

Helensburgh Heritage Trust

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Newsletter

The Newsletter is edited and published by Kenneth N Crawford 'Ardlamont' 3, Loch Drive, Helensburgh G84 8PY kn.crawford@virgin.net

Contributions and suggestions are urgently required and welcome

Recent Books of Local Interest

During the past 12 months or so I have received a number of flyers and reports of books published in, about, roundabout or of interest to Helensburgh and the members of the Trust. On each occasion I had meant to give the publication immediate publicity, but it has not happened and so here is a roundup of all of the products in no particular order of priority!

Our honorary life member Michael Davis has self published "The Scottish Castle Restoration Debate" From his talks to the trust we know just how thoroughly Michael studies the older buildings of Scotland and this book continues his work and is even outspoken about Historic Scotland. Obtainable directly from him at a special members price of £10 - write to him at 79 Main Street Ochiltree, Ayrshire KA18 2PG

"An Avenue in Time." by David Arthur, another of our members is a "scrapbook on some of the family from the 17th-century but it also covers the creation of Lomond School" Published by Austin McCauley last March. It is available from Amazon.

"Colouring the Nation: the Turkey Red printed cotton industry in Scotland" gives much history from 1840 - 1940 of the dyeing industry in the Vale of Leven is written and published by the National Museum of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh

"Rue End Street" is a hard-hitting novel about the area: rather about people trying to recover from wartime disasters in the areas between Glasgow and Helensburgh. It was published in June by Waverley- books.co.uk Glasgow and the author is Sue Reid Sexton.

"Learning about politics in time and space" by Prof Richard Rose, who has been a resident of our town since 1967, is described as 'one

Assistance needed

For some time the Trust has not had a company secretary, nor has it had a treasurer. Whilst the legalities and the financial affairs have been taken care of by members of the board and are in good order, it really is desirable that we find a volunteer - whether prepared to become a director or not - to fulfil either or both of these positions. Please put your thinking caps on And Decide Whether You Are Able to Help the Trust or Whether You Can Recommend Someone Else to Volunteer!!!!

man, two continents, six decades a life on the front line of political science.' He is very positive about living here and working in a study that gives a splendid view, whether leaves are on or off the trees!' Published by ecpr.eu/ecprpress, the paperback costs £12.

And finally, the old becomes new, "A nonagenarian's reminiscences of Old Gairlochside, and Helensburgh" published in 1883, has become available to download as a free e-book! We are indebted to our President for this information.

K.N.C.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting

of Helensburgh Heritage Trust Will be held on Wednesday 29th of October 2014 at 7 p.m.

in the clubhouse of Helensburgh Lawn Tennis Club, Suffolk Street Helensburgh.

The agenda will comprise;- 1. Present, and welcome to new members 2. Apologies. 3. Minutes of AGM held on 30th October 2013. 4. Matters arising. 5. Chairman's report. 6. To ratify the co-option of Alasdair Jamison to the Board of Directors. 7. To approve the re-election to the Board of Directors of Nigel Allan, Cecilia Dunlop, Marion Gillies and Kenneth Crawford. 8. To approve the Treasurer's report. 9. To reappoint Mhairi Fulton of Hammond & Co as independent examiner of the accounts.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please note that, in accordance with the Special Resolution passed at last year's AGM, printed copies of the Directors' Report and Accounts and of the Minutes of last year's AGM will only be posted to members who request them from any Director. They will however also be available at least 14 days before the AGM on the Heritage Trust website at www.helensburgh-heritage.co.uk

Conjure up a vision of the Scots dominie of old, and you may well picture a master ruling his domain with a rod of iron, and with focus firmly on the three "R's" and the Shorter Catechism. However, a description of masters at two local schools goes some way to belie the stereotype view, coming as it does from the pen of someone who was actually taught by them.

Dougald McEachern was born on Mull in 1809, but moved, with his parents, not long after to Helensburgh. His father had experience of farm work, herring fishing and kelp gathering, but it was as a forestry employee of the Grant Brothers that he now sought to make a living. The Grants centred their forestry business at Loch Lomondside, but they also ran sheep and cattle on the lands of four former farms in Glen Fruin, and it was to the only remaining habitable building at one of those, Stuckiedow, on the west side of the Glen, that the family set up home in 1811.

Around 1815, Dougald became a pupil at the Chapel of Glenfroom School, then conducted by James Abercrombie. This was on the site of the existing former school, which dates from c.1840.

In his memoirs, this is how Dougald describes the master: "He was kind, diligent and a good scholar, though aged and lame." Matters were probably made easier in that Dougald's uncle, Neil Fletcher, also attended at this time, as he wished to improve his arithmetic and book-keeping skills, which certainly seems to suggest the school was quite flexible on admissions at the time.

In due course, Neil left, and Dougald now attended with his younger brother, Donald. The main challenge came not from the master, but from their fellow-pupils, who seem to have been jealous of the progress being made by the young McEacherns. For their parents, the big worry stemmed from getting to school. The boys had about two miles to walk down the Glen, but before reaching the school, they had to cross the Water of Fruin. As Dougald recalls, an attempt had been made to construct an arched stone bridge, most likely close to the site of the present Black Bridge, but this had failed when the wooden frame was removed. A temporary bridge, consisting of two long planks, secured by cross-pieces, was installed, and this is what the McEachern boys had to use. There was no hand-rail, and as Dougald states, the Fruin, while normally fordable, quickly became swollen and dangerous after rains.

The only limitation in Mr Abercrombie's portfolio revealed by Dougald stemmed from his shortcomings in Latin. As Neil Fletcher was keen for Dougald to learn the language, he obtained two books for him, and asked the master to teach his nephew the rudiments, but he, "though a good English scholar, was defective in Latin, as I afterwards discovered."

The Grants' timber business failed, due to the mismanagement or roguery of their foreman, and in 1820, the family moved to Torr Farm above Rhu, when Dougald's father found employment in herring-fishing, but when the farmer there went bankrupt, they moved on to Hill of Camsail, at Rosneath, where in due course, the father found employment with Lorne Campbell, Factor for the Duke of Argyll. Dougald took the fancy of Lorne, and for two years served him as a letter-carrier, before he returned to school, this time to that run by John Dodds at Clachan of Rosneath.

John Dodds had just begun his long run of fifty years of teaching there, and Dougald describes him thus: "He was an excellent teacher of Greek, Latin, French, German, Mathematics, Navigation, Geometry, Algebra, Book-keeping, Drawing, and indeed all the qualifications necessary to a schoolmaster in any parish in Scotland. Being a young man from the Borders, and taught in the best colleges in Scotland, the Parish reaped much by his school, and indeed he was a man of very civil, attractive manners, taking much pleasure in the improvement of his pupils, and in conjunction with the Rev. Robert Story....every kind endeavour was used for their moral and spiritual training".

This positive assessment is echoed by W.C.Maughan in "Rosneath Past and Present", when the author states that the local gentry were glad to send their children to Dodds's school, such was the regard in which he was held

In 1830, the McEachern family emigrated to Prince Edward Island, Canada, where there was already a strong Scottish presence.

Alistair McIntyre

Arrochar and Tarbet Hidden Heritage Group have created a series of Tapestries which are on display on the balcony of the Library.

Unfortunately their tenure comes to an end on 12th September, so this notice may be a little late! Sorry !

An attempt is being made to discover the names of local service personnel who have given their lives since 1945. The Ministry of Defence have only been able to supply a list of those born in Argyll and Bute, which obviously excludes people born elsewhere but brought up here, and may not cover Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire during the early part of the period. A Volunteer is being sought to research further in order to find any additional names and to validate those supplied officially. Somewhat surprisingly, the Ministry do not seem to be confident in their own list!

Is any member or supporter of the Trust interested in this project, which when completed will enable the Town War Memorial in Hermitage Park to commemorate the lives of all those who gave their lives, and not just those prior to 1923 and during the Second World War. Contact is Stewart Noble 01435 675484

Current Displays in the Heritage Centre:-

- Case A-The Original Televisor
- B - Our 2004 working replica of the Daily Express 1936 DIY Televisor
- C - E & K Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum History and including Boer War Presentation Clock
- D - Royal British Legion, Helensburgh Commemoration of local service in the Great War
- F - Deborah Kerr.
- G - John Logie Baird
- H - Jack Buchanan
- J - Celebration of Centenary in 1995 of West Highland Railway
- L - Andrew Bonar Law
- M - Scale Model of 'Comet'

Paintings of Henry Bell and John Logie Baird are on the walls. The Provost's Lamp is outside the door.