

Silver darlings were hard work but fun

MEMBERS and friends of the Dornoch Heritage Society enjoyed a nostalgic trip down memory lane recently.

They watched a selection of films presented by Peter Wild at their traditional end of year film evening.

First up was a magic lantern show based on a collection of hand painted slides.

Another film showed some events in the late 1950s and 60s with a trip to Dornoch beach and lido, the visit of the Canadian pipe band and the Dornoch Light Railway featured.

Also, life around a croft in Embo Street showed Angus and Katie Mackay taking the hay home in a horse drawn cart with Angus smoking his pipe and another helper wearing a white shirt and tie!

The main film of the evening, however, was a remarkable insight into the lives of Christina Mackay and her sister Bella who joined their mother, Mary Anne, at the fishing between 1949 and 1952.

Leaving from Embo station and following the herring down the coast, the gutting was hard work for sure, but what shone through was the happy camaraderie during the week and then looking forward to getting dressed up at the weekends to go to the pictures or a dance.

With a treasure chest of pictures the audience was particularly spell bound with a story of going out on a boat at night time and seeing a huge haul being taken in with the moonlight shining off the wet herring - the "silver darlings".

The evening ended with tea and mince pies and a light hearted competition to guess the use of a selection of unusual objects put together by Anne and Dave Coombs.

The next event is the "Taste of Burns" on January 19. The full programme of future events can be found at historylinks.org.uk



Bella Mackay on the left, her sister Christina Mackay on the right with their mother, Mary Ann, centre.



The sisters today, Christina (left) and Bella.