

# Kyleakin Local History Society



Website: [www.kyleakinlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.kyleakinlocalhistorysociety.co.uk)  
Email: [kyleakinlocalhistorysociety@gmail.com](mailto:kyleakinlocalhistorysociety@gmail.com)

## Autumn/Winter 2016 Issue 14

### Diary Dates:

Keep checking the website for up to date information.

Dates of other events taking place in the village can also be included in this section – please send the details to Caroline.

### Committee:

Caroline Clouston  
Hugh Davies  
Hector Grant  
Calum Macaskill  
Angus MacLennan  
Margaret Macrae  
Roddy Morrison  
Anna Belle Robertson  
John Robertson  
Stuart Taylor

## Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2016 newsletter

Hello

I hope that you all had a lovely summer and despite the colder weather reported to be coming our way, you are now looking forward to the change in seasons and the winter months.

Although I suspect that many of you have your time spoken for, if you don't want to hibernate away, you are warmly invited to attend the second in our programme of talks for the 2016-17 winter season on **Monday 5th December in Kyleakin Connections at 7.30pm**.

Our guest speakers will be Norman MacDonald and Cailean MacLean who will present their recently launched 'Great Book of Skye 2'.

Members and non-members are welcome and tea/coffee will be provided after the talk concludes.

The KLHS committee look forward to welcoming you on the night and thank you for your continued support of the Society.

While we are currently in the process of confirming all our speakers for the 2016-17 programme, I can confirm the dates of the talks are as follows:

- \* Monday 9th January 2017
- \* Monday 6th February 2017
- \* Monday 6th March 2017

All our talks will be held in Kyleakin Connections with a 7.30pm start.

Caroline



*'One of Miss Joan Wilcock's images beamed on to the wall of the Church of Scotland' in March*

More about this later on in the newsletter.....

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We are still trying to identify how the village developed in relation to:

- ❖ Churches
- ❖ Hotels
- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Schools
- ❖ Shops & Cafes
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ Organisations i.e. SWRI
- ❖ Kyleakin Highland Games
- ❖ Gala Days
- ❖ Sport
- ❖ Military
- ❖ Families
- ❖ Ferries

If you have a particular interest in any of these sections, or you think that there is something missing, please get in touch.

## Now and Then:

Do you have old pictures of your house and do you know roughly when they were taken? Can you take a picture of your house now – i.e. in 2015/2016?

If so, can you let us have copies so that we can form a display of what the village used to be like and what it is like now?

The majority of the houses in the village have undergone some form of extensions/ alterations, have you found anything unexpected that you think would be of interest to the Society?

## History of Houses in Kyleakin

We are sure that someone out there has more information on these two pictures, if anyone can add to what we have received, please send the information to Caroline.

It is thought that the Castle Moil Restaurant was built in the late 60's or early 70's, by Alec and Heather MacDiarmid, (Nigel's parents).



*Greetings from Skye*

CASTLE MOIL RESTAURANT  
KYLEAKIN  
ISLE OF SKYE



Who painted the mural and do you know when it was painted over?

Did you work there?

Have you got any pictures of the inside of this building?

Please send any information to Caroline to include in the next newsletter

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## Kyleakin SWRI

**This article was written by Flo Reid in 1986 for Kyleakin SWRI's 60th anniversary.**

Sixty years ago, come September, the first Kyleakin SWRI was constituted. What a different life these members lived.

It was the age of the oil lamp and the coal fired cooking range.

Daily papers arriving in the afternoon brought the only news of the outside world. Instead of T V and Radio, books, games and political discussions provided family entertainment.

The Reading Room, where the first meeting took place, was situated between the Church of Scotland and the present Mission House.

When our village hall was built, the little corrugated building was bought by Mrs Graham and removed to Kyle Farm where I believe it still functions as accommodation for visitors.

It was the focal point of village life. There young folk met for dances the music being provided by talented locals.

So naturally the WRI began there and on 28th October 1927 it was recorded that a paraffin stove, purchased by the Institute was used for the first time.

They entertained Breakish in November of that year and recorded that the meeting finished with the singing of the National Anthem.

From 1929 – 30 embroidery, basketry, cookery, knitting, glove making and loose covers were among programmes minuted but each meeting seemed to end light – heartedly e.g. 8/3/28 the meeting ended with "guessing games etc being indulged in" After the cane-work demonstration a few Highland dances were taken part in and much enjoyed" Perhaps this indicates a lower average age for the members. Certainly two 14 year olds and one 12 year old applied for membership and after due discussion and appeals to higher authority for permission to do so were admitted.

By November 30th 1930 plans for a village hall began to be discussed.

28th February 1930 records an Open Night which took the form of a dance, " After paying expenses, the balance was handed to the Hall fund. Mrs Graham also handed over 21/- to the treasurer of the Hall fund, being the proceeds of a small dance held in the Reading Room"

The first recorded meeting in the Village Hal which I found was 18th May 1939 at which Brigadier General Abbot gave a talk on the need for National Service in 1939 – rather prophetic perhaps because war was declared in September.

The minutes of meetings held during the war years record astonishingly busy programmes. Parcels were sent to locals on active service. The girls (young women) received a Postal Order for 15/-

The young men's parcels varied. Socks and sea boot stockings, all knitted in cotton or wool being provided by members and friends were sent also 50 cigarettes, until they were considered too expensive, shaving cream, writing paper and a Postal Order for 7/6.

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That these were greatly appreciated is evidence from minutes which tell that grateful letters from local men and women were posted round the members.

In 1944 shawls, jerseys and blankets were knitted for children of occupied Europe. The Christmas Party for local children was organised, each child receiving a 2/6 savings stamp. The children were also brought in, in the summer to help clear the Corran of ragwort, a competition with a prize for the biggest pile pulled up by the roots helped fire enthusiasm and tea and games ended the day.

A Welcome Home Fund of £500 was somehow or another collected and distributed to returning servicemen who in return paid for six seats presented to the village by the WRI as a token of gratitude.

All these activities didn't dampen enthusiasm for competitions which are well recorded, many taking the form of something new from something old or best Christmas gift for 1/-. On 12th December 1940 Mrs Willie Reid (Teenie) won first prize for this with her entry of 2 cushion covers while Miss Catriona Finlayson (Tana) on another occasion made a skirt from a coat.

Nor were local affairs forgotten; the state of the road in front of the school and church, railings and lights on the ferry pier, the understaffing of the school, a 30 mile limit on the main road, the dangerous corner at the edge of the bridge, allocation of Council houses – all these were discussed and some success was achieved.

So I would say to the younger generation and to those whose roots belong elsewhere – you can be proud of your inheritance.

Many of those who served the Institute have gone. Their names and deeds live on in the pages, which I hope you will preserve. You are now making the history. May you enjoy real fellowship in meeting and in helping each other and the community.

Thank you for maintaining the standard set in 1926. My very best wishes to the next decade.

Flo Reid

WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS, FRIDAY, 14 MARCH 1986

**NEWS**

Members of Kyleakin WRI gathered recently in the Lochnish Hotel, Kyle, for a special dinner to commemorate the group's 60th anniversary. The honour of cutting the "birthday cake" fell to Annie Grant, oldest member of the Kyleakin Institute.

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## Can you help

We have a large number of old photographs of various views in the village; do you have the time to take photographs of the same views now?

We would also like photographs of the harbour, fisheries pier and the boats. Whilst not considered historical now, in years to come, your grandchildren may be asking what it was like when Kyleakin had a working harbour!

**Membership application forms are available at Camerons old shop/Post Office, or from Anna Belle.**

**If you have any photos and documents of interest to the Society, they can be scanned and returned quickly.**

**Please send ideas for items/articles in the newsletter to any of the committee members.**

This year the 90th anniversary was celebrated with dinner in the Kings Arms Hotel. Christine Hutton, National Chairperson along with Pat MacLeod and Molly Sangster from the Inverness-shire Federation were in attendance. After the dinner there was a speech delivered by Margaret Scott, President; Honorary member Cathie Reid cut the cake, and the evening's entertainment was provided by Mary Strachan and Ali MacKenzie.



## From the last newsletter .....

It was the Silver Wedding anniversary for Ruth and Caroline's parents - Agnes and Marcus Soper and this was a party in our house - Seabank, Kyleakin in November 1969. Names from left to right - Morag Robertson, Mary Ann Robertson, Agnes Martin, Fiona Robertson, Duncan Tuach, Agnes Soper and Ruth Soper (now Macdougall) at the front.



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## Annual General Meeting 2016

The Society's annual general meeting for 2016 was held on Monday 19th September in Kyleakin Community Hall. Caroline, our Chairperson, reported on another successful year for the group which included a varied and well-received programme of talks hosted in Kyleakin Connections during the 2015-16 winter months and the Travelling the Archive project, a collaboration with Atlas Arts, artist Nicky Bird and the Skye and Lochalsh Archive Service.

Treasurer Anna Belle reported a current membership of 121 adults and four juniors. Annual membership subs and other fundraising activities meant the society is also in a healthy position financially, Anna Belle confirmed.

The election of a new committee took place with the outcome as follows:

Chairperson: Caroline Clouston

Vice-Chairperson: John Robertson

Treasurer: Anna Belle Robertson

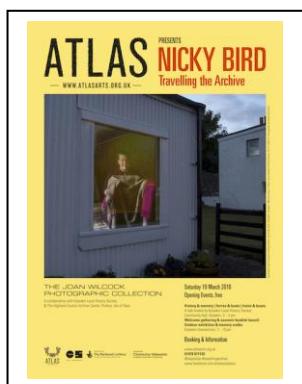
Secretary: Stuart Taylor

Committee Members: Hector Grant; Angus MacLennan; Roddy Morrison; Margaret Macrae; Pete Rawling; Calum MacAskill.

The next AGM will be held on Monday 11th September 2017 in the community hall.

oOo

## A look back at *Travelling the Archive – The Joan Wilcock Photographic Collection*



KYLEAKIN history was brought to life by the fascinating *Travelling the Archive* project which earlier this year brought people of all ages together in celebration and learning.

The project – a hugely successful collaboration between Kyleakin Local History Society, Atlas Arts, artist Nicky Bird and the Skye & Lochalsh Archive Service – re-imagined a time and place in our village's past. It did so by sharing and making accessible the 1950s and 1960s heritage of Kyleakin through a unique series of 35mm slide images taken during this period by Miss Joan Wilcock (1895-1994), who was a frequent visitor to Kyleakin and spent her summers here from 1959-1973.

Poster advertising the *Travelling the Archive* event

The slides – known as the Joan Wilcock Photographic Collection and gifted to the Archive Centre in Portree following her death – form a fascinating, stimulating and heart-warming portrait of our community long before the Skye Bridge was constructed and the Kyleakin-Kyle ferry ceased to operate. The slides were the basis for the *Travelling the Archive* project which set out to raise awareness of the rich heritage of our significantly altered village, historically known as the gateway to Skye.

Nicky Bird spent a year researching Miss Wilcock's images and worked closely with members of the History Society, the local archivist and the Kyleakin community to uncover some of the stories and memories that surrounded them and the period in which they were captured.

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Miss Joan Wilcock  
pictured on the Corran.  
Reproduced with permission

This research formed the basis of a series of events in Kyleakin on Saturday 19th March, including production of an outdoor, night-time exhibition which saw the landscape and buildings of Kyleakin lit up with projections of images placed onto the surroundings where they were originally taken by Miss Wilcock all those years ago.

To whet the appetite, the History Society hosted *The MacBrayne Story*, a highly-entertaining illustrated talk by Ian McCrorie, the official Caledonian MacBrayne historian, in the community hall. This afternoon event was a great success enjoyed by an audience of 75 people.

In the evening, more than 200 people attended the *Travelling the Archive* exhibition which featured a launch party hosted in the Old School (Kyleakin Connections) and a series of 'Memory Walks' to the projection sites led by Nicky and volunteer guides from the History Society.

The stories behind the photographs, of the people and places captured, were brought to life and the enthusiastic audiences soaked up anecdotes and memories as they relived the past encounters with Miss Wilcock and her camera.

Many of the people captured on film are still living in the village or nearby, and the event also attracted a good turnout of Kyleakin 'exiles' and their families. The atmosphere within the Old School building, where the entire Joan Wilcock Collection of more than 400 images could be viewed, was electric, as terrific tales were shared and the characters, buildings, landscapes and events were recalled and celebrated enthusiastically. There was poignancy, too, as some of the images featured villagers sadly no longer with us. Kyleakin's rich social heritage – including the ferries, the shops and hotels, the fishing industry but above all else, the people and families – is encapsulated within these 35mm slides. The Joan Wilcock Collection is of huge significance to our village and Nicky Bird, Atlas Arts and the Archive Service handled this valuable slice of heritage with real sensitivity and creativity throughout.

*'Joan Wilcock Collection,  
courtesy of Highland Council Archive Centre'*



The exhibition also included the launch of a souvenir booklet – a tangible accompaniment to the memories shared through the photographs, highlighting the contrast between the past and present landscape in which the images were captured. The booklet design took inspiration from a guide to Kyleakin that was originally available in the village in the 1960s, and possibly used by Miss Wilcock herself. Physical copies of the booklet and Memory Walk maps are available from the following local outlets: The Bright Water Centre, Kyleakin Connections and Nice Cafe, Kyleakin Post Office, Castle Moil Stores and Harry's Coffee Shop.

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The publication is also available for reference in local libraries and the Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre in Portree. The digital version of the booklet can be found on our website: [www.kyleakinlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.kyleakinlocalhistorysociety.co.uk)

The central theme of this exciting and innovative project was 'sharing heritage'. It was important to build on the events of March 19th – and all the hard work which went in to bringing the initiative to fruition. To this end, in June Atlas Arts, the Archive Service and History Society led a very successful outreach project with the children of Kyleakin and Kyle primary schools. This rewarding scheme involved the youngsters viewing the Miss Wilcock Collection of slides, taking part in guided walks in the respective communities, art work, photography and the creation of a sound recording of memories and exciting visualisations of Kyleakin in the future! This follow-up work with the children was very important, linking the current generation with ones before in innovative and exciting ways.



*Old photographs and new artwork on show at the Travelling the Archive follow-up event in the community hall in September'*

In September Nicky Bird returned to Kyleakin when the Society hosted a Travelling the Archive 'rounding-off' social event in the community hall, which included another big screen showing of the Joan Wilcock Collection, a display of the schoolchildren's amazing artwork and reflections on the success of the collaboration from Nicky, Rosie Somerville from Atlas Arts and our own chairperson Caroline Clouston.

The project has undoubtedly contributed to the wider Kyleakin community's knowledge of its heritage. The huge turnout for the launch night proved there is a real appetite among village residents and exiles, as well as visitors from other areas, to learn more about the village's past. The publicity the project garnered in local and national media has also raised the profile of Kyleakin.

Working with such a renowned organisation as Atlas, who secured the funding to make the project happen, was very rewarding for the History Society committee and supporters. Joining forces with artist Nicky Bird, whose expertise in working with 'found' photographs and the stories behind them, made a huge difference to the way a collection of such significance could be shared and interpreted. The collaboration – and the various methods of exhibition and interpretation – ensured that more people and a wider cross-section of the community engaged with the project.

*Travelling the Archive* has had a very positive impact on the village and the co-ordination between all the groups involved in delivering it was very impressive. It highlighted what a wonderful social history and heritage our beautiful village has and brought together people of all ages. The feedback received by the History Society – and by Atlas Arts – in the aftermath was all extremely positive.

The Society's committee is extremely grateful for all the support and input from members in the build-up to and during the Travelling the Archive initiative. And, for our next project...

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## Diary Dates:

Monday 5th December 2016 – 7.30 pm at Kyleakin Connections. The speakers will be Norman MacDonald and Cailean MacLean who will present their recently launched 'Great Book of Skye 2'.

Monday 9th January 2017 – 7.30 pm at Kyleakin Connections. The guest speaker will be Ross Calderwood, the Lochalsh pipe maker, talking about the 'History of Bagpipes'.

Monday 6th February 2017 – 7.30 pm at Kyleakin Connections. The details to be confirmed.

Monday 6th March 2017 – 7.30 pm at Kyleakin Connections. An evening of storytelling with Richard Smith and friends.

## The House of Stuart Sequence by George H Kearton

"The Year of The Prince" which told of a successful Jacobite Uprising in 1745 and the entry of Prince Charles Edward Stuart and his troops into London on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1746. The book is volume one in my six-volume alternative history "The House of Stuart Sequence" and I am very pleased to announce that volume two is now available as a Kindle book.

"The King Shall Have His Own Again" explores the history of Great Britain, Europe and North America during the reigns of King James III, King Charles III and King Victor Francis. It takes the story of the restored Stuarts to the year 1800. A King is assassinated, a fateful battle is fought on Drumossie Moor, the burning issue of slavery is addressed and a Stuart Prince dies a heroic death as a Crusader.

You can see further details and you can purchase "The King Shall Have His Own Again" by clicking on this link:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Shall-Again-House-Stuart-Sequence-ebook/dp/B01M4FRX8A/>

Further volumes of The House of Stuart Sequence are currently in progress.

## Researching Your WW1 Ancestors

Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre are running a new 2-week block of classes as part of this autumn's You Time programme. Join us on 9 and 16 November to find out more about ancestors who fought in the First World War.

To book, contact the Fingal Centre, Portree, on 01478 614819. Costs for the two-week block are £11 (full price), £5.50 (60 years+), £1 (budget High Life card holders) or free for High Life Highland All Inclusive Members. Spaces are limited, so please book early to ensure a place.

### Week 1 – Wed 9 November

#### 10:00-12:00, Skye & Lochalsh Archive Centre

The first week's session will be led by Graham Ross, author of the Roll of Honour for Skye and Lochalsh. Graham will introduce his work on local war memorials and sources for researching WW1 casualties.

### Week 2 – Wed 16 November

#### 10:00-12:00, Skye & Lochalsh Archive Centre

Archive staff will introduce additional sources for researching your WW1 ancestors, including those who survived the war.