlisle delivered a talk “The Wall after the Romans” This was a fascinating presentation; slides were shown of how the wall and adjacent buildings had been plundered to build dwellings and churches. From his information our exploration of the sites was greatly enhanced -- later the question was asked “did you see?” e.g. Robin`s Tree, prominent in an opening between two

crag, and featured in a film on Robin Hood. Among other items of interest were “the Roman ‘loo seats” inserted into the church steeple at Bywell St. Andrews. (thanks to Susan for organising the speaker).

SATURDAY. Our sortie along the wall was led by Ken Mackay – a programme so full that it is impossible to deal with all the sites, each of which develop a different aspect of life on the Wall. Hadrian’s Wall, the most important structure built by the Romans in Britain, was given World Heritage Status in 1987. Common belief was that the Wall was built to separate the Romans from the Barbarians in the North. However, there were also untamed people to the south of the Tyne-Solway gap and it can be considered that the Wall was there as a police and customs barrier.

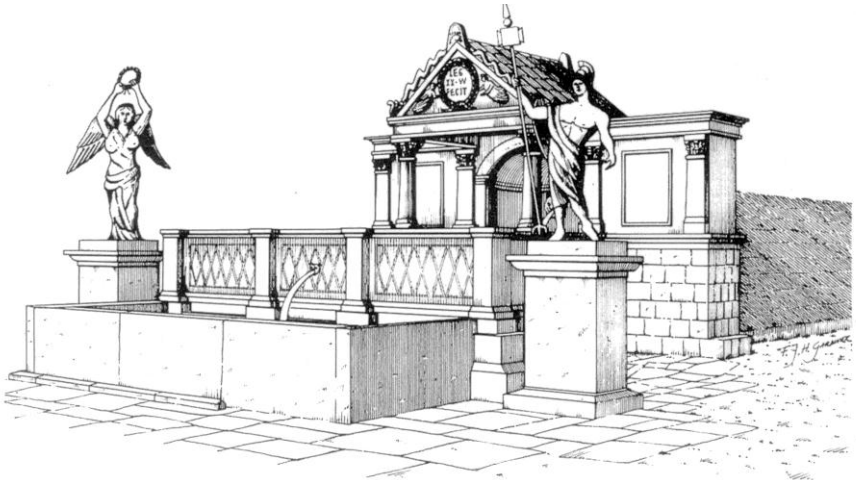
The first site visited was at Chesters where the Museum has seen little change since the latter 19th century and is well worth a visit. The collection contains many altar pieces, carvings and artefacts that were excavated by the landowner, John Clayton (1792-1890). Without his efforts many of these finds, from various sites along the wall, would have been lost. The fort at Chesters was an important cavalry fort constructed across the Wall and guarding the crossing of the river. Downstream from the present road bridge are the remains of the massive Roman bridge that carried the military way and the Wall across the North Tyne. The remaining abutment on the north side can be viewed when the river water is low.

Situated on the south side of the river is an impressive example of a military bath house. The bath house served as a combination between a Turkish bath and the troop’s café where they would relax in comfort at the end of the day, eating and gambling. Also found here and now housed in the Museum is an underground waterwheel.

The TEMPLE to MITHRAS at Carrawburgh was the next visit. The fort situated here was robbed by the builders of the Military Road; however the remaining structure houses facsimiles of the original altars, that are now housed in Newcastle University Museum of Antiquities. This temple, situated in a boggy stretch of ground, was uncovered in 1949

during a period of severe drought when the bog shrank and the tops of three altars protruded through the grass. When we visited, the replacement altars were standing in inches of water and had the originals not been transferred to a safe environment it is possible that they may have eroded beyond repair.

CORBRIDGE (CORSTOPITUM) -- the 2nd largest town on the frontier, here lived the Legions craftsmen. The buildings at Corbridge were on a grander scale than elsewhere, reflecting the importance of economic life. The information boards depict a town of magnificent proportions with substantial edifices lining the main street. The settlement covered an area of 27 acres. This Roman town guarded the main trunk road from the South (Dere Street) that crossed the Tyne. Much of Hexham Abbey and Corbridge Parish Church were built from the stone from this town.



Corbridge Roman Fountain

After Dinner we, again, had a slide show, this time prepared by Susan as an introduction to Anglo-Saxon Northumbria. Once again we had an introduction to the sites we would visit the following day.

On Sunday, known as “The Lord`s Day”, we visited four Christian sites, led by Susan Mills.

Firstly, we parked in a layby to view the site of the Battle of Heavenfield, (in old English Hfenfeth – the heavenly seal). Here in AD635, Oswald (605-642), son of Ethelfrith of Bernicia, fought his way to the Northumbrian crown by the defeat of Caedwalla, the Welsh King. Oswald had already converted to Christianity at Iona when in exile and established the faith in Northumbria with the aid of St. Aidan – the founder of the first monastery on Lindesfarne.

Secondly we visited Bywell, (Old English “byge-wella, meaning a spring in the bend (of the river).”

On approach we passed the impressive gates of Bywell Castle and shortly the Market Cross, a reminder that once a town was situated there.

The reason for two churches in near proximity was that the land bordered two baronies, e.g., those of Guy de Baliol and Walter de Bolbec. Susan conducted tours of both St Peter`s and St. Andrew`s, pointing out many alterations to the exterior that had taken place over the centuries. While viewing the exterior of St Andrew`s, it was obvious that the tower was built partly of re-used Roman stones, and our practiced eyes?? were able to recognise the insertion of the



Roman “loo-seats” near the top of the tower. These thought to have been inserted to improve the acoustics of the belfry within the churches vestiges of Saxon structures were also pointed out. Of course a walk through the churchyard by CFSS members is always mandated. Here there were many interesting features, e.g., delicately carved and in perfect condition, were a number of the serpents devouring their tails – I have never seen such a wealth of that type of carving in one place.

Finally, we visited Hexham Abbey. The weather was absolutely gorgeous, and our group decided refreshment was a must before taking part in the tour, again conducted by Susan. The church was established in AD674 on the inspiration of St. Wilfrid, the patron saint of the abbey. At this time there was a great debate as to which form of Christianity should be adopted – the Celtic form of the Irish monks of Iona or the Roman. After the Synod of Whitby, the Roman form for Easter was adopted.

Within the Abbey there are many examples of Roman sculpture built into its walls – most of it coming from the Roman fort at Corbridge. On entering the building one is met by the magnificent carving of Flavinus, Roman Standard Bearer. Flavinus rides in triumph over his barbarian enemy and is seen kicking his captive’s rear. Flavinus must have contributed to a burial fund from his military pay to be able to have such a substantial monument erected on his death, or, more likely, he was so well thought of by the Legion that they paid for his memorial.

The Crypt, of Anglo-Saxon origin, is accessed by a steep stone stair into rooms and passage ways left intact from St Wilfrid’s original church. Also remaining from this time is the Frith Stool, which stands in the middle of the Choir. It is a solid block of sandstone, and was made into a seat in the earliest days of the Church, its original purpose being the Bishop’s Throne. The Frith Stool was also known as the Chair of Peace and symbolised a centrepiece for those seeking sanctuary within the Church during adversity.

The penultimate stop of the day was a visit to Historic Dilston, Castle & Chapel. The story of the Radcliffes, Earls of Derwentwater is a romantic

one, but at the same time tragic. We all know the history of the `15 Jacobite Uprising in Scotland, but of what happened in Northumberland our knowledge is quite sketchy.

Dilston Castle was built in 1417, then transformed in the 16/17th centuries before finally being incorporated in Dilston Hall, a palatial mansion owned by James Radcliffe,, 3rd Earl of Derwentwater. James Radcliffe`s mother was Lady Mary Stewart, illegitimate daughter of Charles II, and through this union the Radcliffes became one of the most prominent Roman Catholic families in the North of England.

James Radcliffe, an ardent Jacobite supporter, took up arms in support of his cousin, James Stewart, the Old Pretender, in the `15 Rebellion and from that act brought about ruin of his family. The Earl was a key player in that uprising but the cause in Northumberland was lost at the Battle of Preston. After surrendering he was attainted, condemned to death and beheaded on Tower Hill on 24th February, 1716.

His remains were secretly conveyed to Dilston for burial. As the cortege bearing his coffin reached the outskirts of Durham City, the skies lit up with a brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis. Thereafter the Aurora Borealis was known locally as “Lord Derwentwater`s Lights. Legend also has it that the stream that flows past Dilston runs red every year on the date of his death.

He was 27 when he was executed. His estate went first to the Crown, and later was granted by the crown to Greenwich Hospital. The Erskines in Alloa were more fortunate in being able to buy back their estates, while the Radcliffes lost everything.

The following is the last stanza of the Ballad “Derwentwater`s Farewell” that appears in James Hogg`s Jacobite Relics.

“And when the head that wears a crown
Shall be laid low like mine,
Some honest hearts may then lament
For Radcliffe`s fallen line
Farewell to pleasant Dilston Hall
My father`s ancient seat
A stranger now must call thee his,
Which gars my heart to greet.

The youngest brother of the Earl of Derwentwater, Charles Radcliffe, also took part at Preston. He was taken prisoner, and convicted of treason, but escaped from Newgate in December 1716. He exiled himself to the continent where he spent time in Rome at the court of James III, and later, with the intention of fighting for Charles Edward Stewart, he made his way back to Scotland, but was captured at sea. As a cruel twist of fate, he was condemned under his former conviction, and beheaded on Tower Hill on December 1746.

Many thanks to Frances Dickinson, Author and Researcher, for her excellent talk on this unfortunate family.

To conclude this journey into Northumberland, our first stop on Monday, on our way back to Scotland, we stopped off at Bardon Mill Pottery for a guided tour of the works. The staff could not have been more helpful, and, made every effort to make our visit a success. Though it closed many years ago it has mostly been preserved as a 19th century industrial monument. Two updraught bottle kilns, a “Newcastle” kiln and two horizontal, kilns have been preserved on the site, which is a rare and fascinating survival of an industrial pottery in the area. The pottery still uses bottle kilns to fire their goods and most of the work is done by hand. The production, nowadays, is of garden pots and our group did buy some of their wares.

An excellent weekend and now we look forward to next year???

Betty Roy.

ALONG THE FORTH – 10TH MAY 06

The 10th May was the first of the Wednesday evening walks of our Summer Programme. The venue was the walk entitled, Along the Forth, Alloa to Cambus and return.

On a fine evening we left the Medical Centre and parked at the industrial area, the site of the old marshalling yard at Alloa West End. Leaving there we soon followed the track of the old Alloa to Glasgow railway line and the piers of the Alloa Railway Bridge over the Forth came into view, all that remains of the Bridge which was dismantled after the railway line was closed.

Traversing a field, using the right of way (C.F.S.S never breaks the law walking across private land), reached the banks of the river. We followed the river for the next mile and a half viewing the wild life and flora on our left and the magnificent views of the Ochil Hills on our right.

Leaving the river we headed for Cambus and the site of what used to be Cambus Distillery. It was decided to do a short detour to have a look at the Iron Bridge over the Devon, which has been restored and is a landmark in its own right.

Retracing our steps we headed away from the river inland for a short distance and turned left at a junction of the track towards the old Alloa to Stirling Railway Line. Walking along the track we were able to view the progress being made in the construction of the new railway line. We finished our walk where we left the cars.

Ten of our members enjoyed this walk on such a pleasant evening, with thanks to Marilyn for organising this event.

Jack Archibald

EARL'S WALK – 14TH JUNE 06

On the 14th June the second of our evening walks saw us traversing the Earls Walk the opposite side of the town this time. We assembled at Alloa Tower where Betty gave a descriptive talk on the Tower and the surrounding area, also part of the history of the walk itself.

Leaving the Tower we walked through the avenue of trees formerly the driveway to the Tower, to the Mar Policies, the housing estate on the former Earl of Mars land. Walking through the Policies Betty pointed out the site of the Mansion House home of the Earls of Mar from the 1830s. This was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the housing estate.

Reaching the cycle track which was the old road to Clackmannan we passed through a new private housing development which is built on land sold by the present Earl of Mar. Crossing the new road on the boundary of the estate we turned right and headed for the Black Devon. Crossing an old stone humped-backed bridge we turned left into the woods along the south side of the river towards Clackmannan. We reached the main road at the Mary Bridge at Clackmannan passed the Tower Hotel and up the Kirk Wynd to the Tolbooth, the Mercat Cross and the Stone of Mannan. As we passed the Parish Church we admired the Lychgate at the side entrance.

We made our way along Port Street and turned into Craigrie Road to be presented with a panoramic view of the Forth Valley. Turning right we headed west towards Alloa, we had the Forth on one side and an imposing Clackmannan Tower on the other. Betty as always, a wealth of knowledge gave a short history of the surrounding area, which was very interesting. A few of us were able to have a quick search, of a one time coal bing, looking for fossils. Continuing westwards we crossed the Black Devon again which is now in the tidal reaches into a manmade wetland created to help the local wildlife. Soon we were in the Mar Policies and the Alloa Tower came into view having had a very

enjoyable evening, again the weather was kind to us, and many thanks to Betty for her knowledgeable contribution.

On the 29th June Betty led a Group from Perth and Kinross Ramblers on the same walk with a slight deviation paying a visit to Clackmannan Tower. It again was a great success.

Jack Archibald

STRATHYRE BROCH – 28TH JUNE 06

The 28th June saw the group getting into their cars for a trip to Strathyre to meet Irwin Campbell an authority on the building of Brochs, a building only found in Scotland constructed in the Iron Age. These fortifications / castles, were built using the dry stane dyke method.

Irwin Campbell got together a team of amateur and professional dry stane dykers and constructed a section of a Broch using only traditional methods of building, and a lot of research, which was hard to come by as the builders left no documental evidence. The only way was to go and examine the remains of Brochs, which have survived the elements for 2,000 years plus.

First operation was to find a site and this was had from the Forestry Commission at Strathyre. Planning permission was sought and granted. Then came the tricky bit, setting out the Broch, using the traditional methods. The Broch being circular, a pole was erected in the centre and a piece of string was tied to the pole, (the modern equivalent to a leather thong). The string being a given length was the radius of the circle which was the perimeter of the walls of the Broch, deducting the thickness of the walls from the length of the string gave him the inside perimeter of the Broch.

Another piece of equipment he made was an A frame. This consisted of three pieces of wood tied together in the shape of an A. Another piece

of string tied to the apex of the A, and a stone at the other end, acting as a plumb bob, with a mark in the middle of the horizontal, when the two points of the A were laid on the wall and the string was on the mark the wall was level.

The Broch, itself, was constructed with an inner and outer wall with a staircase in between. The treads of the stair helped to stabilize the walls, also with other walls tying the two walls together to make the structure sound. This was very important as they rose to a height of more than thirty feet. The stones of the walls were built sloping to the outside to shed away any ingress of water. The stone used was imported from a quarry near Dundee.

The experience was very informative, the midges which were prolific were held at bay by Avon Skin so Soft.

We have to thank Irwin Campbell for his very interesting account of the project also we look forward to his talk “The Scots Phenomenon” in our Winter Programme.

Jack Archibald

ARGATY RED KITES – 26TH JULY 06

The 26th of July saw the group on a visit to Lerrocks Farm at Argaty near Doune. It was a beautiful evening and our guide Mick gave us an in depth talk on the history of Argaty Estate and the workings of the farm the main attraction of course being the Red Kites.

It was amazing as we had just arrived and we were treated to an aerial display by a pair of these magnificent birds. It was like as if they had been given a cue to start the performance.

The Red Kites is only part of the programme of conservation that happens on the Argaty estate in particular, Lerrocks Farm, which covers

548 hectares (1370 acres) of mixed moorland and upland pasture. There are around 120 hectares (300 acres) of deciduous and coniferous woodland. It has a large number of bird species, wild flower meadows and a range of wild animals from red deer to red squirrels.

The land is managed to provide different habitats and three new ponds have been created in addition to the existing four. The fields are also tended in a way that encourages and protects birds including lapwings and skylarks. Special crops have been planted to provide winter food for farmland birds. In 2002 the farm joined the Rural Stewardship Scheme, which promotes wildlife-friendly farming.

The Red Kites were reintroduced into Scotland, after an absence of 130 years by the R.S.P.B. and Scottish Natural Heritage with help from local landowners. They had been persecuted into extinction mainly by ignorance, by farmers and gamekeepers.

After the initial display, the Kites entertained the party for a good 20 minutes or so before retiring. The ranger then took us on a walk over a part of the land to look at the surrounding area from an elevated viewpoint. We also looked at the flora and examined various species including the “the Sun Dew” an insect eating plant of minute proportions.

Returning to the Hide, Mick gave a breakdown on the life of the Red Kites with a wingspan of 5 ½ feet demonstrated by a cloth copy of the profile of the bird. Modern research has shown the birds were persecuted for attacking lambs and such like when it is now known that they mainly eat carrion, live prey limited to mice and voles and small reptiles. Red Kites are known to be long distance travellers, one from the Black Isle was found in Wales and one from England was found in Spain. Each Kite when young is fitted with a device so they can be monitored.

At Argaty they have a feeding time where they can be viewed from the hide, Mick said winter is the best time to view as they arrive in a flock sometimes up to forty birds at a time.

The evening was a great success and many thanks to Mick for his comprehensive explanation of the project.

Jack Archibald

HUNTINGTOWER CASTLE—ELCHO CASTLE— BURLEIGH CASTLE – 19TH AUGUST 06

Saturday 19th August saw the final day trip of the Summer Programme. Being blessed with good weather for the previous Saturday outings yours truly was on edge having had wet weather on the Friday and the forecast not very encouraging. However Saturday broke fair and we crossed our fingers and set off at 9.30am for Perthshire.

Our route took us to Tillicoultry to Dollar and on to the Yetts o' Muckhart. From there it was through Glen Devon towards Gleneagles turning off to the A9 towards Perth. Turning left at Broxden Roundabout still on the A9 to the next junction for Hunting Tower Castle about ½ a mile on.

On arrival we met the custodian, Keith Nicholson from Historic Scotland. Purchasing guidebooks we make sure we got our members discount and managed to put the till in a tiz. He then gave us a brief resumé of the history of the Castle and we proceeded to explore on our own. Allowing Keith to make final preparations for the wedding, which was being held later in the day. We had a good look round with Keith coming to see us periodically to point out various features we may have overlooked. Not often that happens with the hawk eyes of the C.F.S.S. being there. Having been from basement to roof including a walk around the parapet, we then had our coffee break in the grounds, putting two picnic tables together, which were conveniently placed around the property, enjoying the summer sunshine and having a good discussion on the trip so far.

Break, over, we then had a walk round the grounds to view the gardens and the exterior of the castle. The Castle was originally two separate towers only three metres apart and in the 17th century they were joined together as it stands today.

Built in the 15th Century by the Ruthvens who lost control in 1600 after various exploits against James the VI. It was taken over by the state in 1607 when the name was changed from Ruthven Tower to Hunting Tower. The state then gave the property to the Murrays of Tullibardine. In 1767 it was abandoned as a place of residence.

As we were leaving the bride arrived so we decided we could not leave just yet as we could not miss the opportunity of viewing the wedding party.

The journey to Elcho Castle took about twenty minutes and arrived at a very picturesque part of the country on the south bank of the River Tay. We were met by the custodian, who just happened to be Nesta Nicholson wife of Keith of Huntingtower surprise, surprise! We were given a very descriptive talk and tour of part of the castle and then, we were left to explore the rest by ourselves. Elcho is quite an amazing place, with three spiral staircases and a grand staircase to the first floor, all serving a specific purpose, Lord of the manor, guests and servants. Once again we had a good look round from cellar and kitchen to the parapet all bedrooms being en suite, not such a modern idea as you would think.

It was now time for a late lunch and as before we organized the picnic tables and we all gathered round for our eats and treats and a chat.

The castle grounds has an orchard which claims to have 69 apple trees, 14 pear trees and 9 plum trees, all of which were hanging with ripe fruits. We were given permission to pick what we wanted so out came the poly bags and we spent a good half hour filling them. The outcome is plum jam, plum chutney for the coffee morning effort.

After lunch and the fruit picking we explored the grounds and after directions from Nesta we made our way down to the river and looked for

the medieval harbour, which served the Castle and has been partially restored.

Elcho Castle dates back to 1570, on land that had been granted by James III to the Wemyss family in 1468. The main tower house as seen today is as it was built surrounding buildings have long been demolished. Re-roofed in 1830 by the 8th Earl of Wemyss who was responsible for demolishing the out buildings, recycling some of the stone that went to build the cottage that stands in the grounds today. Placed in the care of the State by the 11th Earl of Wemyss in 1929 and now looked after by Historic Scotland.

From there we retraced our steps to Bridge of Earn and headed towards Milnathort via the scenic route through Glen Farg diverting a couple of miles from Milnathort to visit Burleigh Castle. We could only have a quick look round as parking places were virtually nonexistent. A peculiar shape building of two tower houses, one with a round corner the other square joined together by a wall with an arch in the middle. As there is no custodian at this property we concentrated our visit on examining the exterior of the building.

Burleigh Castle was the main seat of the Balfours of Burleigh Family. The estate had been granted to Sir James Balfour of Balgownie by James the II 1445/6 it remained in their ownership until the mid 18th century. It was only a short visit but a pleasant interlude before heading homewards.

Jack Archibald.

OUTING TO KILSYTH AND SAIL FROM AUCHINSTARRY BASIN ON THE FORTH & CLYDE CANAL – Saturday 24th June, 2006.

(Organised by Jack & Sadie Archibald)

We left Alloa Medical Centre car park at 9.30am on a bright, sunny morning, led by Jack in his car. We took the road to Stirling, then to Kippen .

We stopped at Fintry at the Community Centre where we enjoyed tea, coffee and scones. It was beautifully clean and very pleasant with a pub like atmosphere, most unusual and very pleasant. Looking round the Centre, there was a gymnasium and squash courts. A young man showed us round, all very impressive – this had been a Millennium and Lottery project. It costs £50. to join and 70p every time you use the facility. Some of the Field Studies members saw bowling facilities there. Of course, this is also a Rugby Club.

We then set off for the Campsie Glen Viewpoint where we had lovely views all round. At this point Eddie and Jack took photographs of the group.

Next we set off for Colzium & Lennox Estate, where we walked round the walled garden that had lots of unusual plants in it. We enjoyed a picnic lunch here in beautiful sunshine. Then we ventured down to the parkland where there was a pond with a swans nest with six cygnets in it. There were also mallards with ducklings, and also here was a wonderful adventure playground for children.

The Kelvin Valley History and Wildlife Cruise on the canal is organised by the Forth and Clyde Canal Society.

At 1.00pm we arrived at Auchinstarry Basin to board a long boat named “Voyager” which was run by volunteers. Our visit coincided with the first anniversary of the boat which had been launched with Drambuie served in a silver quaich. We then took off with Damselflies hovering over the water, herons a plenty, swans with cygnets and ducks with ducklings, fishermen enjoying the peace and quiet of the banks.

Tommy, the Volunteer, gave us a running commentary on the many interesting things along the way. The Canal was opened in 1790 and closed in 1963. It was re-opened in 2001. The Canal is 20 feet deep in places.

Auchinstarry Basin, a few miles east of Kirkintilloch, is a good overnight stopping place for boats, (they are expecting to build a 10

bedroom hotel, restaurant and bar). The new road and bridge by-passes the original bridge location, which can be seen just to the west. A Marina is planned for the basin, and at present there is a slipway and some amenities. The small town of Kilsyth is a short walk to the north. The final reaches at Lock 16 pass Craigmearloch, one time destination of the `Queen` pleasure steamer: sadly gone, are the tea rooms, putting green and other amenities! To the south is Croy Hill, site of a Roman Fort on the Antonine Wall.

Wyneford Lock No 20 is where we disembarked to look round and hope that a boat would arrive so that we could see the locks working, sadly there were no boats.

We then went back to Twechar which lies just south of the Canal, and from it you can access Bar Hill Roman Fort and enjoy a stroll round Bar Hill. The new hydraulic opening bridge was built in 2000 for the Millennium Link.

We were on the boat trip for four and one half hours at a cost of £8.00. At the end of this very relaxing trip, attended by 19 CFSS members, Betty Roy gave a vote of thanks to Jack and Sadie for a very enjoyable day. We returned to Colzium & Lennox estate to finish the day and have a cup of tea from our flasks. By this time the cygnets had come off the nest and were swimming in the water. This rounded off a lovely day that was enjoyed by all.

ISOBEL WOOD.

“GATHER YE ROSEBUDS WHILE YE MAY” ----- Some Flowers Seen on the Canal Trip.

Considering the late start to the summer who could have envisaged that we would have been blessed with so many warm, sunny days. Because of the mild, wet winter the flourish in the woods and hedgerows has been excellent.

Reflecting on the canal trip from Auchinstarry, I remember admiring, with awe, the quality and variety of the flora both in the water and along the tow path. Of the land species I marvelled at the brilliance of colour exhibited by the Clover, from deep Scarlet, through to Pink and on to White, a plant everyone knows, but one that does not usually have us exclaiming on its beauty. The Red Clover variety was made famous by Darwin, who demonstrated that it would die out unless pollinated by the Bumble Bee, whose tongue alone was long enough to fertilize these flowers.

As we slowly glided along, glimpses were seen of the Pink Valerian, a plant that in earlier times was renowned for its stress relieving properties. Nearby, was Meadow Sweet, a plant used as an air freshener and cold remedy. It was from this plant that the active ingredient for Aspirin was first isolated in the 19th century.

Keeping my eyes focussed, I was rewarded by spotting a Marsh Orchid? – too far away to be sure of its genus. A flower that is easily recognised is the Yellow Flag Iris and growing by the canal bank. In profusion and by the water`s edge there grew the nationally scarce Yellow Tufted Loosestrife – a plant that can reach a height of three feet. Also of interest and in abundance was the Yellow Water Lily (*Nymphaea luteum* / *Nuphar lutea* / *Nymphaea lutea*) dedicated by the Greeks to the nymphs. Its common name is the Brandy Bottle on account of the flower that smells like stale wine odour and by the shape of its flagon like seed vessel. Walking along the tow-path would definitely have yielded many more treasures, but that must wait for another day.

BETTY ROY.

VALLEYFIELD WOOD & TORRY BAY NATURE RESERVE – SATURDAY 22ND July, 2006.

THE PRESTONS OF VALLEYFIELD

The Preston`s of Valleyfield belonged to the same family as the Preston`s of Craigmillar, in Midlothian, the estate in Culross parish was first acquired in 1543 by James Preston, grandson of William Preston of Craigmillar, and son of Henry Preston, burghess of Edinburgh. It was conveyed to him by Patrick Bruce, son of Sir David Bruce of Clackmannan, to whom it had been transferred by the Commendator and abbot of Culross in the same year that they made over, as already mentioned, the estate of Blairhall to his brother Edward Bruce (later created Lord Kinloss for his part in the negotiations along with the 2nd Earl of Mar, on the safe ascension of James VI, on to the Throne of England). The grandson of James Preston received the honour of knighthood from James VI., and his son George was in 1637 made a baronet by Charles I. The title still exists, though no longer connected with the estate of Valleyfield since the death of Sir Robert Preston.

Sir Robert Preston, the eighth of nine children, was born on 21st April, 1749. We follow the footsteps of Sir Robert Preston! He accumulated a large personal fortune during the 1770`s, when he served as commander in the East India Company, and as captain of the trading vessel “Asia”. On return to Britain from overseas in 1777, he became a partner in a London-based trading business. He married Elizabeth Brown in 1790, the daughter of a wealthy London merchant. From 1784-90 Sir Robert was Tory MP for Dover, and between 1792 and 1806 he represented Cirencester. A self made man, Sir Robert owned houses in Essex and had a home in Downing Street, London, the latter he eventually sold to the Government, after which it became the Colonial Office.

Sir Robert, known as “Floating Bob” due to his maritime pursuits, was a well known figure in contemporary political and artistic circles, and counted amongst his friends such names as William Pitt, the Younger, Sir Walter Scott, and the artists Naismyth and Turner. Upon the death of

his brother Charles on March 23rd 1800, the Baronetcy of Valleyfield passed to Sir Robert.

He immediately set about the development of his newly acquired property, commissioning Sir Humphrey Repton, the most acclaimed and expensive landscape designer of the day to improve the estate of Valleyfield. Repton's son visited Valleyfield House in 1800, taking notes from which his father drew up plans for the transformation of the estate, as well as improvements to the house itself. Valleyfield was the only Repton-designed landscape in Scotland, an indication of Sir Robert's wealth and status. Elements of Repton's landscape still survive, and can be visited in Valleyfield Woods, which are now managed by Fife Council.

Repton designed gardens in the Naturalistic style, as opposed more Formal style of the mid 18th century, (good example of which can be seen across the Forth at Hopeton House). His work was criticised by rival, Scottish designer, John Claudius Loudon, for being too artificial.

Repton thought the natural landscape seen on the approach to the estate from North Queensferry was every bit as important as the artificially designed landscape, and he sought to use the natural beauty of the Firth of Forth to his advantage in creating a suitable prestigious setting for Valleyfield House. In the eyes of Sir Robert, the industrial complex at Preston Island would have added to this setting, increasing its prestige and elevating the status of its owner. So Preston Island was constructed alongside these more aesthetic developments. Great men of Sir Robert's day saw industrial development as a way of leaving their mark on the landscape, and of demonstrating their credentials to their peers – a kind of 19th century keeping-up-with-the Jones's.

Sir Robert's primary concern in establishing Preston Island was not only to make money (he had already amassed great personal wealth), but also, to build a lasting monument to his memory. The quality of construction of the buildings at Preston Island is far in excess of that required for their mundane function. Indeed, the structures at Preston Island, with their tall and elegant chimneys, would have contributed to the striking vista

seen for Valleyfield House. One can imagine Sir Robert proudly pointing-out this industrial wonder of the day to his friends, perhaps during an afternoon stroll through his extensive, Repton-designed parklands.

Through the Valleyfield Endowment, he dispensed charity, he gave financial help to the poor of Culross and Torryburn, and excess food from Valleyfield House was distributed to the poor, not that there would have been much excess food, Sir Walter Scott reports that “Floating Bob” was “as big as two men. And eats like three” – Sir Robert was, it seems, a big man in more ways than one! He was also an eccentric, and kept a colony of turtles, to the fascination of the local populace.

Towards the end of his life, Sir Robert became increasingly obsessed with his own mortality, especially after the death of his wife in 1832. He was keen to see that his memory outshone that of his ancestor, Sir George Bruce, who had established a famous coal mine at nearby Moat Pit Island in the early 17th century. He even went so far as to convert Sir George’s family vault at Culross Abbey Church into the Preston Family Vault, where he and his wife are now interred.

“Floating Bob” died in 1834, but he would have been confident in having left his mark on the landscape, in the form of his house and estate, and the industrial complex at Preston Island. Sadly neither of Sir Robert’s great works survive intact. Valleyfield House was demolished in 1941, and Preston Island fell out of use in the 1850s. Over the past 65 years nature has reclaimed its own again, little can be seen of Sir Humphrey Repton’s works. Sir Robert Preston’s dream has almost gone forever. Only a few vestiges of stone are all that remains. That dream is now relegated to the pages of history.

EDDIE STEWART.

Gudeman of Ballangeich

James the V had a peculiar childhood, born months after his father was killed at Flodden, he was brought up almost in imprisonment by his stepfather The Earl of Angus who had divorced James's mother. As a youth he eventually escaped the clutches of his stepfather and joined his mother Mary Tudor in the safe surroundings of Stirling Castle. The years following saw an open conflict between his mother and stepfather until such time as James began his rule.

His minority years in isolation and almost a prisoner had a considerable constraint on his freedom to move around the country. It would appear that the isolation as a minor had a lasting effect on James and to see the countryside and his subjects for himself he would take off alone disguised as a beggar man.

How often he took off on these adventures alone is not known. It has been accepted that while staying in Edinburgh he had taken up with a young girl of the lower classes who resided near the area now known as Cramond. During one of his frolics to Cramond a gang of muggers near the river Almond Bridge caught him. His day was saved by a John Howison a bonded farm labourer who was working in a near by barn and who came to the aid of the king. After beating off the muggers the labourer took James into the farm barn to get over the escapade without knowing that the person he rescued was the king. Inside the barn James requested a basin of water to wash his cuts and bruises. In the conversation taking place between the pair James asked his rescuer what would he desire most in life, and was told that as a bonded labourer a farm of his own would be his dream. On parting company James told John to come to the Palace of Holy-Rood and ask for the Gudeman (a farmer) of Ballangeich, a name James used on many occasions. Ballangeich being an area just west of Stirling Castle and Gaelic for a windy pass

John did present himself at the Palace and was astonished to find that the person he had helped was the king. Part of the land adjoining the river Almond known as Braehead was granted to John Howison by Royal Charter on condition that John and his descendants made available a

basin of water for a monarch to wash if they did happen to pass the Bridge of Cramond. It has been reported that when George the IV visited Edinburgh in 1822 descendants of John Howison carried out this ceremony.

Another of the King's adventures took him to Clackmannanshire. Again he was alone and there are various suggestions how he came to be wandering about in the countryside on his own. One suggestion was that he fell from his horse while out hunting and got separated from the rest of the party. Another suggestion was that he was visiting a lady friend and got lost. Another suggestion and the most likely was that he was out looking round the countryside dressed as a beggar man. Whatever was the reason he was alone and possibly lost and found his way to a cottage in the middle of a moor near to Alva occupied by a husband and wife by the name of Donaldson. The Donaldson family being kindly people invited James into their home where he was fed and stayed the night. In the morning James left the cottage and on leaving invited Mr Donaldson to call at Stirling Castle and ask for the Guideman of Ballangeich. Mr Donaldson did call at the Castle and asked for the Guideman of Ballangeich and was astonished to find that the king had been his guest. This evidently amused the king no end and before parting designated Mr Donaldson as King of the Moors. To this day the area between Alva and Sauchie is known as King O' Muirs.