

# Kyleakin Local History Society



Website: [www.kyleakinlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.kyleakinlocalhistorysociety.co.uk)

Email: [kyleakinlocalhistorysociety@gmail.com](mailto:kyleakinlocalhistorysociety@gmail.com)

## April 2012 Issue 5

### Diary Date

Wednesday 18th April  
2012 – Re look at the  
pictures from the Ringnet  
talk and from the Joan  
Wilcock collection

The winter talks will start  
in November 2012 –  
watch this space for  
further information.

If any of you have any  
suggestions for talks,  
please contact any of the  
committee members.

Dates of other events  
taking place in the village  
can also be included in  
this section – please  
send the details to Sue.

### Committee:

Caroline Clouston  
Hector Grant  
Sue Lyons  
Margaret Macrae  
Roddy Morrison  
Anna Belle Robertson  
John Robertson  
Karren Smith  
Mike Taylor

**Welcome to the April 2012 newsletter**, we hope that you all managed to attend some of the talks over the winter months and perhaps attended the Burns Supper. Thanks to everyone who has supported the society over the last year, we now have 118 members!

Don't forget, you can email us at the above address, if you haven't received anything recently from us, please check your "spam box".

Also, keep an eye on the website, we aim to keep it as up to date as possible, but if you spot any errors, please let us know.

A member's only evening will take place on Wednesday 18th April at 7.30 in the Village Hall so that you can all have another chance to see Will MacLean's photographs of Ring Net Fishing. If you didn't manage to attend his talk in January, or you wanted a detailed look at the pictures, please do join us.

During the same evening you will also have chance to look at some of the pictures the society have purchased from the Joan Wilcock collection which she donated to the Archive Centre in Portree. I am sure that these photographs will bring back plenty of memories, if only to see the hand-knitted clothes some of the little ones were wearing.

Plans for the winter talks in 2012 are underway and we will let you know as soon as we have further details.

Once again, we have a permanent display in the Bright Water Centre and volunteers are required during the season, April to October, 10am – 4pm every Thursday.

Help is required to transcribe some of the talks i.e. type up the talks which have been recorded on a Dictaphone.

We are still looking for a room/building to rent so that we can house our collection of pictures, artefacts and other memorabilia and somewhere to operate from.

It would be interesting to have a collection of local wedding photographs over the years, especially to see how fashions have changes. Photos will be scanned and returned, so if you have any pictures you would be willing to share of family and friends from 1900 or before up to the present day, let us know.

If you can help with any of the above, please contact Caroline.

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We are still trying to identify how the village developed in relation to:

- ❖ Churches
- ❖ Hotels
- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Schools
- ❖ Shops & Cafes
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ Organisations i.e. SWRI
- ❖ Kyleakin Highland Games
- ❖ Gala Days
- ❖ Sport
- ❖ Military
- ❖ Families
- ❖ Ferries

If you have a particular interest in any of these sections, or you think that there is something missing, please get in touch.

## Now and Then:

Do you have old pictures of your house and do you know roughly when they were taken? Can you take a picture of your house now – i.e. in 2012?

If so, can you let us have copies so that we can form a display of what the village used to be like and what it is like now?

The majority of the houses in the village have undergone some form of extensions/ alterations, have you found anything unexpected that you think would be of interest to the Society?



In the last newsletter we asked if you knew when this picture was taken and who the bonnie lads were!

**The picture was taken at Douglas Park, Kyle in 1972**

*Back row – left to right*

**Donald Robertson, Jonathan MacDonald, John Paterson, John Robertson, Hector Grant, Donald Neil MacInnes & Charles Reid**

*Front row - left to right*

**Donnie Paterson, Kenny MacPherson, Jim Innes, Chris MacKinnon & Mitchell Reid**

Thanks to John Robertson who provided this information.

This time, it is the turn of the wee lads and lasses: As before, who are they and what year was this picture taken and where?



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## Can you help

We have a large number of old photographs of various views in the village; do you have the time to take photographs of the same views now?

We are looking to collect enough photographs so that we can organise a "now and then" display.

We would also like photographs of the harbour, fisheries pier and the boats. Whilst not considered historical now, in years to come, your grandchildren may be asking what it was like when Kyleakin had a working harbour!

*Membership application forms are available in the Bright Water Centre or from Anna Belle.*

*If you have any photos and documents of interest to the Society, they can be scanned and returned quickly.*

*Please send ideas for items/articles in the newsletter to any of the committee members.*

## Kyleakin Shops up until 1960 by Ruth Macdougall

When the 2nd Lord MacDonald established a fishing station by the name of Kyleakin, he also founded Skye's first shop, geographically speaking. That was over 200 years ago, at the end of the 18th century. How have Kyleakin's shops changed over the years?

If we assume that the first shop was at the pier on the site of the Brightwater Centre, the next known building was a salt store. Sometime in the 1920's there was a shoemaker here and in 1924 Mrs Graham's opened her shop, '**The Dairy**', where she sold produce such as milk, butter and crowdie from the family farm (Kyle Farm, at the other end of the village) as well as groceries. The shop was built by McKerlich's, Kyle, and there was also a tea room. In 1930 the Cameron family bought the business and Charlie Cameron added to the building which became **Cameron's Stores**. This was a general store, tea room and boarding house during the 30's and 40's, petrol and Calor Gas were also sold here and a drapery and souvenir department was added in the 1950's. For many years the shops on this site were known locally as "the Dairy".



Behind this building and beside a house called Ferry Cottage (demolished in the 1950's to make way for the road) was **Neil MacLean's** butcher's shop. He sold meat as far afield as Breakish, from his bicycle.

Where the White Heather Hotel is now was the **White Heather Café** with a shop area selling ice cream, crisps, etc, run by Wacek and Ena Sikorski (the latter being the daughter of Mrs Graham, above). The cottage on the site was converted from 1949 by Wacek who also built the tables and seats in the café and over the years expanded the business.



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Moving up the pier - a real hive of activity - was another butcher's shop, **Grigor's**, beside Duncaan. Although the owners were Grigors from Mallaig, the butcher who worked there for many years was the well known Duncan Tuach from Ross-shire. He will be remembered collecting his meat deliveries from the train in Kyle and bringing them over the ferry on a barrow. When he was away, Joe Wiseman from Mallaig provided holiday cover. Does anyone remember Joe enjoying a dip in the sea?

Duncan Tuach lived next door in the building occupied by **Johnnie Munro** (Johnnie Uisdean) a real character, well remembered by Ian Robertson in our DVD and whose shop (H & J Munro) sold paint, paraffin, ships' chandlery, fishing tackle, some groceries and was also a betting shop. It could be daunting as a youngster to go into that dark shop to buy biscuits when Johnnie was occupied with his older betting customers who were colourful local characters. It's not quite so daunting now as Harry's coffee shop!

The corrugated iron building where we now have a part time post office has had a variety of occupants: it was owned by Mrs Graham and was where Mary MacDonald, the dressmaker, worked before and possibly during the time of World War II. In the 50's and early 60's it was Lochcarron Handloom Weavers (nicknamed **the Tweed Shop**) whose assistants were Peggy MacPherson, then Catriona Finlayson (Tana). Behind it there may have been a blacksmith's shop.

Crossing over the Corran now and behind the new flats, Obbeside, which used to be the Marine Hotel and Seaview, was a **Bakery** in the 1920's, said to have belonged to Martina Robertson. There was a bank of cinders on the shore nearby which one of our contributors remembered his mother telling him was from the bakery. The Marine Hotel itself also sold 'odds and ends' in those days.

Probably the most important shop in the village at one time was the **shop and post office** built and opened by Donald Macpherson in 1902 in what was known as the Heathmount building and which today is Saucy Mary's Bar and Hostel. The Macpherson family continued to run this business after Donald's death in 1934 until the **Macrae** family acquired it in 1945 and operated the post office, grocery, newsagent and petrol pumps. In the earlier days of the telephone, it also included a small, manual telephone exchange.



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Next door on the site of Glen Arroch was **Iolaire** (the Eagle Inn) where there was a shop owned by Toady Munro, a relative of Johnnie Munro and you could buy bread there; was there any connection to the Bakery at the back of the Marine Hotel?

**Benmore**, Skye Backpackers, was where Donald Macpherson and his uncle had the post office and shop before they built Heathmount in 1902. In the 1950's Neil Macpherson had a ladies' and gents' hairdressing business in the front room nearest to Bellevue.

Between Benmore and the Old School is Bayview and there, first, Donnie Lamont had a café where he sold ice cream made from his own Italian recipe. Later it became **H. Lamont's** shop where Hector's sister, Lena (Mrs Nicolson) sold drapery, wool etc. The shop was loved by the schoolchildren next door for the selection of sweets they could buy for a few pennies.

Opposite the church on the corner of Meuse Lane was a corrugated iron **tailor's** shop where Mr MacKinnon was the tailor and Murdo Montgomery his apprentice. Murdo (Monty) was tailor there until he retired. Some of the local men would congregate here to listen for news of the Kyleakin fishing boats which you got on the radio fishing stations.



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After World War II, **mobile shops** took to the road and there was the Co-op from Broadford (Neil the Co-op), Fraser & MacColl's hardware shop from Inverness, Ronnie Matheson from Portree with groceries and Miss Thompson from Glasgow who sold drapery from her van.

Over the next decades there were inevitable changes and additional shops further "up the village" and Part II in a future newsletter will detail these. In the meantime, if you have any further information, we would like to hear from you so that we can add more colour to this picture.

Our grateful thanks for help with these recollections go to Morag Macrae, Cathy Reid, Richard Robertson and Ena Sikorski, senior members of our community.

Whilst researching old maps I came across one of Kyleakin dated 1889 and it shows a 'Doctors Rock' (or rocks). Can anyone tell me the reason for this name as I am sure there is a story attached?

Thankyou.

Robert – [smartie.morri@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:smartie.morri@yahoo.co.uk)

I am looking for information regarding an ancestor – Christina McGilvrey (or some variant) born on 19th March 1837 at Kyleakin, Isle of Skye. Registered as Chirsty in Old Parochial Records and baptised on 6th April 1837. Her mother was Mary Kelly from Pabbay, married to Malcolm McGilvrey on 2nd February 1830. Malcolm and family emigrated to Canada in the mid-1800s and I would love to know more about where they came from and why they left.

Many thanks.

Christine Kirk, Inverary, Ontario, Canada – [clorkirk@hotmail.ca](mailto:clorkirk@hotmail.ca)

Eilean Bàn Trust are looking for volunteer guides for an afternoon tour of the island, if interested contact Bright Water Centre - 01599 530040

I am able to restore and renovate faded or damaged old photographs, and make photographic copies (gloss or matte, etc) for friends/relatives etc., purely as a hobby – I long since retired! I can also make photographs from old colour slides and of course from film negatives.

If I can help any members, please get in touch to discuss.

Deryk Wylde – [d.wylde815@btinternet.com](mailto:d.wylde815@btinternet.com)



Do you have any pictures or memorabilia relating to any royal visits, including previous jubilee or coronation events/celebrations that were organised in the village? If so, let us know as we aim to put a "royal" display in the Bright Water Centre to coincide with the Queens Jubilee year.