

Kyleakin Local History Society

What we need from you:

- Photographs.
- Newspaper cuttings.
- Help with putting names and dates to pictures.

Committee:

Caroline Clouston
Hector Grant
Sue Lyons
Ruth MacDougall
Margaret MacRae
Roddy Morrison
Anna Belle Robertson
John Robertson
Mike Taylor

We now have 90 members!

After another successful display in the former Cameron's shop on 6th, 7th and 8th May, which coincided with the Highland Road Run for Vintage Commercial Vehicles, we are looking to organise another display on 8th to 13th August 2011 from 2 - 8 pm which will coincide with the Kyleakin Gala.

If you haven't visited the Bright Water Centre recently, do pop along. The Eilean Bàn Trust have kindly allowed us to have a permanent display. Admission to the Bright Water Centre is via a £1 donation and we are currently displaying information on the Port Napier as well as views of Kyleakin from as long ago

as the early 1900's!

Do you know anyone who is not yet a member – annual membership is £10 per calendar year to join and entry to talks during the winter months is free to members?

We now have a lot of pictures scanned for posterity. **DO** you have any pictures or artifacts you can donate or loan to the society?

Alternatively, all the pictures we have, will at some stage, need to be correctly dated and where possible the people identified – is this something you would be prepared to help with? If so, please contact Caroline.

With well attended talks by Dr John Addamson in March and Steven Birch in April, we will be working on a programme of talks for the winter months soon, if you have any suggestions for topics or speakers, please let us know.

Finally, in response to the request in the last newsletter regarding the minute book for the Kyleakin Highland Games, we are pleased to inform you that the minute book has been found and handed over to the society along with the Tug of War Trophy from John Robertson. The minute book starts in 1924; does anyone have any information prior to 1924 – such as when was the first Kyleakin Highland Games?

Do you know when this picture was taken?



Also, do you know who they all are? If so, we would like to keep the details with the photograph for future reference.

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 2011?

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?

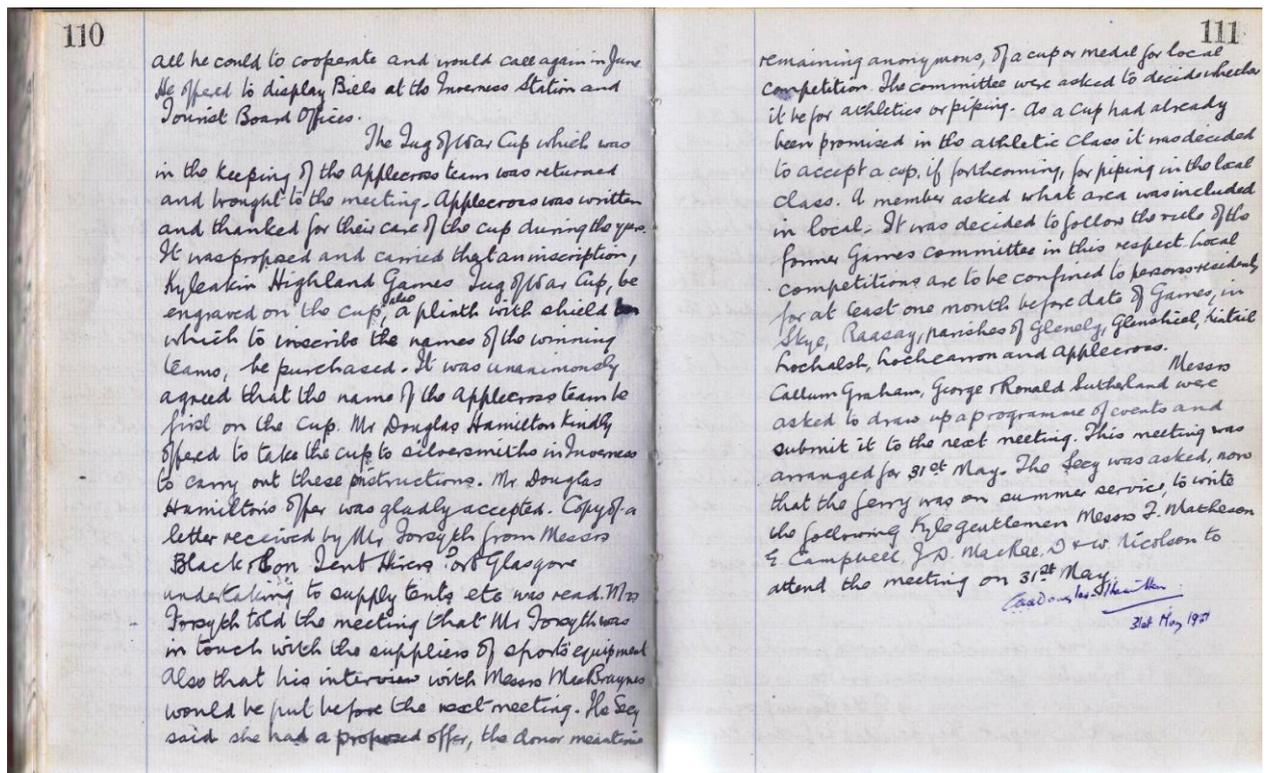
In future newsletters, we will try and identify how the village developed in relation to:

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

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

Kyleakin Highland Games

As mentioned on the front page of the newsletter the Minute book and the Tug of War Trophy have been handed over to the Society for safe keeping we hope to have these items included in our next display.



RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EVACUEE

The following are the recollections of **Peter Spencer** who was evacuated from the town of Sunderland in north east of England during World War II, to the village of Kyleakin on the Isle of Skye:



Agnes Cameron and Peter Spencer (1940 – 1941)

My mother had some relatives in the village – namely Charlie and Jean Cameron and their daughter Agnes who owned Cameron's store at the pier. They kindly offered to share their home (which was attached to the shop) with my mother Chrissie who came from Mull, sister Shuna – named after a small island in Loch Linnhe – and myself. We came by train – a big adventure which I remember. I think I was six years old and think it was 1940.

Lots of bombs were dropping on Sunderland as the Germans tried to wreck our shipyards which were vital for the war effort. My dad stayed in Sunderland for his job with a company making anchors. He was too old to fight (sixty) but was sure we would be safe in Kyleakin.

Kyleakin was very quiet and the school much smaller than what I was used to, with just one teacher. I think, a Miss MacInnes. The school was on the left going up past the Obbe – a two minute walk. I must have made friends but I can't remember their names and the accent was very different from Sunderland – nicer I thought. Miss MacInnes was strict and I was a bit naughty, I've been told, so I was told to stand quietly in the corner of the classroom. I have a vague memory of being shut in a cupboard by her once.

Our favourite play area was 'The Lump' which had a great view and was good for hide-and-seek. When I visit Kyleakin now I go and sit on The Lump and it seems very familiar still. My uncle Charlie seemed to enjoy having a boy around and often would take me out on a clear night and explain the stars to me. We would go up to the end of the village going north and sometimes we would see the Northern Lights in winter time. He used to talk about his life when he was young. It sounded exciting to me but I can't remember the details now. Auntie Jean, I remember being mostly in the kitchen where it was warm and nearly always there was a biscuit or slice of cake to be had. My mum and Agnes were good friends and I think I may have met Marcus (Soper) an Englishman from Dorset, who was in the navy and later he married Agnes – they had 2 girls, Ruth and Caroline – but that was later. Another clear recollection was when the tides were high the water literally lapped at the back door steps of the house but never came in. We also mucked around in the Obbe, the Castle Moil area and climbed the hill behind.

After eighteen months or two years my dad felt it was safe to go back to Sunderland. Maybe he missed my mum's cooking and my help in the allotment but after we got back, the worst bombing of the war occurred. Our terrace was hit but we were safe in our Morrison shelter.

I have returned to Skye and Kyleakin many times, including bringing my wife Judy and my three kids so they too could enjoy The Lump and the family hospitality. There will always be a part of my heart in Kyleakin.

PS. I emigrated to Sydney (NSW) in 1954 and my sister Shuna and family followed in 1968 with my mum. In recent years we have enjoyed visits from Ruaraidh, Eilidh, and Alasdair Macdougall and Caroline's boys George and Ross.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SHUNA PICKERING (SPENCER)



Peter and Shuna

The following are the recollections of Shuna, elder sister of Peter Spencer who was evacuated with him to Kyleakin. Both Shuna and Peter emigrated to Australia many years ago.

I loved being on Skye and the freedom we had to play on 'The Lump' and the idea that I could dabble my feet in the sea just outside the back door was a wonderful thing.

Getting to know Auntie Jean and Uncle Charlie was fun, and of course we loved Agnes, their daughter, very much too. One year I was anticipating my birthday and apparently invited some friends at school to come for a tea party, knowing what a good cook Auntie Jean was. She was horrified when I told her and said – "You can't just have a few children, we'll have to have them all as the parents will be offended if a select few come". Being wartime rations were scarce, but she eventually forgave me and we had a wonderful party. The Tea Room was full. I learned a valuable lesson – ask first before making arrangements that involve others!

School was quite a daunting experience with the fearsome teacher, Miss MacInnes. She was incredibly strict – a case of us all with mouths shut and heads down – or else! I remember the boys had to knit and the girls had to sew and one boy had huge stitches that he pulled out from his needles and made me laugh. I suppose with a class of mixed ages and abilities she had to be strict to survive.

One thing we had to do was to learn verses from the Bible every day and recite them back to her. Poor Peter – he couldn't understand the words, never mind pronounce and remember them. Once she said he forgot them for the 22nd time!

Probably my most vivid and unforgettable memory is of Hallowe'en - our first experience of it. I was to be allowed to go visiting with the other village children. They called for me and we wore masks (false faces) and took a carry bag. We walked to a bridge (I think) where bigger children were waiting and suddenly I was whirled around in a mad sort of a dance – sort of exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. I'd love to know who that person was.

Anyway we progressed round the houses, collecting goodies and all too soon we were saying goodnight. I've never forgotten it

My last memory is of being woken one night by Mum who put a blanket round me and took me outside to see the Aurora Borealis in the sky. Another magical moment watching the dancing colours in the sky. I haven't seen them since, but may be able to see the Aurora Australis in Tasmania.

Of course it was a marvellous thing for the Cameron family to have us there and put up with little kids, but we'll never forget it.

And finally.....

Contact Information:

Caroline -

carolineclouston@hotmail.com

Sue -

suelyons2909@aol.com

Mike -

mike@skye6.fsnet.co.uk

Work is now starting on a web site, we are still in the early stages of development, but it is hoped that we can have something up and running during the summer.



These children were attending the Skye MOD 1968 - 1969

Back row - left to right

David Taylor, Donald Nicholson, Morag Urquhart, Robin Graham, John Reid, Roderick Robertson and Iain MacKinnon

Front row – left to right

Sandra MacRae, Margaret MacKay, Mairi MacInnes, Greta MacLeod, Peter Robertson

Diary Dates

Display in the former Cameron's Shop – 8th to 13th August 2011 to coincide with the Kyleakin Gala.

If any of you have any suggestions for talks, please contact any of the committee members.

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

Membership application forms are now available in the Bright Water Centre.

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.