

Burns 250 Years

The Society held its celebration of the Bard on 22th January at the Golf Club.



Once again the entertainment featured Rabbie's poetry and song, not the sometimes doubtful quality of rhetoric you can experience at Burns' Suppers, the content of which has only the slenderest of ties with the person supposedly being celebrated.

As usual the haggis was piped in by Fr Mel Langille and addressed by Graham Park before Fr Langille opted to say a grace that is known to have been written by Burns rather than the usual Selkirk Grace which is only attributed to him. There were songs by Catherine Charlish and Ronnie Bruce and some fine fiddling by Donald Goskirk.



There were three major recitations: Jimmy Melville gave us *John Barleycorn*, while Helen Fairgrieve brought *Holy Willie's Prayer* vividly to life. But the liveliest performance was once again *Tam O'Shanter* by Hugh Steele with never a stumble on the way, just like noble Maggie.

And not the meager repast of earlier years either: this time two courses and coffee were enjoyed. The Committee is though apprehensive about next year's event: it has become so popular it may outgrow the venue. But it wants to go on record how deeply grateful it is to Judi Sutherland who admirably organised the event on its behalf. Without her, seventy members would not have been afforded the great pleasure they were.

Annual General Meeting

The 2008 DHS AGM was held on 23rd September. Rena Oman stepped down from the Committee after many years' service. John Barnes resigned as well in order to chair the Trust. His predecessor, Graham Park, was made an honorary member. All three were warmly thanked for their contributions. The Committee for 2008/9 consists of:

Chairman: George Munro

Vice Chairman: Rick Bramley

Secretary: Robin Ashby

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Gerard Fitzpatrick

Ordinary Members: Ullabritt Ashby, Jean Birkett, Steve Dallman.

Coming Events

Date	Event	Details
Thu 16 Apr	Book Launch	Page 3
Wed 29 Apr	Dornoch War Memorial Project: Presentation	Page 4
Sun 3 May	Dornoch War Memorial Project: Guided Walk	Page 4
Sat 9 May	Coffee Morning in West Church Hall	
Wed 13 May	Dornoch War Memorial Project: Genealogy Session	Page 4
Sat 30 May	Quiz Evening at Historylinks	Page 2
Sat 6 Jun	Excursion to Ballone Castle	Page 4
Sun 16 Aug	Meikle Ferry Commemoration Day	Page 4



Open 10 am to 4 pm

April 5 days a week – Monday to Friday (incl. Easter weekend)

May to September open 7 days a week

FREE ADMISSION FOR MEMBERS



HISTORYLINKS

We have been very busy in the Museum over the quieter winter period and there have been several changes with updated or new displays.

Geology

The geology display has been dismantled and revamped by Graham Park with new text, diagrams and rock samples showing the fascinating story underneath the scenery of the Highlands. Included in the new display is more information on the threatened Dornoch Esker. There is also a little quiz put together to complement the display.

Clearances

A completely new display has been put together by Graham Park showing the impact of the clearances in this area. This will be accompanied by a booklet later on in the year also written by Graham Park.



Embo/Crofting

The Embo display has been greatly extended including new photographs (left) and more information about the 'herring girls' and the addition of a recently gifted scull (fishing bait basket) – made in Embo nearly 100 years ago, which has travelled from Embo to London (via wheelbarrow and train) before returning back 'home' last year.

The Crofting section has also been re-organised with all the information collected together in the one area and including newly displayed a complete pair of quern-stones (below right) which had been stored at the cathedral.



We have put together some new questions for the ever popular children's quiz which with a number of repeat visits each year we always try to make a bit different. A newly acquired red deer skin now on display will form one of the questions.

Extension to the Museum

The Trust has decided that an extension to the Museum is sadly not a feasible idea at this time due to a huge over subscription to the available Heritage Lottery Funding and the vast amount of paperwork required to accompany any application.

Instead the Trust has decided to re-organise the existing video room to create a flexible display space which will have new moveable display boards, improved lighting and an upgrade of the golfing exhibition and video area. The work has been completed in time for Easter.



QUIZ NIGHT

Historylinks
Members free
Like last year.
Hunt among the exhibits.
Refreshments.

Sat 30 May at 6.30

QUIZ NIGHT

Open 10 am to 4 pm

April open 5 days a week – Monday to Friday (also including the Easter weekend)

May to September open 7 days a week

FREE ADMISSION FOR MEMBERS

Capt Ronald Hugh Walrond Rose World War 1 Collection

At the end of 2008 Historylinks Museum was fortunate in acquiring, on 5 year loan, a collection of objects recording the military service of Captain Ronald Hugh Walrond Rose (1880-1914), 1st Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). We are most grateful to Mrs Carol Haq and other descendants of Captain Rose for permission to use his war diary, photograph albums, documents, uniform and accoutrements in displays and exhibitions.

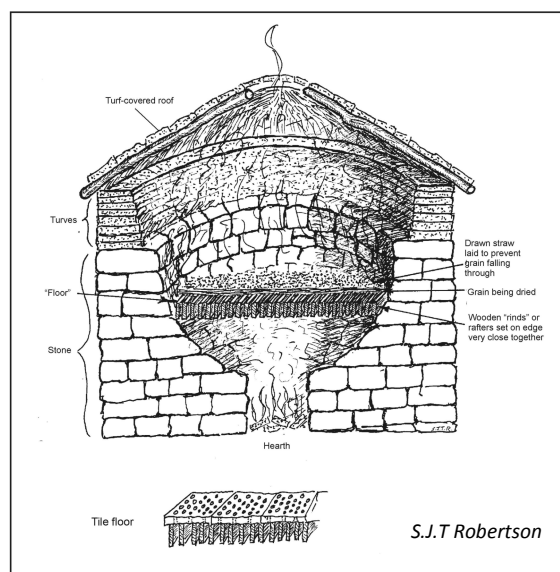
Capt. Rose was the son of Katherine Gilchrist of Ospisdale (Sutherland), who commissioned the stained glass window in his memory (along with one to his brother) in Creich Parish Church in Bonar Bridge. Capt Rose's name is included in the Roll of Honour in Dornoch Cathedral.

The war diary of Captain Rose is of great historical interest, particularly as it is complemented within the collection by photographs of places and incidents recorded in the text and letters. The diary covers a relatively short period, from the Cameronians' mobilization in late July 1914 to 22 October 1914 when Captain Rose was killed in action near Ypres, but it records the epic initial period of the war - the BEF retreat from Mons, the subsequent BEF counter offensive to the River Aisne, and the race to the sea, to fill the open flank, with the Cameronians redeployed to the area of Ypres.

Capt. Rose's dress uniform, his sword and medals are awaiting collection.



Book Launch



About twenty years ago, the people of Dornoch could visit the Council Chamber and view a very long (some 70 ft) exhibition which depicted the prehistory and history of communities along the river Evelix. It was the work of the late Jimmy Bell and Dr Struan Robertson: a detailed mix of text, maps and illustrations.

The exhibition was dismantled and kept by DHS until the archives could be moved to Historylinks. It was then reassembled and converted into electronic data over a period of several years.

Last year Dr Robertson and Dr Graham Park cooperated on a scientific account of the Evelix Valley based mainly on the material from the exhibition. This book will be on sale from April.

At the same time the Museum is publishing a booklet about the Clearances around Dornoch, based on the book. The illustration is from the booklet.

ABANDONED BUILDINGS of the EVELIX VALLEY,

SUTHERLAND - symptoms of the social

and economic decline of a Highland Valley by S.J.T Robertson & R.G.Park

Dr Park will be presenting the material and the publications at a last lecture of the season

Skelbo Castle

Those members who received an email on 1st April from the Secretary detailing radical plans for the building and who failed to notice the significance of the date were in good company: the Northern Times thought they had a scoop and Historic Scotland had a fit. To put the record straight, there is no truth in the proposal to enclose the ruined walls in blocks of clear plastic to make a futuristic clubhouse for a championship golf course planned by Mr Peter de Savary along the shore of Loch Fleet.

The real situation is that Historic Scotland carried out a conservation survey last autumn, something they can do without the permission of the landowner. The results have taken longer to correlate than expected, but the report is due soon.

Mr de Buar, Baron of Skelbo, has been in poor health according to his lawyer, who has not been in direct contact with him for half a year, and appears to have no immediate plans.

Highland Homecomings 2009

These events will be promoted in a booklet funded by the Highlands & Islands Museums Forum.

Meikle Ferry Disaster: 200 year commemorative project



This year is the 200 year anniversary of the tragic incident when 99 people, mainly from the Parish of Dornoch, lost their lives when the ferry sunk in 1809. A public enquiry was promptly held and funds were raised for the destitute families, with contributions coming from both at home and abroad. The impact was huge on the area and many families were affected in many different ways. The historical background to the disaster is fascinating and the museum has linked up with some of the pupils of Dornoch Primary School to re-tell the story. The pupils will create a wall hanging in a creative art workshop led by Sally Wild.

The Heritage Society has also contributed funds towards a commemorative plaque which will be unveiled at Meikle Ferry North on **Sunday 16th August**. An invitation is extended to anyone wishing to attend the ceremony. The wall hanging will also be on display in the Cathedral for this occasion.

Dornoch War Memorial Project

Historylinks Museum is contributing to a national initiative called '*Their Past Your Future*', a project that focuses on recording wartime memories. This time the emphasis is on WW11 reminiscences and the museum would like to hear from anyone wishing to contribute their own wartime memories or old photographs etc. The museum is also interested in collecting local information about WW1, e.g. information and old photographs about people mentioned on the war memorial. The museum has organised three events to launch this exciting project:

Wednesday 29th April

Illustrative presentation – 'Dornoch War Memorial Project'

Venue – West End Church, Dornoch

Time – 7.30 pm

Sunday 3rd May

Guided walk – 'Dornoch's War Memorials'

Meeting place – Outside Historylinks Museum

Time – 2 pm

Wednesday 13th May

Genealogy session – How to use military records for family history research

Venue – Historylinks Museum



Excursion to Ballone Castle

The owner has kindly agreed to show us around on **Saturday 6th June**. There will also be a chance to see the Pictish stones along the Seaboard coast. We reckon on car-sharing, leaving Dornoch around 2 pm.

To help plan the excursion and arrange rides for those without transport, please make your preliminary booking **by Sat. 30th May** with George Munro (811192 or munrobalbain@btinternet.com) or Robin Ashby (821328 or robin@kommevalla.plus.com) and you will be kept informed personally of the details as they are confirmed.

