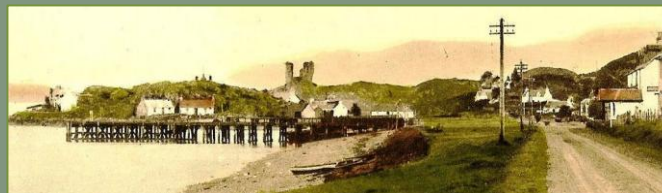


Kyleakin Local History Society



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Autumn 2013

Issue 8

Diary Date

The second talk of the winter season will take place on Monday 2nd December 2013 starting at 7.30 pm at **Kyleakin Connections, Old School, Kyleakin.**

Details of the other talks are on the back page of this newsletter.

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
Calum Macaskill
Margaret Macrae
Roddy Morrison
Anna Belle Robertson
John Robertson
Karren Smith

Welcome to the Autumn 2013 newsletter.

Where has the time gone..... Year three of the society included five talks over the winter and once again these talks proved to be successful with 30 – 40 people attending each talk. Thanks are extended to all the speakers.

The society could not function without the help and support of a number of people so on behalf of KLHS I would like to thank - Kyleakin Connections for the use of their projector and also Margaret & Hugh Scott for the use of their screen when they were required. Ruth Macdougall for her articles on "Shops in the Village". Anna Belle for organising the quiz evening and the quiz sheet and for all the fundraising she does over the year to create a healthy bank balance and I would also like to thank her for researching information relating to queries received through the website. I would also like to thank Margaret for her professional expertise in carrying out her duties as Minute Secretary so efficiently and to all the committee members for their dedication and support.

As I am sure that you already know, the talks are moving from the Village Hall. Unfortunately we experienced a fair amount of background noise and disturbance from other hall users during the talks in the Village Hall. So we are relocating to the Nice Café in the old school building for the 2013 – 2014 winter programme of talks. We have also asked for permission to use the Church of Scotland car park behind the church and we are awaiting confirmation from the Kirk Session.

80 copies of our first DVD have now been sold and next year we hope to reproduce Mary MacPherson's booklet 'Memories of Kyleakin'.

The society newsletter will now be produced in spring and autumn thanks go to Sue for her hard work in producing and editing the newsletter. New Items are always welcome so put your thinking caps on!

Work on the website is ongoing and most of the photos have now been updated with the relevant details. Thanks to Anna Belle, Hector and Margaret for researching and providing the information. Time permitting; we hope to add more pictures over the winter months. The website is proving to be very successful with lots of hits worldwide. Thanks to Sue for updating the website as new data becomes available.

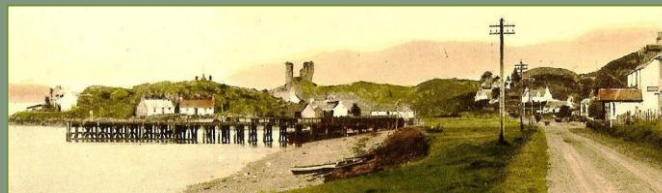
This season we have struggled to find volunteers to man the Bright Water Centre where we have our small exhibition. This year we needed people for one Friday per week over a 6 month period, but only 4 members volunteered. Thanks to Anna Belle, Margaret, Ruth and Kate Ann who along with myself managed to support this venture. In order to continue using this facility more volunteers will be required for next season otherwise, we may have to withdraw from the Centre.

Finally, Calum Macaskill has joined the committee, replacing Mike Taylor who has been onboard since KLHS started – thanks Mike for your valued contribution to the society.

We need to work as a team to keep the momentum going and I thank you all for your support.

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?



COILLE BHURICH

Coille Bhurich was built around 1881 for Sarah MacKay or Matheson as a house and what looked like a general store and possibly a salt store and fish curing station.

To the west and adjoining Coille Bhurich was Fuschia Cottage occupied by the Grant family, which was demolished in the 1960's - 70's. Next door to Fuschia Cottage was a tailor's shop and behind this was a blacksmith's, with several cottages close by.

To the east of Coille Bhurich was a cottage occupied by the MacInnes family which was demolished in 1934, the remains of this cottage and another one behind formed part of the garden which became the Coille Bhurich site.



From 1939 the property was owned by Rebecca Ann Matheson whom some of us will remember as 'Becca', she was a descendant of Angus MacKay born in Kyleakin in 1812. He was the first ever piper appointed to Queen Victoria and he died in 1859. His son Donald was piper to the Duke of Sussex.

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Becca's brother Dugald was a violinist who also made violins and we are fortunate to have his original violin pattern which, along with the Coille Bhurich seal and a collection of photographs have been kindly donated by Will MacLean. Will's aunts lived there after 'Becca's' death.



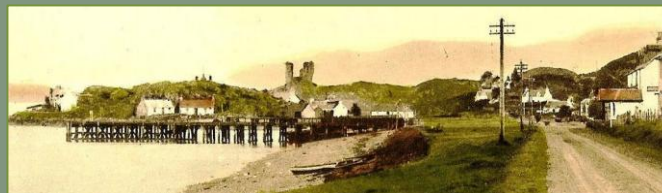
The History Society will shortly be receiving a bible presented to Miss R A Matheson in 1899 in appreciation of "All The Good Work" she did with the 'New Kilpatrick United Presbyterian Church'. This bible was bequeathed to Kate MacPherson (The Cliffe) and inherited by her daughter Mairi Gordon who wishes to donate the bible to the society for which we are very grateful.



If anyone else has any more information on Coille Bhurich, please let us know.

KLHS would like to thank Will MacLean for the use of the photographs.

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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 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 from in Camerons old shop/Post Office, or from AnnaBelle.

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 in more recent times

Although the Sunday ferry service from Kyle to Kyleakin began in 1965, **Sunday newspapers** had been available for a number of years. Robert Smith (Bob the Painter) who came from Bannockburn and latterly lived in Broadford, started selling Sunday newspapers in 1948 when he lived in Upper Breakish. From the early 1950's Simon MacLean, the local boatman, who had a contract with the wholesalers (possibly John Menzies) brought them in all weathers – sometimes it would appear that his dinghy almost disappeared under the waves – to Kyleakin slipway where Willie MacKay collected them. Willie, who had come from Ardgay, was gardener at Dunningell (now MacKinnon House) and had previously been foreman on Lord MacDonald's estate in Sleat. He drove a Humber Hawk and sold papers at the slipway and elsewhere, all the way to Portree.

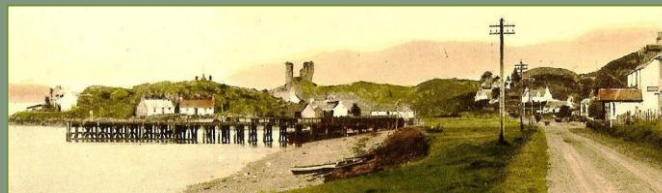
After Willie MacKay came Foster Nelson and Norman Hannah who collected the papers at the slipway from Willie MacKinnon's fishing boat. While Foster took the papers to the north end, Norman sold them from Kyleakin to Broadford and Sleat and as things got busier, Philip Nelson took them to Sleat. After the start of the Sunday ferry in 1965 the papers were loaded from the Inverness wholesaler's van on to Foster Nelson's Ford Thames van (which had windows in the side for sales) at Willie Nicolson's shop on Kyle pier. In due course Donnie Robertson joined Norman Hannah and then he and his father, Dave, did the paper run, by now in the late 70's. Alasdair MacLean, Jim Muirhead and Hamish Fraser followed.

The Statistical Account for Scotland covering 1834 - 45 states that here were 'some shops' in Kyleakin as well as 'a dozen good slated houses and a very comfortable, well kept inn'. Inevitably, over the years most of Kyleakin's shops evolved into other businesses. This was the case with Camerons' shop: the new building opened in 1964 when the older grocery and drapery shops combined in one large shop after a short period in a temporary wooden building during the reconstruction. The business moved up the pier to the 'Tweed Shop' in 1993 when the shop closed and the building was subsequently purchased by Highland Council. The Eilean Ban Trust opened the Brightwater Centre exhibition and shop on the ground floor in 2000.

Grigors' butchers shop closed and became the Ice of Skye ice cream shop where ice cream was made on the premises by Xander MacDiarmid who also hired out mopeds. Subsequently, it became a cycle shop run by his brother, John, who also had cars for hire. The building housing Johnnie Munro's shop was renovated by a Mr and Mrs Tolan who opened The Pier Coffee House in 1988 and in 1991 it became the coffee shop which we all know today as Harry's.

The 'Tweed Shop' was for a short while a part-time Bank of Scotland, the Deerstalker craft shop and then Camerons' shop/newsagent/post office until 2009. It is now a part-time post office operated by Broadford post office and in 2010 held the first photographic exhibition of Kyleakin from which Kyleakin Local History Society evolved.

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In the 1960's Mr and Mrs MacDiarmid built the Castle Moil shop and licensed restaurant – the latter being a ceilidh venue - and in due course they added the King Haakon Bar. The business operated along the same lines under different ownerships and has now re-opened after renovations. Across the road Corran Cottage (formerly Mrs Bain's guest house) became MacDiarmid of Skye's woollen and tweed shop.



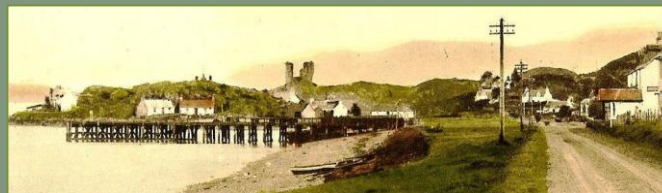
Across the (South) Obbe there is no record of shops, although there was a hairdresser, Ann, at Covesea.

MacRaes' newsagent and shop operated until the 1970's and the post office occupied the same building until 1998, while the former Triton Hotel subsequently became the Triton Bar, an Indian Restaurant, the Kyleakin Hotel, Haggis Backpackers and Saucy Mary's bar/shop/restaurant and hostel which it is today. There were petrol pumps here too, prior to the opening of the filling station outside the village.

Neil Macpherson operated his hairdresser's business in Benmore until 1954/55 when he left to work at the fishing, returning to hairdressing in the Waverley, Main Street, Kyle. Mrs Lena Nicholson ran Lamont's shop until the mid 1960's and Murdo Montgomery was a tailor until 1977 in his small shop on the corner opposite the Church of Scotland.



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Further along Meuse Lane at Marieville, Flora Strachan's Pottery and shop operated for four years in the 1990's with Jackie Buskie and other workers selling locally made crafts such as pottery, stained glass jewellery and hand-knitting.

Beside The Barn, opposite Achmore Road, Roddy Macdougall had his cycle shop and hire from 1973 until 1978 and in the 1990's Mr and Mrs Seville sold bakery at The Barn. Another hairdresser, Morag MacLeod, has operated her shop continuously since 1986 at the rear of her home in Crowlin Road.

Kyleakin Filling Station, which was opened by the MacRae family in the 1960's, had a booth for self service machines, shop, payment booth and toilets and what, at the time, seemed like a very large concreted forecourt. Over a period of time there were various proprietors: Chrissie Cornish, Jim and Maureen Muirhead, a cycle shop proprietor and various others who ran it for the fuel companies until it closed. Since its revival it has had a mix of shops and enterprises.



In a future issue we will trace how these shops have evolved into other types of business.

Further to our previous article, *Kyleakin Shops up until 1960:*

We know that the information on our website triggers your own recollections. Proof of this came recently when we were given information by Will MacLean regarding the house on Kyleakin pier known as 'Coille Bhurich' between Harry's coffee shop and the Post Office which was the home of Becca Matheson until the late 1960's, and her father before her. From the photographs and information supplied by Will, we see that there was a shop here, thought to be a General Merchant's with a sign above the door, certainly between the 1890's and 1914, although possibly earlier.

Keep the information coming.....

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Continuing the theme from the last newsletter about the origins of houses in the village, looking from my daytime vantage point at my desk, there are a number of houses opposite on the Obbe side – but having looked through the scanned images most people seem to take pictures facing The Pier.

So if your house is in either of these pictures, let us know.

What are the origins of your house; where did it get its name from; has it undergone several name changes; do you know anything about the house next door?

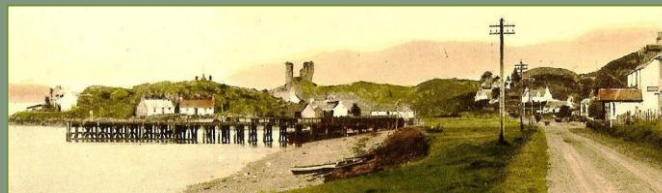
We would like to collect information on the six houses from “Seawinds” to “Hillview”, hopefully going back as far as we can from the current occupiers.



If you are interested in finding out more about your house, let us know – it could feature in future newsletters.

The history of these houses will be lost in years to come unless we record the details now!

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Dates for your diaries:

The talks for the 2013/2014 winter season are moving to Mondays and will be held in Kyleakin Connections Day Centre. The dates are:

Monday 4th November 2013 – Some history of the Crowlin Islands – Speaker – Bill Ramsay

Monday 2nd December 2013 – Old Photographs of South Skye – Speaker – Maggie MacDonald

Monday 6th January 2014 – West is Best (Scenes from the sea including St Kilda) – Speaker – Gordon Brown (SKYAK)

Monday 3rd February 2014 – Protecting the crofting cultural landscape – Speaker – Iain Turnbull (National Trust, Balmacara)

Monday 3rd March 2014 – Interesting artefacts found on Skye – Speaker – Martin Wildgoose (Local Archaeologist)

Saturday 25th January 2014 - Burns Supper in the Kyleakin Village Hall. Further information will be available in due course.

The 2014 Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday 22nd September 2014 starting at 7.30 pm in Kyleakin Village Hall – please do come along with ideas of how you would like the society to progress.

KLHS Website

The **News & Events** page has been updated to include a dropdown page "**Newsletters**" which will give you access to all the newsletters issued by KLHS - just click on the newsletter image and depending on the settings on your computer, the newsletter will automatically open or will be in your download box.

The "Important Dates" page has changed to "**Historical Time Line**" and new information has recently been added.

The website also provides information on the society's current programme of talks and activities as well as other events in the district.

WW1 and WW2

Have you any information or memorabilia about how WW1 affected Kyleakin and the people living here at the time? Do you know of anyone from this area who was involved in WW2 and especially Dunkirk?

Over the winter months we would like to collect as much information as possible in order to make this the basis of the exhibition in the Bright Water Centre in 2014.

Volunteer Request

KLHS will once again provide volunteers to work in the Bright Water Centre, over spring/summer and autumn 2014.

If we are to be able to continue to house our exhibitions in the centre, volunteers will, once again be needed to work in the centre.

Please contact Caroline if you are able to help or if you need further information before deciding.

Do you know which the oldest house in the village is? At least one house was built in 1891 (according to the deeds) – but was your house built earlier than this? Despite the possibility of numerous renovations, you may be living in what was the first house built in Kyleakin – or do you have any old maps - if so get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.