

New school exhibition at Dornoch's Historylinks

HISTORYLINKS Museum in Dornoch has just unveiled a new exhibition about the changing face of schools and education in the Parish over the years.

There once was more than eight schools in the area, with local communities such as Torboll, Clashmore, Rearquhar, Balvraid, Skelbo, Larachan and the larger settlements of Embo and Dornoch all with their own schools and, Dornoch even having three – one housed in the then active Jail!

The display tells their history with many old photos from the collection held by the museum.

Many of these schools were still open until the middle of last century but gradually all were closed and pupils were bussed to the new Academy and existing primary school in Dornoch.

Embo was the last school to close in the early 1970s. The exhibition also reveals the fascinating history of education in Scotland and a strong tradition, different to the other member nations of the United Kingdom, going back as early as the 16th century when there were already four Scottish Universities.

In 1560 John Knox declared the aim of "a school in every Parish" and the ground breaking law of 1872 led to just that, with hundreds



Dornoch Borough School 100 years ago.

of schools being built throughout the country. One architect, Alex Ross of Inverness, built over 450 schools including the one at Larachan (as well as designing the new Skibo Castle for Andrew Carnegie).

The large increase in schools led to an increase in the demand for teachers. This created not only a need for formal teacher training but also an opportunity for more women to become teachers. Strict rules, however, were laid down for

female teachers such as:
You will NOT marry during your term of contract
You may NOT loiter downtown in ice-cream stores
You must wear AT LEAST two petticoats.

Amazingly these rules remained in place until as late as 1919 and even after that many female teachers never married.

With the centralisation of schools in the mid-20th century, pupils who lived too far away from a Secondary School had to stay in hostels during term time.

Two were set up in Dornoch. The girls' was at Ross House (now the North Highland College) and the boys' at Earls Cross House.

Children from places on the East and North coasts such as Kinlochbervie, Scourie and Durness, as well as those from Lairg and Golspie, stayed in these hostels.

As well as the new exhibition there is much more to see and do in the Museum, with a children's room and quiz and permanent displays on the Vikings, archaeology, the railway, golf and much more.

Many more school photographs from the early 20th century to the present day are also permanently on display in the Reference Section – you may well see someone you know or even recognise yourself.

Much of the collection can also be seen online via the Historylinks website Image library on www.historylinks.org.uk