

30/3/18

Heritage talk on history of Industrial Capital of North

THERE was a full house at Royal Dornoch Golf Club when Dr Nick Lindsay from the Clyne Heritage Society recently gave a talk on Brora's History, Evolution and Quirks.

Dr Lindsay takes groups on walking tours of Brora and with the use of pictures he took his audience round the trail with stops and stories along the way.

He explained how the history of the parish of Clyne was dominated by its long industrial past with coal mining, a brick-works, salt panning, tweed production, distilling and even very early electricity generation.

The early industries were established by the House of Sutherland and, by the late nineteenth century, Brora became known as the Industrial Capital of the North.

Crofting and fishing also played a major part in the development of Brora.

These industries were revived by the third Duke of Sutherland in the 1870s and the coal mine only

closed down for good in 1974. Hunter's Woollen Mill, operated in the village from the turn of the last century until 2004 when it too closed its doors for ever.

Thomas Hunter eventually owned the coal mine and brickworks, as well the mill which he powered by electricity generated on site. He sold his surplus electricity to those who could afford it as early as 1913, when he set up the Brora Electricity Supply Company to use his surplus power.

The village street lights were also powered by this source and soon the village acquired the name 'the Electric City,' fully 35 years before the arrival of mains electricity after the war.

Dr Lindsay was introduced and thanked by Peter Wild of the Dornoch Heritage Society, which organised the talk, and reminded the audience that the final talk of the winter season would take place on Thursday, April 19 in Royal Dornoch Golf Club when Graham Muckhart will give a talk on the history of the Embo Wedding Stone.