



## APPLECROSS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Comunn Eachdraidh na Comraich

Web : [www.applecrossheritage.org.uk](http://www.applecrossheritage.org.uk)

Scottish Charity No. SC030267

NEWSLETTER - January, 2011 Issue No. 23

### GENERAL :

We are pleased to report another good year, though both number of visitors and income were reduced when compared with the year 2009. This is not surprising, as that particular year saw a considerable increase in tourists visiting the area because of the publicity associated with the Monty Halls TV programme and the then economic situation which encouraged people to holiday in the UK rather than travel abroad. In 2010, the infamous 'credit crunch' undoubtedly had an impact.

Visitor numbers were down 27.9% and takings were also down by 26.6.%.

### THE APPLECROSS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME (ALPS) :

In the last newsletter, we reported that ALPS was under way and listed six projects specifically related to Applecross Historical Society. It is with some pleasure that we can now report that our curator/researcher has been appointed. He is Gordon Cameron, an Applecross native, who is a Gaelic speaker as well as having impressive, relevant experience. He started with us on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 and we confidently look forward to a revitalising of the heritage centre including, inter alia, completing the digitising of our archives and records and making these available on our website.

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### A word from the Curator

It's been a busy few weeks since I took up my post as Heritage Curator on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010, but things are slowly beginning to take shape behind the scenes at the Heritage Centre. I have been in touch with staff at the National Archives of Scotland and the University of Strathclyde to discuss how best to structure our archival records system - which will help us when we come to digitise the Heritage Society's holdings.

We have a number of key projects ahead of us including the recording, collation, mapping and display of as many Applecross place names as we can collect; mapping the Clachan graveyard and the gravestone inscriptions; digitising the archives; and building on the excellent work already done over the years on our genealogical database.

The Society will need help and input from members of the community so if you have anything to contribute, please get in touch. Even the most minor, seemingly mundane, details can be the keys to better understanding our shared heritage. For instance a receipt for some clothing (on the face of it just an old scrap of paper) could give us the names of the seller and the buyer, the item, the materials, the cost and the intended use, helping to build a more detailed picture of trade, economy and occupations in Applecross in years gone by. So, if you start to have a spring clean of any cupboards or lofts, let me know if anything catches your eye that could be useful. It will be much appreciated. You can reach me on 01520 744 478 at the Heritage Centre or by email: [gordon@applecross.org.uk](mailto:gordon@applecross.org.uk)

Gordon Cameron  
Heritage Curator

and in Gaelic

### Facal bhon Ghlèidheadair

Tha na beagan sheachdainean a dh'fhalbh air a bhith caran trang on a thòisich mi san dreuchd agam mar Ghlèidheadair Dualchais aig Ionad Dualchais na Comraich air 29mh Samhain 2010. Mean air mhean, ge-tà, tha cùisean a' tighinn ri chèile. Tha mi air a bhith a' bruidhinn ri luchd-

obrach Tasglann Nàiseanta na h-Alba, cho math ri daoine aig Oilthigh Srath Chluaidh, mun dòigh as fheàrr siostam clàraidh a chur an gnìomh. Bidh siostam ceart na chuideachadh mòr nuair a chuireas sinn na clàraidhean againn ann an cruth didseatach.

Tha grunn phròiseactan cudromach san amharc, nam measg ainmean-àite na sgìre a chruinneachadh, a chlàradh agus a thaisbeanadh; map' a dhèanamh den chladh is na tha sgrìobhte air na leacan-uaghach a chur sìos air coimpiutair; an cruinneachadh againn a shàbhaladh ann an cruth didseatach; agus feuchaidh sinn ri barrachd a chur ris an obair ionmholta a rinneadh mar-thà air sloinntearachd na Comraich.

Bidh sinn an urra ri cuideachadh bhuaibh fhathast ge-tà, is ma tha càil agad a dh'fhaodadh tu a dhèanamh no a thoirt dhuinn, leigibh fios thugam. Tha fiù 's rudan beaga 'suarach' glè chudromach ann a bhith gar cuideachadh gus an dualchas againn a thuigsinn. Mar eisimpleir, dh'fhaodadh cùntas mu aodach dealbh nas treasa a thoirt dhuinn mu eaconamaidh na Comraich sna bliadhnaichean a dh'fhalbh – ma tha e ag innse dhuinn cò a reic is a cheannaich e, dè bha ann is na bha e a' cosg, na h-obraichean a bha a' dol aig an àm. Mar sin, ma shineas sibh ris an taigh no an lobht agaibh a sgioblachadh as t-Earrach is ma tha ur sùilean a' laighe air rudeigin a dh'fhaodadh a bhith inntinneach cuir fios thugam. Bhithinn' gu mòr nur comain. Gheibhear grèim orm aig an Ionad Dhualchais, 01520 744 478 no air post-dealain: [gordon@applecross.org.uk](mailto:gordon@applecross.org.uk)

Gòrdan Camshron

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Significant progress has also been made in acquiring equipment. John McKeown has worked hard to ensure that we get the best possible deals including seasonal offers.

The other projects which figure in those supported by ALPS will be implemented as mentioned by the curator.

We are also grateful for the support we have received from the ALPS Administrator, Sam Bridgewater, and Archie MacLennan, Trust Administrator during the process of acquiring equipment.

#### **VISITORS :**

We had our usual visit early in the year from Ann Bishop with results of her further research into census records and related items – and we look forward to her next visit.

Mackenzie visitors from Australia brought news of Malcolm and Heather Murchison from Tasmania (and we have also exchanged correspondence with Heather).

#### **FRIENDS NO LONGER WITH US :**

Garnett Ashby : For some years, we have enjoyed annual visits from the Ashbys from America who, annually, took up temporary residence in Clachan Manse and we were particularly saddened to learn of Garnett's death earlier in 2010. We offer our sincere condolences to his family.

Nan Bain : Nan Bain, who for years has spent the summer in Toscaig, died suddenly while in Toscaig. Nan was connected with the Kennedys from Toscaig and her home during the summer was "Willie Kennedy's house". She was in the WAAF during World War II and was the lady who produced the quality-knitted scarves we sold at the heritage centre. Her annual visits will be missed. Our condolences go to her family.

#### **BILINGUAL SIGNS :**

We were fortunate to be provided, by Bord na Gàidhlig, with bilingual signs, to replace those in English only that we have had in position for some years now.

#### **CAPTAIN MURDOCH MACKENZIE (1812 – 1884) :**

Captain Mackenzie was buried at Symonds Street, Auckland, New Zealand and we recently made a donation towards a memorial stone to commemorate the event. Confirmation of the erection of the new stone has been received. The following article written by Ian Mackenzie in 2006 gives the background :

The Waipu House of Memories Newsletter of November, 2005 intimated the intention of marking Captain Mackenzie's grave and to that end has asked for contributions towards the cost, and Applecross Historical Society agreed to send a donation.

Murdoch Mackenzie led a full and interesting life and is best known for his support of the Reverend Norman MacLeod from Stoer.

MacLeod left Loch Broom in 1817 with his dissatisfied followers. He had been employed as a teacher at the SPCK school in Ullapool and was in dispute with the local established minister. One of the matters that caused upset was his refusal to have his son baptised by the minister. Instead he took him to Lochcarron and was sacked. MacLeod led his people firstly to Pictou, Nova Scotia in 1817, then to St. Ann's, Cape Breton in 1820. Still looking for religious freedom, he had ships built by the Mackenzie brothers and sailed in 1851 to Adelaide via Cape Town. The lifestyle of the gold rush was unacceptable to this determined man and, in 1833, the group sailed to Waipu in the north east corner of North Island, New Zealand.

The Applecross connection is absolute. Although Murdoch, his brother Duncan (Prince) and their sister Ann were born in Prince Edward Island, their father, John Mackenzie, known as 'Smuggler', was born in Applecross and, having left Applecross to settle there in 1790, the family returned to Applecross where another brother, Hector, was born c1815. His mother was Ann MacDonald from Applecross. One reference I have states that 'Smuggler' was born in Gairloch in 1771. It is thought that he got his distinctive nickname from the opportunities available to a competent seaman in the aftermath of American Independence. It is said that the family returned to Applecross in order to get an education for the children but, I suppose, it is also possible that the 'Smuggler' would appreciate an opportunity to come back to the sanctuary.

In the event, on their return to Cape Breton in 1833, Murdoch was a young man and the whole family were proficient sailors. Their Applecross schooling proved to have been a successful grooming for their future lives! Sister Ann married Hector MacDonald from Applecross in 1839.

Although the Mackenzies were not part of the St. Ann's community set up by the Reverend Norman MacLeod, they had the skills he was seeking when he began to plan the move of his people to Australia. Ships were built and captained by the Mackenzies who also acted as business agents for the emigrants, particularly once they had settled at Waipu. It was Captain Murdoch's brother, Duncan, who petitioned the Governor of New Zealand for a grant of land for the community. 30,000 acres of land at Waipu was allocated. The late James Shaw Grant of the *Stornoway Gazette* put this matter in perspective by pointing out that the arable land of the whole of the Isle of Lewis amounted to only 14,323 acres. Grant also opined that 'there should be a memorial in Applecross or Assynt to a memorable migration'. The priority given to our peninsula by Grant is revealing. This distinguished writer had no axe to grind and yet chose to name the Applecross seamen and traders first in preference to the minister, MacLeod, who led his people from Scotland to Canada and from their second settlement there to Australia via South Africa and thence to Waipu, New Zealand. Significantly, there is now a distinguished monument to the Reverend Norman MacLeod, erected in 1994, seven miles north of Lochinver, overlooking Clachtoll Bay.

Captain Murdoch is described in the *New Zealand Herald* of 1884, which reported his death and funeral as 'noted as a mariner for his good judgement, boldness, nerve and capacity .....as great a favourite with shipowners and shipping agents in every port he visited for his honesty, genial and gentlemanly disposition'. The paper also commented, 'It is a noteworthy fact that during his long term of service as a master mariner, extending over forty-five years, he never lost a vessel or met with any serious accident'.

That the good people of Waipu should look for a more modest marking of the last resting place of one of the distinguished family of seamen and traders who made the dream possible, is wholly appropriate.'

### **CLACHAN CHURCH :**

We maintain a close interest in Clachan Church which is only a few metres from the heritage centre and is generally of considerable interest to our visitors, and we are pleased to report that its refurbishment is now actively being pursued by ALPS. The windows, which are in imminent danger of collapse, will be dealt with immediately, being replaced with a design similar to the original, and the other works will follow. Interestingly there are colonies of brown long-eared and pipistrelle bats in the church and it is now a legal requirement that their welfare must be considered, and major works to the roof will take this into account. We believe that visitors will appreciate that this church, of historical significance, is now being preserved.

From time to time, we include items of interest from Applecross's recent history. The article which follows was provided by our good friend, Iain McLean.

## **IAIN McLEAN'S HOLIDAY MEMORIES :**

Memories of holidays spent in Arrina and Ardheslaig between the 1930s and the 1950s on the North Coast of Applecross overlooking Loch Torridon

In July, 1946, I remember studying a cannon which was lying on the beach between high and low water mark on the east side of the loch at Ardheslaig. It must have been lying there for at least two hundred years and, considering everything, was in remarkable condition. I wonder if it is still there?

At the same time, I remember noticing a cottage above where the cannon was, or maybe still is, where the grass was much greener than its surroundings. On seeking an explanation from my father, he told me that it was due to earth ballast in a sailing ship from Ireland being dumped there to make room for a cargo of cattle and sheep. It just goes to show what entrepôt trade went on between Applecross and the rest of the world at that time. The sea was the highway for commerce in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The postmen who did the service between Shildaig and Arrina on the North Applecross coast prior to about 1950 had to row from Shildaig to Derry Dhu, by Inverbain, on Loch Shildaig then haul the mail bags by cart to Ardheslaig where they had another boat which they also rowed to Kenmore then by cart to Arrina where another postman took over, had their terms and conditions greatly improved when in that year they acquired a British Seagull outboard. One at first which did the double duty and then, eventually, another one for the Ardheslaig to Kenmore run. At that time, I felt the North Coast owed a great debt to the British Seagull outboard as it made life considerably easier if you had one and there were quite a few on the Coast.

Distillation – I remember being told this story by retired ex-matron MacKenzie in Innellan, Argyll, where she retired after a long nursing career spent in the north east of England, I think. (She came from either Arrina or Fernabeg.) Anyway when she was a young girl and out playing in the heather, she fell into an illicit distillation warehouse, and according to her recollection, she was surrounded by whisky casks so the output of the 'cratur' must have been impressive because she never told me what happened after that and how she was rescued!

I often wonder if there was a special emigration scheme for Wester Ross boys to go to the west coast of the U.S.A, as so many seem to have gone there round about 1910 onwards. They gathered, according to legend, at the weekends in the Redmayne Hotel in Spokane, no doubt to ease their homesickness! And, as has been mentioned hitherto, they sent money back home which was essential.

September, 1948 - On the bridle path between Fernabeg and Arrina, I spoke with Alec MacKenzie, retired, and it was agreed that a road would be a great thing for young people. It was only after we had parted that I thought what young people and there were only a handful left by that time, if that, on the whole North Coast. The road, when it came in 1976, was a hundred years too late for the then generation left on the Coast!

Round about 1947, or am I dreaming it, did a group of young men take an Austin 7 tourer round the Coast from Applecross, manhandling across bridges etc. and pushing it up the hills or was it just a joke? It was, according to legend, propelled to Shildaig by such means.

The 1940s, ceilidh times – The old people who came into my aunt's house for a cup of tea, would talk about the times they went to Arrina school and how, if they spoke Gaelic, they ran the risk of having to wear across their necks a notice board with the words, "I must speak English in school!", for the rest of the day.

At the same time, they also remembered my father's mother, my granny, who only spoke Gaelic, who must have been too old for the Board School when it started but nevertheless was an excellent sheepwoman and, I believe also, a noted matchmaker and, no English apart, was an expert on the 1911 National Insurance Act. The power of the spoken word can never be underestimated especially in the Highlands!

In the same vein, Sunday work was invoked. It simply was not done as Sunday was a day of complete rest except for work of necessity. For example, to ease the burden of beasts in the byre or the like. The whole community observed this stricture, if it was one, to a greater or lesser degree. For example, some households would have no Sunday cooking, all preparation being done the day before.

At ceilidh times, it would also be recalled that prior to 1914 when there were a lot of young men about, shinty and wild pony riding was carried out on the flats to the west of Arrina.

"Crowdie and cream!" in 1950 – Going for the cattle in Ardheslaig on a summer Sunday night, the only possible form of diversion permissible. We had a corgi dog with us on holiday and it used to bite the heels of the cattle, in frustration, to get them moving on and it was very good and effective at that. A throwback to its Welsh forebears and just something in it, as it had never been bred to do that.

In 1948, a postman told me that their work was heavier round about New Year time and Communion time. No doubt they would have been very careful at New Year time!

I was in Arrina on holiday in July, 1940 and, in order to get there, my father and I had to go through Identity Card Control at Inverness station. This consisted of a trestle desk and a couple of chairs for the Army officers to sit at while they checked your Identity Card. No-one was allowed west of Inverness without going through this procedure because of the intense military and naval activity in the area. In addition to this control, letters from the area were strictly censored and I remember one from my aunt in Arrina being heavily "blue-pencilled", this being the censor's way of deleting anything not in the national interest that had been written and in the case of Arrina, this usually meant shipping movements in Loch Torridon which were easily observed from there.

In the Thirties, I remember seeing my aunt coming home from the peat bank with a loaded creel and exclaimed to her that she was heavily burdened! She replied that normally she did her knitting while walking home with peats from the peat bank in Arrina, likewise, while rounding up the cow in the evenings for milking. Such was the industry of Arrina's ladies at that time!

I think that it would have been in 1937 that the cruise ship *Andes* visited Shieldaig in the summer time. Anyway, one fine night, my father and I were fishing from the rocks opposite Sgeir Dhubh at the back of Arrina when the RMS *Andes* sailed into Loch Torridon at full speed. Quickly my father told me to pack up fishing straightaway and seek refuge on higher ground as, if we delayed, we would be hit by the encroaching bow wave. Sure enough, we had barely sought refuge when a colossal wave engulfed our previous position and we would have been swept into the sea. So much for local knowledge!

In the 1930s in Arrina and in a good many of the North Coast townships, dry sanitation was the order of the day, the water closet being the exception. As many of the houses were crofts with a byre, this helped but it was not until many years later that things improved.

Also, around about the same time, my aunt in Arrina used to say that there were lovely places there in which to pray and that thought has never left me.

During these years, there was a lament at ceilidh time for the years prior to 1914 and the grandeur of Camus an Eilean when Lord Middleton's steam yacht would sail into the bay there for the shooting in August carrying from Indian princes to servants who would look after the shooting party. The hosts and guests would be accommodated in the lodge, and their attendants were accommodated in a wooden hut to the rear of the lodge. Many of the servants carved their initials in to the woodwork of the hut and these can be seen to this day, as fresh as ever!

Emigration, prior to 1914 – There was considerable emigration from the North Coast by young men to the western states of America. In fact, a lot of Applecross men used to congregate in the Redmayne Hotel in Spokane at the weekends when they had the chance. Both my uncles went to the west coast of America and sent money home religiously and clothed the younger members of the family as did many others who went there.

July, 1940 – Talk got on about the war, The Great War, again at ceilidh time and my father was in a reminiscent mood going back to the time when he was discharged as unfit for further service in 1917 from Erskine Hospital, having been previously at Selly Oak, by Birmingham, and the scene today for many of our wounded from Iraq, so, is nothing new? Apparently, he was given a gratuity of £10 (ten pounds) after two years front line service with the Royal Engineers which was a lot of money in those days, bearing in mind a soldier's daily rate of pay started at 6 pence a day (in old money). Anyway, half of this he gave to his father to buy a new coat!

Church Services – I remember the school in Arrina in August, 1946 being absolutely jam packed with folk one Sunday to hear the minister from Applecross preach. For my benefit, so I was told, his sermon was in English which, considering the length of it, was much appreciated. I always remember he made specific mention of the Dutch people and their religious affinity to the people of Applecross and the anticipated hardships they were expected to undergo during the forthcoming winter of 1946/47. In the event, the weather was very bad that winter of 46/47 and a special collection would not have gone amiss.

Years later, when coming back from Applecross one afternoon, I met Doonican from Lonbain on the road. I am sure he was at that service in Arrina.

The Fairies – Again at ceilidh time in the Thirties, the fairies would come up in conversation and there would be a harking back to the time when they were children by my aunt and my father. They would draw a picture, circa 1900, of the younger members of the family gathered round the peat fire in their pre-bed state of being washed and attired for bed when tales of the fairies would get up. They exerted an overwhelming influence on these young lives, the like of which never left them even until the end of their days! The peat fire and the oil lamps would have added to the mystery of the occasion for my father used to say that he would sooner face the wrath of the German machine guns than the wrath of the fairies! There is the story of the woman who was coming from Kenmore to Arrina when she had the misfortune to meet with the fairies en route. She only escaped them by reciting the Lord's Prayer over and over again till she reached her own door in Arrina! And, woe to anyone who dug into the hillside at the back of our house in Arrina, as the hill belonged to the fairies!

More July, 1940 reminiscences! – My father remembered going in 1919 to an engagement party in Rona which must have been quite an occasion!

In 1950 when we were up on holiday in Ardheslaig, I expressed, to my aunt, an interest in learning the Gaelic language. The matter was considered for a while and a reply given to the effect that I should consider obtaining an English to Gaelic Bible, then, if I did not learn one thing, I might learn another!

In the Thirties in Arrina there lived, with his wife, a retired regular soldier who had spent most of his service on the North West Frontier of India, as it was then, and, may be still is a very unruly place. Anyway, according to the wealth of stories he had, it was not unusual for a local to obtain a rifle and defend the top of the hill against all comers by issuing warning shots from his 303 rifle. The Army had to stop such practises!

Tales and Stories – What I remember most about holidays in Applecross was the amount of visitors who came to my aunt's house for a cup of tea and a chat. The strupak and ceilidh! Anyway, it must have been in 1940 round about the time of Dunkirk, there was a group of folk in the house and for my benefit, English was spoken, although I am sure Gaelic would have been preferred, when talk got up about earlier wars and one venerable soul spoke about his father and the Crimean War. Apparently a frigate would come round the Applecross coast staffed by the Black Watch, Feachren Dhu, looking for volunteers among the local males during that war! The less enthusiastic took to the heather and kept watch till the frigate had gone and then returned to their crofts! The Black Watch was not the most loved regiment in Applecross because of its recruiting tactics!

Getting your coal supplies in North Applecross – While a lot of peat was burnt in places on the North Coast in Ardheslaig, it was coal that was burnt and getting it was an exercise in itself! I remember in September, 1948 just before I went into the RAF for National Service, I was on holiday being involved in getting the winter's supply of coal in. It was done this way. A puffer would come up from the South (a puffer was a small steam maid of all work vessel) loaded with coal to Diabeg. A fleet of five or six rowing boats were towed by the local fishing boat, in this case *The Seaflower* across to Diabeg. There they were loaded up by the puffer's crane till there was very little freeboard left on the gunwhales! The whole exercise was supervised by a couple of very competent sisters who seemed to be, for young eyes, both the harbour masters and stevedores for Diabeg. Then the return trip which was taken dead slow back to Ardheslaig for obvious reasons and it was when we got there that the real work began for the small boats had to be unloaded! This involved taking them close in shore and removing the coal by hand into handy containers while ensuring all the time that the boat's keel never touched bottom during the unloading else the boat would break her back. Then the boat had to be hauled up the shore, beached and washed out ready for her next use!

Sudden illness and toothache – My father was on holiday in Ardheslaig from North Wales on the second weekend in August, 1945 when he took an appendicitis. Fortunately the local fishing boat, the *Clan MacLeay* was at home and the men had to carry him down the turned stair in a chair in my cousin's house and down to a small boat which was beached on the shore. The chair was then fastened to the middle thwart or seat and this boat with him in it was towed all the way to Shildaig. The weather was perfect and the sea was dead calm which, as the doctor remarked who was in attendance in the small boat that he had lost quite a few patients going round the point between Outer Loch Torridon and Loch Shildaig owing to rough weather. Once at Shildaig, my father was then decanted into a taxi with my mother and me in order to make the journey to the hospital in Inverness. It was a beautiful evening and I well remember looking after we left Achnasheen to see the grass growing vigorously down the middle of the road as we sped along,

with Achnasheen retreating in the distance. Into hospital around midnight and on to the table to be operated on and the following day, I learned that the Japanese had surrendered! Such is life. After recovery, my father went back to Ardheslaig to convalesce before returning to North Wales in early October! Regarding toothache, this was a considerable problem for the North Coast as there was no dentist available, the nearest one being in Kyle of Lochalsh I suspect, although the early Fifties saw mobile surgeries arriving especially for schools but little for adults. My aunt in Ardheslaig had had toothache. She decided to make the journey to the doctor's in Lochcarron in the hope that he would extract the offending molar for her (possibly without anaesthetic) as sometimes he would do that. He duly did but it was a sanguinary business but at least, as far as my aunt was concerned, the terrible pain of toothache was ended! Otherwise you had to put up with it till the nerve expired and the offending tooth turned black. There was quite a lot of that about on the north coast in these days I have to say from observations which were inescapable.

In 1948, Ardheslaig got a new fishing boat and there was great wonder at it. It was financed by an ex-serviceman's grant, being post-war when such things were given in order to rebuild our fishing fleet in Scottish waters. She was called, *The Seaflower* and was built on the Fife coast, probably St. Monanse. She was then sailed from Fife through the Forth and Clyde canal and up the west coast to Ardheslaig. Quite an adventure! One retired fisherman from Ardheslaig remarked that, once the crew had found their feet so to speak, they were making so much money with her.

"They'll no tell you what they are makin'!"

In the 1930s, reference was often made to the girls and young women who went from Applecross and Loch Torridon to munitions, and all over Scotland and the rest of the country come to that, between 1914 and 1918 at the Royal Ordnance Factories such as Bishopton in Renfrewshire. This story is largely untold even to this day but it made monumental differences to those who went, as many young women stayed in the South after the war ended, coming home only for summer holidays. Both my aunts went but returned home at the end. They had a fund of stories about war work and associated activities!

The bridal path from Shieldaig to Applecross was maintained by the roadman or as he was known "Rodoman" and was not alone in his endeavours in maintaining the path. He had the "A Bhaintir" which rises to 175 metres straight from sea level and this was a daunting task to maintain. For example, about half way up there was an enormous boulder which he shifted single handedly to stabilise the side of the path as it climbed the hill. Needless to say, he was impervious to midges and clegs!

In the 1940s, there was great talk in Ardheslaig of how prosperous the crofts were between Cuaig and Applecross in terms of sheep and there was talk of how well the crofters there had done out of wool due to the Second World War and after when there was a tremendous demand for wool for export and home trade. I believe the area is not so good now owing to sheep fluke.

I remember hearing in 1948 about a man who had been piper at the Aird beyond Ardheslaig. He was also a shoemaker and it was said that his hand-made shoes were devoutly to be wished for their comfort! Anyway, in order to practise his piping, he made a small hut on the east side of the headland at the Aird overlooking Loch Shieldaig where he played his pipes. I would imagine the pipe music on a summer evening drifting the loch would have been something. The remains of the hut were there until not long ago.

In the 1930s in the summer evenings, milking was done by the well in Arrina so that the milker returned with a bucket of water and a bucket of milk. There was nothing better, my father thought, than a glass of warm milk straight from the cow. The perfect end to the holiday until next year!

Iain McLean  
Elgin

### **IAIN MACLENNAN :**

Iain, whose book *Applecross and its Hinterland, A Historical Miscellany* has made a substantial contribution to our earnings, suffered minor health problems recently but we are very pleased to note that he has now recovered and we look forward to seeing him again in the Spring. It is interesting to note that we have supplied copies of the book to members in Canada, America and Australia as well as by mail order in this country (some as repeat orders), and the National Library of Scotland also requested a copy. We wish Iain continued good health.

## **VOLUNTEERS :**

As always, we are indebted to our volunteer attendants who man the heritage centre – Isabel Cross, Jackie Liuba, Eileen MacRae, Liz Wright, Sue Grocock, Janet Mackay, Ruairidh Cameron and Alistair McCowan.

Margaret Beaton's spinning corner was again very popular.

Margaret McCowan has, as usual, typed up this newsletter, as well as providing typing services generally.

The garden, under Kate Cameron's control, is steadily becoming more mature.

We extend a warm welcome to all new members who will receive this issue as their first newsletter and we wish all members best wishes for 2011.

AMcC

January, 2011

*If you are already a member of the Historical Society who receives the Newsletter by post but would prefer to receive it by email, please let us know via our website. Also, would members please remember to notify the society of any change of postal address and email address.*

Applecross Historical Society is a company limited by guarantee and a registered Scottish Charity. Our directors are subject to the normal legal directives which govern the behaviour of company directors, and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator impose upon us strict controls on our activities. We employ professional accountants and auditors and in all respects comply with requirements of the regulatory bodies.