



Football!

The joy of discovering and rediscovering objects from our past is the almost instant recollection of memories tucked away in less visited corners of the mind.

Those of you who've driven through Applecross recently will have noticed the new roof on the barn that formerly belonged to the Gillies family in Culduie.

Duncan McCowan, who breathed new life into the old structure, arrived at the Heritage Centre in early September with an old lace-up leather football.

It's believed to be one of the balls taken to Applecross by the late Hector Gillies. When visiting from Glasgow, staying with relatives in Culduie as a young man, Hector would bring footballs for the younger boys to play with. In fact, it might even be that some of the matches the Applecross football team played were with equipment Hector brought with him.

The ball is an Ariel size 5, hand-sewn, brown leather. After all these years, it's a little scuffed and marked from the dirt and grime of the barn. It's what the second-hand or antiques market would call "pre-loved"!

Do any of our former footballers have any stories to tell about their experiences with the Applecross team? Or, better still, does anyone have any other photographs of the team? Contact the Heritage Centre.

New stock in the Heritage Centre shop includes the artwork of Sheila MacLean from Lochcarron and Liz Gaffney who makes felt flowers and other lovely things. Also available is Iain MacLennan's new updated edition of his *Applecross and its Hinterland* book.

Applecross Coast boys at 90



Two former classmates of Arrina School celebrated their 90th birthdays within a week of one another in September 2011. Duncan MacLennan pictured on the left and Ronald MacBeath (Ronnie) on the right caught up with one another recently at Duncan's home in Conon Bridge.

As well as attending school together, both served for a while on the same ship during WWII - an oil tanker based in Kyle which acted as the fuel stop for the fleet of destroyers and minesweepers that operated from the area. The tanker was believed to be on its way to the Normandy landings when it tore its hull while being guided into Milford Haven by a pilot boat and it was at that point Duncan and Ronnie went their separate ways.

Continued on page 8...

Visiting Keith

The curator made a trip to Keith on 8th September 2012 to give a talk about the saintly history shared by Applecross and the Moray town.

'Our' Saint Maelrubha is the same historical person as Keith's Saint Rufus, for whom the Church of Scotland there is named. The church congregation there is very vibrant, with a strong youth group, so there was plenty of laughter on the day.

Many thanks to the Rev. Dr. Kay and the Rev. Randal Gauld (facepainted below) for their wonderful hospitality at Saint Rufus Manse, and for helping to reinforce the ancient links between our two communities.



On September 21 2013 (that's a Saturday), the Heritage Centre will be collaborating with Edinburgh-based Screen Bandita. They "... are a collective that strives to, through various activities, create an environment where previously abandoned film can be given a new lease of life through its contextual re-imagination and exposure to a new audience."

There will be a 'Bring Your Own' event at the Heritage Centre - do you have old slides, cinefilm or Super8? If so, this is the chance to see it again. In the evening, there'll be a screening of an old film about crofting in Wester Ross. More details on our Twitter feed nearer the time.

Thanks

Highlanders Museum

Since the last issue, the Heritage Centre has acquired a collection of museum cabinets thanks to **Captain Mick Low** and his colleagues at the **Highlanders' Museum, Fort George**. And it all happened because of a throwaway comment at a training event. The Heritage Centre curator joked that as Hugh Grant (yes, the Hugh Grant) had helped raise almost £3 million to fund the renovation of the Highlanders' Museum, Applecross would be happy to take the old cabinets off their hands. The reply was: "No problem, just bring a van!"

By opening day last season, the cabinets were in place. They offer secure display space for our exhibits, meaning we can show more delicate, fragile or valuable items to our visitors, and they also offer more lockable storage capacity.



The secure cabinets now in place in the Heritage Centre

Robert MacRae - the shiny, new shed erected in Milltown replaced an old treasure-house of a building. Robert MacRae, son of the late Roddy and grandson of Mortie Ali (who was a boat-builder and carpenter), presented an enormous bow-saw and joiner's plane to the Historical Society last year. However, the most significant artefact was the original funeral bier which Robert's grandfather had made. It is incredible to consider just how many hands have touched this item, as it conveyed previous generations to their final resting place at Clachan.

Brian Kerslake - a long-time supporter of the Historical Society donated books and slides related to his studies of the communities of the north Applecross coast, offering an interesting look to the days just before the arrival of the Coast road.

Rory and Kate Cameron - the Society's Treasurer (Rory) and Honorary Gardener (Kate) curiosity unearthed during renovations of Garden Cottage was a bottle which may or may not (!) be related to a local trade in illicit whisky. So that no identities are compromised, one member of the community remembers that whisky-filled bottles of a similar shape were left in the culvert by the Holy Well, for the exchange of a coin or two. Thanks also Kate for her continued good work in the Heritage Centre garden.

Peter Jones - another long-time friend of the Society, the Harrow-based Peter Jones donated a stunning cinema bill poster for the Ealing comedy Laxdale Hall, which was released 60 years ago.

Thanks continued

Deryk Wylde – a conversation with Judy Fish in the Applecross Inn led to Deryk Wylde, formerly a magazine editor and owner of a major archive of off-road motorcycle and trials photographs. Deryk first visited Applecross in the 1950s, having ridden all the way from Yorkshire to face the challenge of the Bealach na Bà. Deryk very kindly donated a set of prints of the Six-Days Motorcycle Trials on the Bealach road, as well as electronic versions of the images. Many thanks to a long-term supporter of the Society.



One of the many stunning images courtesy of Deryk Wylde.

Obituaries

Donald MacCuish

Back in 2010, the Curator was researching his Masters dissertation, preparing an essay on the coming of the coast road and how, as late as the 1980s, communities across the Highlands were still living and dying by the decisions made by transport policy makers. The coast road came too late for many, but when I interviewed Donald MacCuish in his very welcoming house in Kenmore, he had no doubts. The completion of the road in 1976, opened in sections before that, had rescued the coastal communities on the north of the Applecross peninsula. He had no problem with what could be called 'incomers' or 'white settlers'. New blood and a mutual respect was more important.

Donald was born in Kenmore – his parents were from the Island of Harris, with his father composing the 'Harris national anthem' Chì mi 'n tìr. He spent his time on land crofting, while fishing on the Seaflower with the Livingstones into the 1960s. After stopping fishing, he worked on the Highland Council's roads crew, and was an elder in the Free Presbyterian Church.

Donald passed away last summer and will be missed.



Obituaries

Kirsty Anna MacLennan

In January 2013, a real character who formerly lived in Lower Toscaig passed away. Known to everyone who was in and around Applecross in the 1960s and 1970s, Kirsty Anna MacLennan died in Broadford and was buried on the Island of Raasay. Her uncle Murchadh Rònach took her to Applecross in the late 1950s where she lived in the house now owned by Robert Martin. Her mother was Peggy MacLennan.

Kirsty Anna was a good singer and always had plenty to say for herself. She always carried, of all things, a pocket knife! As it turned out there was a very good explanation – if she was out walking and came across a sheep or lamb stuck in a bramble bush, she'd be able to cut it out without having to go home for a knife, or to find someone else who could help.

The photograph shows Kirsty Anna in familiar good spirits on Toscaig Pier. The other familiar faces ...? Answers at the bottom of page 8!



Vera Littlewood

The Historical Society also sends its condolences to the family of the late Vera Littlewood, who died last autumn. She was a popular figure, vibrant and friendly, who'll be much missed.

Clachan Graveyard

Mapping Project

The Clachan graveyard mapping project has drawn to a close. You can see the results at: www.clachancemetery.org.uk. Between names on stones and names in official records, we have approaching **1100** individuals in the database, and now the task at hand is to try and link up family members and spouses with each other.

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Occasionally, one family member may have died after a stone was carved with details and so is left off the memorial. This is where the Highland Council's Register of Interments has come in, offering a valuable source of information.

It is possible to connect individuals by matching the lair numbers. When a gravestone stands on Section III Lair 41 of the graveyard, and we find a person who is not listed on the stone in the Register, but who shares that same Lair, we can be pretty confident that we're matching up the families correctly.

In other cases, stones have been removed and never replaced. This happened with one well-known family from Shore Street – over time, the original stone had weathered so badly that the writing became all but impossible to decipher. When a more recent generation passed away the stone was taken down to be replaced, but no memorial was ever repositioned.

Hopefully, a future step in our graveyard mapping project will be to build biographical details on those individual records which are a blank canvas at

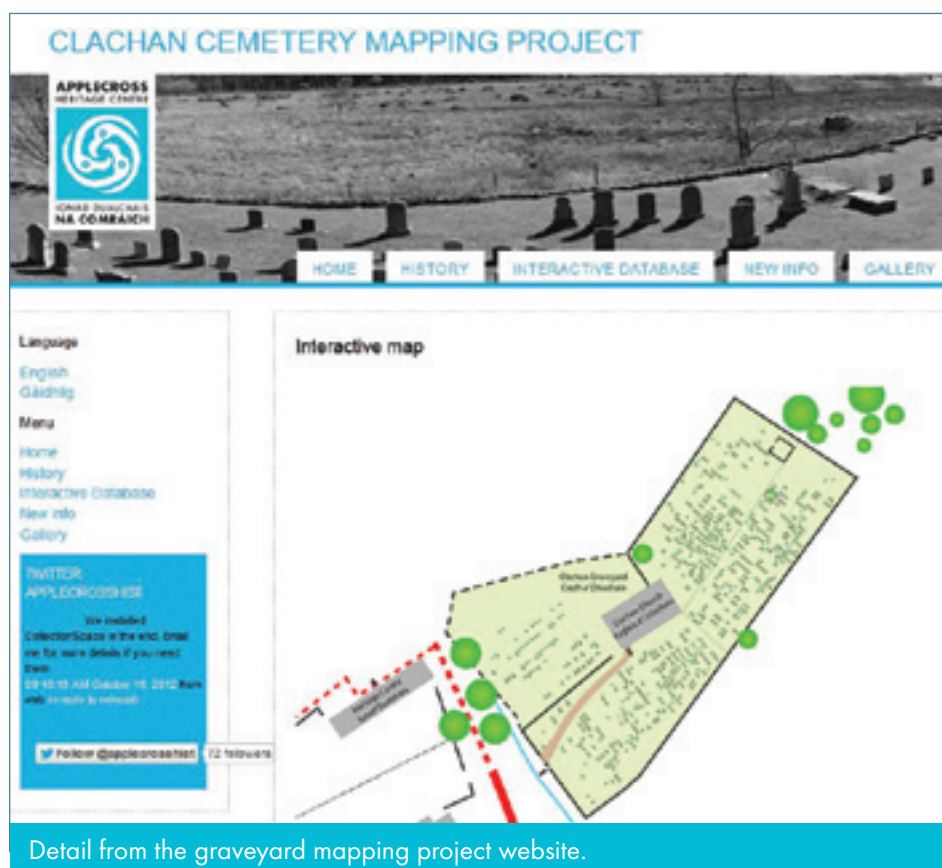
the moment; and also to try and work out who else is buried at Clachan, not recorded on a stone, and who passed away prior to the start of the Council's Register of Interments in 1927.

The Historical Society has a copy of a hand-written list prepared by the late Kenneth Macrae, sexton of the graveyard from around 1930 until his move to Inverness. The list then went to Donnie Sutherland, Duncan Murchison, Donald Cameron and finally to the Heritage Centre! This document relates the last resting spot of (among others)

William Maxwell – believed to be William Hare, grave-robber!

The map of the graveyard is representational only – it has been prepared from a plan drawn by Kenneth Macrae. Due to the location's status as a Scheduled Monument, there are restrictions on what can be done on the site.

The Clachan graveyard mapping project has drawn to a close. You can see the results at: www.clachancemetery.org.uk



Detail from the graveyard mapping project website.



Kenneth Macrae's plan of Section One of Clachan Cemetery.

Macrae's plan

In September, prior to her fascinating talk on Corry's account book, Sandra Macdonald popped in to the Heritage Centre with a real treasure for us: three sections of plans for Clachan Graveyard, prepared by her father, Kenneth Macrae, F.S.A.S. As well as holding such an important document in our collection, the map unveils a number of long-forgotten facts and answers more than a few

questions. The enclosure just south-west of the ruined chapel is marked 'Haynes'. This refers to Robert Haynes, a doctor who died in March 1866 while based at Hartfield.

An enclosure, which has clearly been railed in the past, in Section I (between the gate and the Church) is marked as the last resting place of Reverend Aeneas MacAulay. The minister was admitted to Applecross parish in 1731, and had a large family ... including

two sons called Donald, two daughters called Marion, and two sons called Ebenezer! In 1759, he was chastised by the Synod of Glenelg for what appears to have been regarded as preaching sermons too difficult for his parishioners to understand. On 10th December that year, his youngest son and namesake was born; Aeneas MacAulay died just a month later in January 1760.

Laxdale Hall

2013 marks the 60th anniversary of the enduringly popular Laxdale Hall, an Ealing comedy shot in Applecross.

Looking back now, it was quite the cast list descending on the rural west Highlands:

Prunella Scales - making one of her early cinematic appearances before she became better known as Sybil Fawley!

Raymond Huntley - an Ealing comedy stalwart who had appeared in Passport to Pimlico

Ronald Squire - the same year as Laxdale Hall, he co-starred with Gregory Peck in The Million Pound Note

Kathleen Ryan - the Irish society beauty who appeared with Rock Hudson in the 1955 movie Captain Lightfoot



Coincidentally, long-time supporter of the Historical Society and Heritage Centre, Peter Jones from Harrow, London, presented us with a stunning memento of the film: an original bill poster advertising Laxdale Hall.

Jameson Clark - a hard-working Scottish character actor who starred in Whisky Galore!, Geordie, The 39 Steps and Ring of Bright Water

Fulton Mackay - the much-loved star of Porridge returned to Applecross in 1982 to film Ill Fares The Land

Roddy McMillan - who is as fondly remembered for his role as Para Handy

Rikki Fulton - the Scotch and Wry comedian in probably his first film role.

In fact, watching Laxdale Hall today, you can still make out plenty of the Applecross countryside and local landmarks ... and, if you look closely, you might also see a few familiar local faces in the background!

Place names Project

The collection and recording of Applecross place names continues, and the list has now reached well over **1000** unique names on the peninsula. Giving a bit of a clue (OK, an indiscreet nudge and wink) as to the topography of the area, over 10% of those names are for lochs.

Over the years, the Historical Society has been very lucky to have received information from some very knowledgeable local informants including (among others) **Mrs Annie Fraser, Miss Jean Finlayson, Dr Alexander Gillies, Dr Kenny MacDonald, Sandra Macdonald**, the late **Mrs Martha MacDonald, Duncan Murchison** and **Murdo Duncan MacRae**.

We're always looking for more names and traditions, especially for the areas around the north coast villages including Cuaig, Fearnmore, Fearnbeag, Arrina, Ardheslaig and Inverbain.

One interesting name that has come up in revisiting the map drawn by Ken Griffin and dropped in to the Heritage Centre by Richard Wills is what was recorded as Loch na Savvy. This is almost certainly Loch na Saobhaidh, which translates as the loch of the den.

This small, freshwater body sits up at the top of Beinn a' Chlachain and is connected to Loch nan Eun by a little stream. It would probably make sense that the name relates to a fox's den, but Edward Dwelly's dictionary says (firstly) 'the den of a wild beast', before it mentions a fox. Maybe something more ferocious once lurked in the wilds of the Applecross deer forest?! It's certainly not the most visited part of the Applecross peninsula, so it would make a reasonably secluded spot for a fox to make a home in former times.

You can see the map and database of names collected so far:
www.applecrossplacenames.org.uk



It was lovely to see Mr Hall and his painting reunited and to hear about the work behind the image. We hope to have it on display in the Heritage Centre next season.

A Painter And His Work ... Reunited!

The mystery of the roundabout journey of a watercolour painting that was purchased by the Historical Society last winter became a little clearer when E. Grieg Hall called in to the Applecross Heritage Centre in mid-September.

It was in November 1967 that Mr Hall and his wife Dorothy were on a tour through the Highlands that he stopped to paint the Applecross Hills as seen from across Loch Kishorn. This was in the days before the illuminations from the oil rig construction yard!

As well as the skill of the painter, the quality of the paper was critical to the painting's impact. "It was David Cox paper. We used to travel around art shops hunting it down as it was getting so hard to get hold of." Cox paper was also known as Scottish wrapping paper, and had quite a rough texture and a natural level of imperfection. Mr Hall said that this particularly helped when painting mountainscapes.

Mr Hall added some later tweaks to the image when he revisited it in his studio some 30 years later, before the painting made its way to Kirkhill Gallery in Ellon for framing. It was then sold as the Halls prepared to leave their base in the north of England for a new home in Torridon.

That seemed to be the end of the story ... until Mrs Sandra Gray of Glasgow donated money to the Heritage Centre in memory of her grandparents Alexander MacDonald (Ali Glas) and his wife Isabel, who had lived at Lochend, and her parents Alastair (Mac Ali Ghlais) and his wife Margaret. With the proviso that something appropriate be purchased, up popped Mr Hall's watercolour on eBay!

Sold by a dealer in Wales, the painting had completed its journey from Loch Kishorn to the north of England, to Aberdeenshire, back to the north of England, to Wales and finally 'home'.

Applecross Coast boys at 90

... Continued from the front page

Ronnie next joined the hospital ship the SS Amsterdam which was sent to pick up wounded soldiers from the beaches in France following the D-Day landings. The ship hit a mine during operations and sank with the loss of 106 crew, patients, medical staff and POWs.

Duncan and Ronnie's lives may have gone their separate ways but those of their families continued to be linked in that Duncan's widowed mother and Ronnie's parents all moved to Raasay in the late 1940s. Ronnie says that after the war the older people in the remoter villages on the Coast began to feel their isolation more acutely. Transport had improved greatly but was of little benefit to areas without road access. In addition, many of the young people who left during the war did not return to settle in the less accessible villages.

The two families had links to the island of Raasay. Ronnie's mother and paternal grandmother, and Duncan's maternal grandmother, all came from there. Duncan had also by then married Katie Gillies, a Raasay girl.

Ronnie and his brother Norman were brought up in Arrina by their parents John MacBeath, Arrina, and Christina MacLennan, Raasay. Their grandparents were Norman MacBeath, Arrina and Isabella Nicolson, Raasay. Ronnie's brother Norman was sadly lost at sea during WWII.

Duncan was brought up in Fearnmore along with his brother Alick and sister, Katie – all three were later to marry Raasay people, and Katie still has her home there. Duncan's parents were John MacLennan, Fearnmore, and Lexie MacPherson, Arrina/Doireanonar.

Lexie's parents were Alex MacPherson, Arrina and Chirsty MacLennan, Raasay. The MacPhersons and MacBeaths of that generation were cousins and near

neighbours, their womenfolk were Raasay ladies and also related and so it is no surprise that the families were lifelong friends.

Duncan's widowed mother was the first to make the decision to move to Raasay and Ronnie's parents followed a year or two later. Their new homes were part of a 64-house miner's row at Inverarish. The street had been built to house workers at the iron ore mine, including German Prisoners of War, during WWI. When demand for ore dropped at the end of the Great War, the mine closed and eventually the houses became available to the local population. At the time they were considered desirable in that they offered comparative comfort, including mod-cons such as electricity, running water and toilets.

Duncan continued in the Merchant Navy catering department after the War and remained there for most of his working life, much of the time with Denholm shipping company. After marrying, he and Katie made their home in Glasgow where they brought up a family of two before eventually retiring to Conon Bridge. Duncan is now a widower, still lives in his own home, runs a car and manages for himself.

After the war, Ronnie returned to his home in Arrina and worked for a couple of years on the Ardheslaig fishing boat the Seaflower. (Some years later when his parents passed away it was the Seaflower that came to Raasay to take them back for burial at Applecross.) Ronnie married Lizzie MacBeath from Diabaig who was at the time District Nurse at Shildaig.

He was initially not keen on his parents moving to Raasay but gradually came to accept it was the best option for them. They were getting on in age, had lost one son, the other was away a lot at the fishing and the villages round about were

gradually emptying. Ronnie says, despite all, his parents enjoyed their final years in Raasay amongst friends and relatives. Shortly after his parents moved, Ronnie and his wife also settled there where they brought up a family of five girls. Ronnie is now a widower and although he still has his home on Raasay, he lives mainly with daughters in Stornoway.

Children brought up on the Coast led an active life. In addition to the outside work required, Duncan used to walk the track from Fearnmore to the school at Arrina and back every day, a distance of four miles. Ronnie had it a bit easier since he lived next door, but one, to the school but he still did plenty of walking between the villages including when helping out the local postman. Every weekend, attendance at church involved either a walk to the church at Cuaig or a combination of walking and rowing to a morning service in Shildaig and an evening service in Ardheslaig. When he was bit older he acquired a bicycle and as a young adult went back and fore on a motorbike.

The sprightly appearance of these two nonagenarians would suggest that their early years of moving around on foot and at the oar paid healthy dividends later in life.



Ronnie MacBeath as a young man

This lovely reminiscence and photograph was contributed by Jane MacIntosh, Ronnie's daughter. Many thanks, Jane. Mòran taing, dha-rìreabh.

[ANSWERS FROM PAGE3: (l-r) the late Kenny MacDonald (Kenny 'ain Dungain), the late Kirsty Anna MacLennan, Robert Martin, Lynda Harding.]