



MEMORIES OF

*Carrick Shore*

## Foreword

The values of Carrick are unchanging - the sea, the sky, the beach, the rocks, the islands, the flowers. But there is also an enigma Carrick itself has evolved and changed since the 1930's and at an accelerated rate over the past fifteen years as many new properties have been built.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Carrick Residents Association in 1998 it was decided that the time was right for a "history" of Carrick. This book is the result of that decision. Jack Hirst and his daughter Kathryn have worked tirelessly, talking to residents past and present, to knowledgeable locals, and consulting a range of different official records both locally and in Edinburgh. They have compiled and edited a mass of information, history, anecdotes and good honest fun about Carrick, which will inform, remind, amuse and enthuse the many people who stay at or visit this very special place.

On behalf of all members of the Carrick Residents Association I would like to thank Jack and Kathryn most warmly for their efforts and enthusiasm, which have brought this project to fruition so successfully.

**Maurice Griffiths**  
Chairman, Carrick Residents Association  
April 2000

*God gave all men all earth to love  
But since our hearts are small  
Ordained for each one spot should prove  
Beloved over all.*

*Rudyard Kipling*

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## Introduction – Reminiscences of Carrick

We have attempted to trace the history of Carrick Shore with the use of old maps, research in various archives and above all through the memories of people who have spent many happy hours at Carrick.



Do you remember the lifebuoy on the front of Outlook, or the boat hatch covers forming part of the walls on 'Truda', or the whole of the roof being blown off 'Windward' in a winter gale? What about the caravan bedroom at the side of 'he Barnacle'? (the 'T' was missing for years). Many people said that the original Square Hut was an old waiting room from Castle Douglas station and above the small beach just below Square Hut, many mentioned the Carrick Monument. This was a stone-built National Trust collection box from the short period when the Trust had care of the shore. It was also at this beach that we collected our water for drinking, three steps led down to a pool in the stream where we dipped our jugs. It was always advisable to boil the drinking water before use. Washing water was collected in rain butts from the roof of each hut. Yes, they were 'huts' in those days.

The Monument Beach was quite a focal point. It was here that a grey Murray Arms mini van delivered to order: milk, newspapers and bread daily. Mrs. Murray-Usher ran the shore, through the Cally Estate in those days and could often be seen driving round in the early morning on a tour of inspection. George Wishart remembers that she drove an Armstrong Sidley Sapphire. All huts had to be painted the regulation eUsher Greeni, the shade of which seemed to change annually. George can remember the paint being sold at the Sandgreen shop in tins marked 'War Department'.

Many spoke about the alterations to the course of the track over the years. Can you remember when it went straight on from Solway Spray and down the hill by Tigh-na-Mara? More recently was the construction of the 'High Tide' by-pass.

Not to be forgotten is the Easter when the chimney of Carrick Farm caught fire. The fire was put out by Jim McMillan and Donald Tait before the fire brigade arrived from Gatehouse.

# CRA – Carrick Residents Association

## Chairperson

1986 - 1990	Dr. Munro
1990 - 1995	Jim McMillan
1995 - present	Maurice Griffiths

In October 1976 a letter was sent to all chalet owners from the Cally Estate Offices suggesting that the time had come for an association to be formed of Carrick tenants. It appears little if anything was done at the time for in April 1985 the Cally Estate Offices once again enquired if an association had been formed. This time some action was taken.

John Munro sent a letter to all residents in February 1986 requesting a meeting to discuss the formation of such an association to be held in Oyster Cabin on Easter Sunday. The venue was later changed to Barnbarroch House, Dalbeattie, due to the high level of interest which had been generated. A steering committee was appointed consisting of :-

Dr. Munro	Oyster Cabin
Mr. Watson	Nirvana
Mr. Wright	Gateside
Miss. Brown	Curlew
Mr. Wheeler	Truda

That year, following the inaugural meeting, a second meeting was held on 25/05/86 at Rosemount, Kirkcudbright. At this meeting Dr. Munro was appointed as Chairman and the constitution and rules of the Association were reviewed and agreed. Other committee members were appointed at that time: Noel Brown, John Wright, George Higgs and Isabel Tait. The meeting set the annual subscription at £5.00.

Since 1986 the annual general meeting has been held each Easter Sunday at various venues. The next three were held at Chacara - the largest but at the time on the Shore and the only one big enough to accommodate everyone. As the number of sites on the Shore increased it became impossible to continue holding the meetings on the Shore and so the venue was changed to Gatehouse.

Various topics have been discussed over the years but there have been some common agenda items with the track and its maintenance being the most popular.

The following photograph shows the 1999 maintenance crew hard at work outside Whins.



In 1987 it was suggested that speed limit signs and sleeping policemen should be created on the Shore. It was also at this meeting that the idea of buying in the materials and holding working parties to lay them was first agreed.

The problem of overhanging bushes was also discussed and it was agreed that each but owner should be responsible for their own bushes.

A survey of electricity was carried out and for the 24 huts without it, 11 were in favour of installing providing the cost wasn't prohibitive.

It was announced at the meeting that Mrs. Murray-Usher had applied for 24 additional chalets to be built and the committee had approved the building of a timber refuse disposal at the end of the track.

1989 saw the first meeting with the 'new' owners present although no building work had yet started. Eleven sites had been sold.

At this meeting Niall Duncan requested that passing places be constructed to accommodate all the additional traffic which would be using the Shore.

1990 saw a big increase in attendance at the meetings with 54 members being present. At this time 20 sites had been sold, 6 had been developed, 13 were awaiting development and two plots were not to be built upon. Topics on the agenda included safety regulations, in particular speed boats using Carrick Bay risking the safety of swimmers.

In 1992 Mr. Barr was thanked for the work he had done in restoring Carrick Bay following the January storm damage. There was also concern over the Post Office van and there was a motion to stop it from coming onto the Shore. This motion was rejected overwhelmingly.

1993 had two additional items on the agenda. One was the speed of traffic using the Sandgreen road and the other was connected to radiation testing. There had been general concern for some time that radiation had been leaking from Sellafield and that it was killing

the mackerel and polluting the Shore, so this item on the agenda was eagerly awaited. The outcome was that GUARD (Galloway United Against Radiation Damage) were to undertake a series of tests in the area and that the CRA would provide a donation for the good work of the group.

In 1995 the first guest speaker came to the meeting. Constable Bradley gave a talk on break-ins and offered suggestions on security. It was suggested that gates could be put on the Shore.

1995 also saw the first social evening organised by the CRA. 45 people attended and it was agreed that it would become an annual event. A treasure hunt was also organised around the shore over the weekend. The social events helped both old and new residents to meet each other. Faces around the Shore suddenly had names and chalets attached to them and it helped to break the ice. The comment by Mrs. Simpson at the first event probably summed up the mood of the evening, when she announced that she wouldn't be talking to the people she had arrived with as she already knew them!

## **Carrick in the Archives**

In trying to identify the origins of Carrick Shore we searched through the early maps. Although not totally accurate they give an interesting insight into the development of the area. We managed to obtain maps from various archives in both Edinburgh and Dumfries dating from 1654 to 1953. Many people will be able to recognise the Shore from the 1953 map even though it was surveyed almost fifty years ago.

The maps with the date and the name of the cartographers follow. We have attempted to point out features recognisable today.

Although the first maps were produced in the seventeenth century there is mention of the area well before that. George Wishart of Carolside says that possibly the first mention was when King Edward I (1272 - 1307) camped his army at Girthon and Twynholm whilst Kirkcudbright was under siege in 1297.

The earliest reference to the area is in Pont's map which dates back to between 1608 and 1620 and was used as the basis for Blaeu's map. Pont, whose survey predates the association of Murray with the Cally Estate, refers to the larger of the two Murray's Isles as Garuellan and the smaller one as Craigneskan or Kraigeskan. These two names prevail on Blaeu's map.

### **Blaeu 1654**

Blaeu's map entitled 'Gallovidiae Pars Media' shows 'the Middle part of Galloway which lieth between the rivers of Dee and Cree'.





Although way out of scale Karrick miln with a waterwheel symbol is shown. Also around the area of Carrick are Knockbrakes, Bourland, Girtown and Kirk of Girtown which is shown with a square tower and cross symbol.

The present Boreland Burn is clearly marked following its course from Ainrik with a spur off to a dam by Boreland

Farm. Kelly (Cally) and the bridge across the Fleet at Gatehouse are marked. Also on the way to Kirkcudbright are Borg and Bishoptown.

## Jas Tait 1761

Carrick Shore is found on Tait's map entitled 'Plan of the foot of the River Fleet exhibiting the several Fords and Roads leading there with adjacent shore and houses'.

A line of writing across the map from near Cardoness Castle to Carrick Shore reads:

*'As there is no distinct tracts of a road leading from the ford of Annacarry to the slap in the March dyke such road is not drawn but I am told those who travel keep somewhere nigh this line.'*

Another line of writing from Carrick leading to Girthon Kirk reads ;

*'The Boundary dyke of the Parks of Cally was thought unnecessary to be drawn but it runs nearly as this line and is thus far the separation betwixt the Parish's of Borgue and Girthon'.*

Carrick House and Old Waulk Miln are marked at Carrick. A Waulk Mill is described as a woollen mill by Ian Donnachie in his book the 'Industrial Archaeology of Galloway'. Also at Carrick is Slap of the March Dyke, the Dyke end and the 'old entrance' by the dyke end.

It is likely that this is the route of the medieval road to Port Carrick which pre-dates the straightening of the Fleet in 1824. The evidence of this road is still visible today on parts of the nature trail at the Cream o' Galloway. Neighbouring this, the Sailors Home Cottage is marked, this is thought to date back to a medieval inn serving sailors from Port Carrick.

The High Road to Kirkandrews and then on to Kirkcudbright runs from Isle Mouth, where the road entrance is marked, in front of Knockbrenn and across the shore.

Boreland Burn, the stream, by the present rubbish compound is marked and a ford is shown.

At the top of the map and unreadable on this reproduction it says 'The Cally House comes so near to the top of the paper that there was not room for drawing it'.

A 'Faint tracks of a road' is shown from the Slap or Stile at Sandgreen to Boreland Burn ford.

Garuellan and Craigneskan from the early Pont's map are now called the Murrays Isles, the present Ardwall is called Isle of Knockbrenn and Barlocco Isle is marked for the first time.





## Ainslie 1796

This map is far less clear than its predecessors.

The Islands of Fleet are marked and Carrick Point is visible with a hill marked inland from it.

Kinganton Farm and Kirkandrews Bay can be picked out to the south-west of Carrick, as can Airds Bay (Sandgreen) to the north-east.

## Thompson 1821

Surprisingly Carrick isn't shown on this map, but the boundary between Girthon and Borgeue runs from Carrick Shore.

The Sandgreen road, with the junction to Rainton and the right-angled bend at the end of the track close to Boreland, is clearly shown for the first time.

There have been improvements on the road to Kirkandrews as it now follows its present course round Knockbrex with the junction to Lennox Plunton clearly marked.



The Parish of 'Twineham' is an interesting spelling.

## Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile - Surveyed 1850 - Published 1854

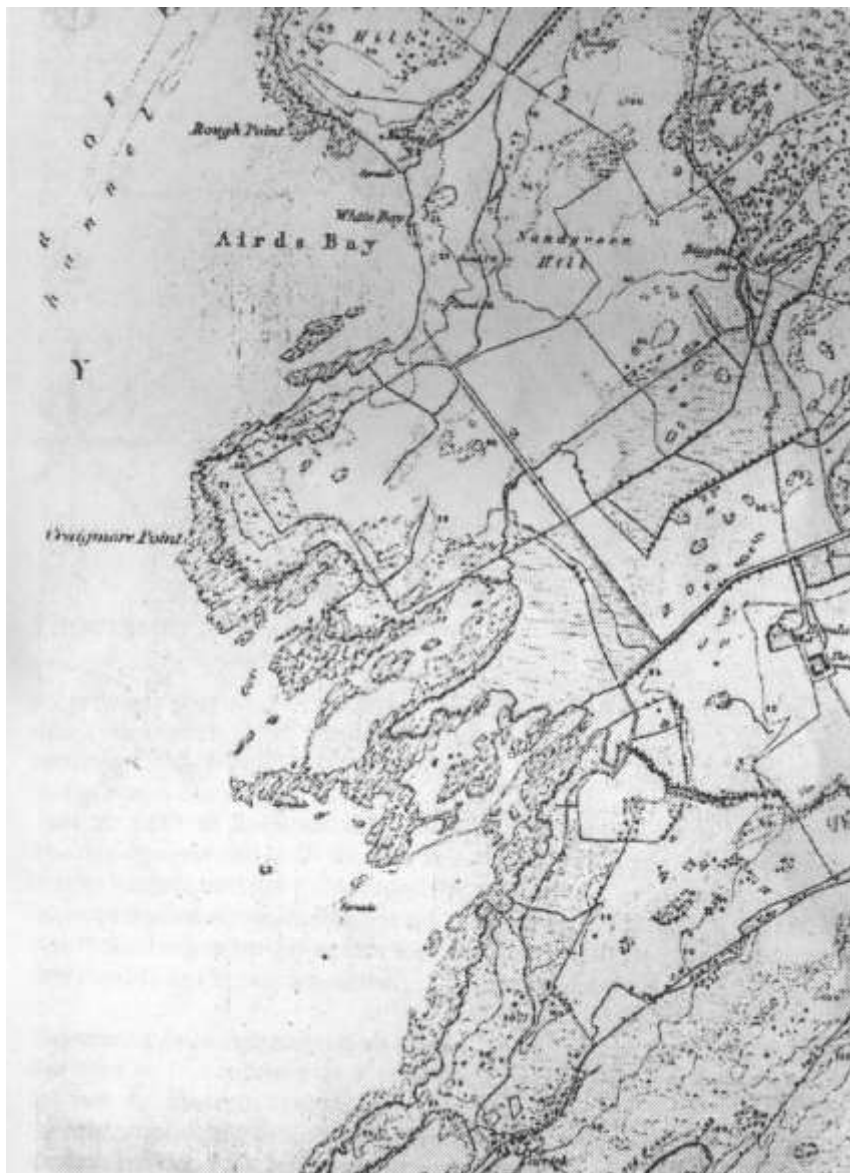


The earliest Ordnance Survey map showing Carrick Shore was surveyed in 1850. At Isle Mouth the old back track is shown along with the present road.

At Carrick there is a clear back track and a front footpath. No huts are shown but there appear to be two walled gardens. We have been unable to trace the reason for these gardens. They certainly pre-date the original Carrick Fisherman, William Davidson's, use of the Shore.

The loch used to feed the waterwheel at Carrick mill is seen by the 'old fence' and a second feeder loch, by the 'x' in Knockbrex Hill, is shown silted up.

The March Dyke between Girthon and Borgue Parish shown in Jas Tait's 1761 map runs past Carrick Farm. The 'Slap in the March Dyke' is the gate next to Gateside Chalet and the end of the March Dyke runs into the bay near to where Lichen Cottage now stands. Niall Duncan of High Tide wonders how old the gate posts might be, as it is likely that they are still the originals.



Another section of the same map shows Boreland Farm with threshing mill, mill dam and sluice.

There are no cottages at the corner of the Sandgreen road but the track on to Carrick is clearly marked.  
There are sand pits at Sandgreen and also a bathing hut out towards Rough Point.

## Sketch of Cally Park 1856

Although this map doesn't show Carrick it is included because of the interesting features on it. The straight section of the Sandgreen road, now from Girthon to the modern A75(T) Gatehouse bypass was constructed by Mr Murray to replace the old road through the Fleet Forest to Gatehouse.

The old A75 from Enrick to Gatehouse, now the B727, was similarly constructed in 1819 and 1823 to replace the Old Turnpike Road through Gaily Park, which entered Gatehouse at the top of Ann Street.

Written along the road from Girthon through Fleet Forest to Gatehouse are the words, 'Old parish road from Clauchan or Kirk of Girthon to Gatehouse suppressed by the Road Trustees in 1806.'

The straight stretch of road from Girthon to the bypass has written long it 'Road made by Mr. Murray rough Enrick Meadow in lieu of the Old Parish Road from Clauchan to Gatehouse suppressed in 1806 and now forming part of the road reserved to the public in 1823'.

On the Old Turnpike Road from Enrick to Ann Street it says, 'Turnpike Road made in 1804 or 1805 and suppressed by the Road Trustees in 1819 and 1823 except from A to B'. The short stretch from A to B was part of the old Sandgreen road before the A75(T) bypass was built.

Note the 'Sawmill' and 'Lock up gate to Lodge' at the top of Ann Street.

Also running from the top of Ann Street is part of the old Military Road suppressed in 1806.



## Carrick Shore - 1908

### Taken from the 1908 Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile

A front footpath and a back track are shown and there appear to be three walled gardens on Carrick neck. The gardens marked on the 1850 map are no longer present.

The two buildings which now appear on the Shore are the original fisherman's hut in the same position as Jean Horn's present 'Hut' and behind it, about the position of Tigh-na-Mara is William Davidson's stable and cow byre.

Truda, although built at that time, does not appear. This is probably because Ordnance Survey maps are not fully updated with each reissue, but based on past surveys.



Boreland Burn still follows a winding course after passing under the track. It now goes on a more direct route to the sea down a waterfall, its old course being a marsh.

The ford at the first right-angled bend in the track is marked and there appear to be three gates on the track.

There are two bench marks identified on modern maps of the Shore. The first is on the dyke between the present High Tide and Square Hut and the second on the gate post by Carrick Farm. They can still be seen today if you look carefully.

The sluice and dam at Boreland Farm are shown, but the threshing mill shown on the 1854 map is now no longer marked although the shape of the buildings remains the same. The water from the dam runs by the farm track then along the side of the Sandgreen road to the ford on the track.

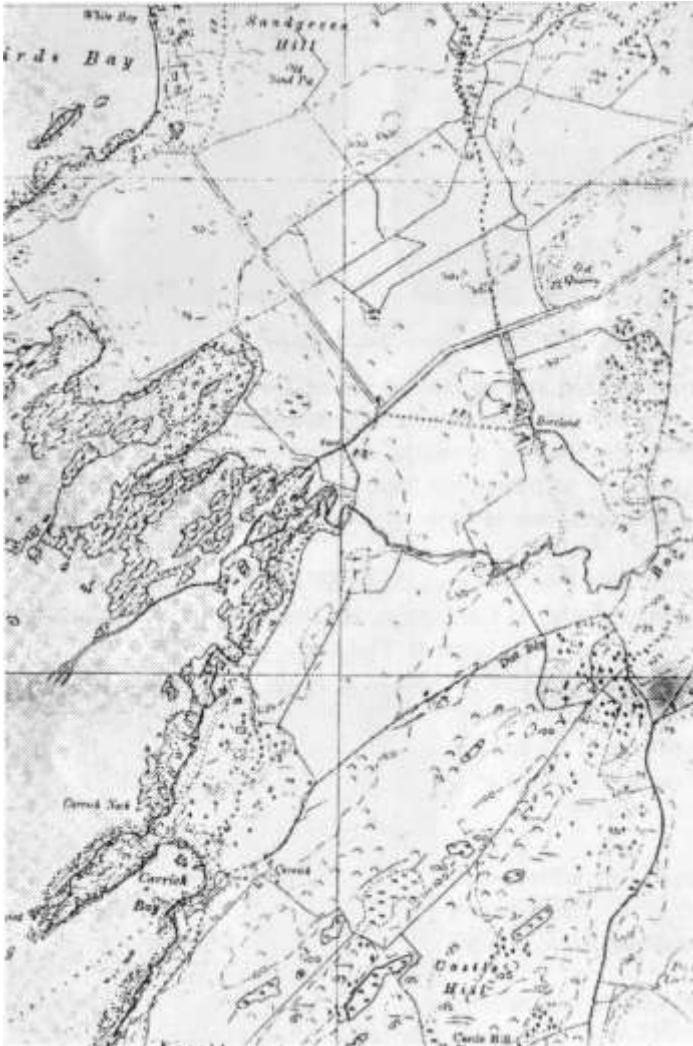
A footpath is now marked from Boreland Farm to the cottage at the corner of the Sandgreen road.

**Carrick Shore 1953**

## Taken from the 1953 Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile

Both the front and back tracks with at least eight huts are shown although we know at that time there were more. The positions of these huts approximate to the sites of the present High Tide, Square Hut, The Hut, Tigh-na-Mara, Driftwood, Croft Cabin (the Church of Scotland Hut), The Cabin and Barnacle.

There is still only one house at the corner of the Sandgreen road, the ford on the track still exists and the mill dam at Boreland Farm is beginning to silt up.



## William Davidson – The Carrick Fisherman



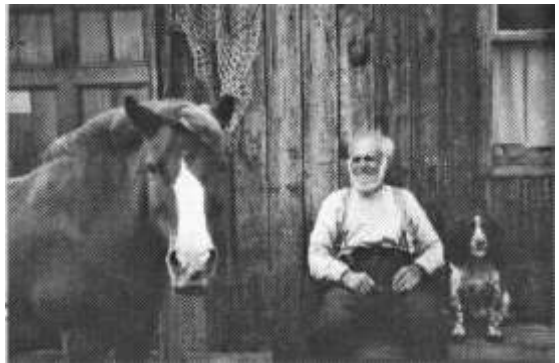


This old Edwardian postcard shows two views of Carrick Shore. The first picture show William Davidson with his wife, Margaret and one of his sons, possibly Walter standing on the left. The net they are holding contains at least one fish. In the background it would appear that new stakes for salmon nets have been delivered and are leaning against 'The Hut'. On the second picture a cow is looking into the doorway of Carrick Farm.

William Davidson first came to the area from Montrose to take up fishing rights both at Carrick and the opposite shore at Cardoness. He lived at the Shore and Jean Horn believes that some of his ten children were born at 'The Hut'

Three of William Davidson's sons are believed to have emigrated to British Columbia to work on the Skeena and Fraser rivers.

William had a horse, Pat, which was used to pull the cart which transported his catch to Gatehouse and a dog, Gip.



*William sitting outside 'The Hut' with Pat and Gip*

In his later years William spent the summer on the Shore but wintered with members of his family in Gatehouse. He died in the 1930's shortly before

the hut was burned down and he is buried, with his wife, in Girthon graveyard in Gatehouse.

Retired forestry worker Jim Grieve, who lives at Fleetside in Gatehouse is the grandson of William Davidson, the Carrick Fisherman. Jim has provided us with a lot of information on William Davidson and his family. He thinks that when William first came to the area, with his wife, Margaret McLean, they lived at 'Syllodioch', a cottage close to Fleet Forest with access to a lane off the Sandgreen road. He got the fishing rights before the turn of the century and Jim says that it is likely the Cally Estate gave permission to build a hut at Carrick so that William could be nearer to his work.

However, we know that in 1891 William and Margaret were living in Gatehouse. The census for the Parish of Anwoth that year gave the following entry on Fleet Street, Gatehouse of Fleet :-

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relation</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Where Born</b>
William Davidson	Head	Married	49	Salmom Fisher	Kincardine Fordoun
Margaret Davidson	Wife	Married	49	Salmon Fisher's Wife	Forfarshire Friockheim
Margaret Davidson	Daughter	Unmarried	21		England
Robert Davidson	Son	Unmarried	19	Salmom Fisher	Forfarshire Montrose
James Davidson	Son	Unmarried	17	Salmom Fisher	Forfarshire Montrose
Edwin Davidson	Son	Unmarried	11	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire Anwoth
Isabella Davidson	Daughter	Unmarried	9	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire Anwoth
Walter Davidson	Son	Unmarried	7	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire Anwoth

William Davidson rented the whole Shore from the Cally Estate, and his land stretched from the gate at Carrick Farm to the gate just beyond the well.

Jim remembers his grandfather as an outgoing, friendly type of man who enjoyed a chat with anyone he met on the Shore. Jim kindly came out to the Shore in June 1999 to point out landmarks and reminisce and we spent a fascinating afternoon with him.

William's cow byre was at the end of the short track to Driftwood. Jim recalled that he would take a metal mug with him, when William was milking to have a drop of

fresh milk. To the left of that track was a wired enclosure for hens. We believe it is this enclosure that other people remember as a garden on the Shore.

William had a stable and a hay barn, in the undergrowth between where Tigh-na-Mara and Ledinghame now stand. These were obviously shown as the second building, behind The H on the early Ordnance Survey maps.

*Photograph taken around 1930 showing the stable and hay barn. It is still possible to site this photograph with the tree which is outside Ledinghame.*



The toilet was sited about the junction of the front and back tracks, a good distance from the Hut. The flat patch of grass behind the Hut and in front of Tigh-na-Mara was used to lay out the nets. The leader for the nets William used was 50 - 70 feet long. This, along with the pockets for the salmon nets, was pegged out for repairing and tarring in this area.

Water for use at The Hut was obtained from a stream on the nearby beach. This is of course the same water hole we all used in the old days and it is quite possible that William made 'the well' and steps down to it.

William grew hay for annual feed in the Church of Scotland field and on the site of the present Shilfa. He also grazed Pat his horse there. Jim thinks that Pat the horse, who lived for 45 years, was bought from a farm near Anwoth called Killiegowan. William really looked after Pat and would go out on wild nights to make sure he was alright. He "nursed him", said Jim. Pat outlived grandfather William and when William died he was put out to graze in a field at Boreland. "He went downhill after that", said Jim.

Jim can remember William growing carrots in the walled garden on the point. He recalls that it was good soil for growing carrots. The location of this walled garden is the site of the current day Oyster Cabin. Jim produced the following photograph of his mother and father standing at the entrance to the garden. Parts of the wall still remain to this day close to this hut.

In his younger days Jim often spent the night in the Hut with his grandfather, but was kept awake by the rats scurrying around. If they got too noisy, Gip the dog would go on the prowl to quieten them.

From the front of The Hut between the rocks, William had laid a footpath of flat stones out onto the sands. He had one net near Ardwall Island and another staked out between the Monument Beach and Craigmore Point across the burn. To get to this net William drove down the beach with his horse and cart, there being no eroded steps at that time, and between the rocks. The space that he made across the beach is still visible today.

William always said that if the wind came from the north-west it was a good day for salmon. Salmon fishing, of course, was seasonal. The nets and stakes were taken down and brought ashore in the autumn and put out again in the spring to save them getting wrecked by the winter storms. When the nets were brought in William would catch flounders, dabs, cod, conger eels and lobster instead.

Two ladies on holiday near to Carrick asked William if he could supply fish for a meal and he prepared and cooked them a cod, which they thoroughly enjoyed. They returned later and asked to repeat the process and William was happy to oblige. "It was a different fish this time", they said when they next met. "It was very tasty, what was it?" When William told them that it was conger eel both were nearly sick at the thought of what they had eaten.

Jim recalled going out to the salmon nets one dark night with his mother, Isabella, and finding a 20 lb salmon, the biggest he can remember catching. On another occasion the nets were full of red jellyfish and Jim can remember getting badly stung.

Rona Bowers, née Johnstone, of Kirkcudbright remembers regularly visiting William Davidson at Carrick when her family were on holiday at Sandgreen. On one occasion she can remember word getting to the family at Sandgreen that he had had an interesting catch. She went as quickly as she could with her father and her sisters to see his nets. When they arrived they found a four foot angel shark caught in them. Rona recalls it having a very ugly face and big mouth.

On one occasion William Davidson caught a young seal in his nets and brought it to The Hut. He kept it overnight in a tin tub by the house. Rona Bowers and family once more called to visit. She remembers that her father picked it up by its tail to get a better look at it and it tried

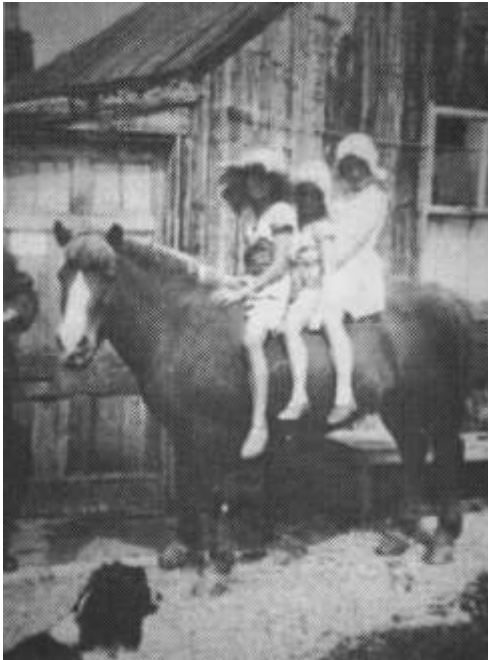


to bite him. Eventually the seal's mother tracked it down and called out to it from the rocks. William Davidson let it go. She recalls watching the happy reunion before the pair swam out to sea.

Jim Grieve can remember, in his younger days coming down to Gatehouse on his bike with a box in front to sell flounders and cod about the town. The salmon which William caught were wrapped in broad reeds to keep them fresh and most were sent to Glasgow. The reeds were collected from the marshy area between where Shilfa and West Winds now stand.

Jim spoke of the route travelled from Gatehouse to Carrick, which was very different but more direct than the one taken today. They would leave Gatehouse heading towards Cardoness and would cross the swing bridge over the Fleet. The footings for this bridge are still visible from the present day bypass. The route continued via Cally Mains and Sandgreen to Carrick.

Rona Bowers recalls staying at Sandgreen when she was a little girl for holidays. She told us that her parents built a house at Sandgreen in 1925. She can remember William Davidson riding to Gatehouse via Sandgreen and later in the day she can remember seeing Pat taking William home again whilst he had a sleep in the back of the cart.



*Rona, Alma and Zoe Johnstone at Carrick.*

One story Rona Bowers remembers is when her sister, Zoe was about seven. Zoe had fallen whilst playing in the forest and had cut her knee. As William Davidson passed on his way to Gatehouse he spotted Zoe crying on the roadside and he told her she would alright, but advised her to find a cobweb to put on her knee to staunch the bleeding.

Jean Horn recalled a picture of William sitting with his dog, outside the hut, which is on display in the Lunky Hole restaurant in the Murray Arms. The picture has the caption 'William Davidson at Carrick with his dog Gip'.

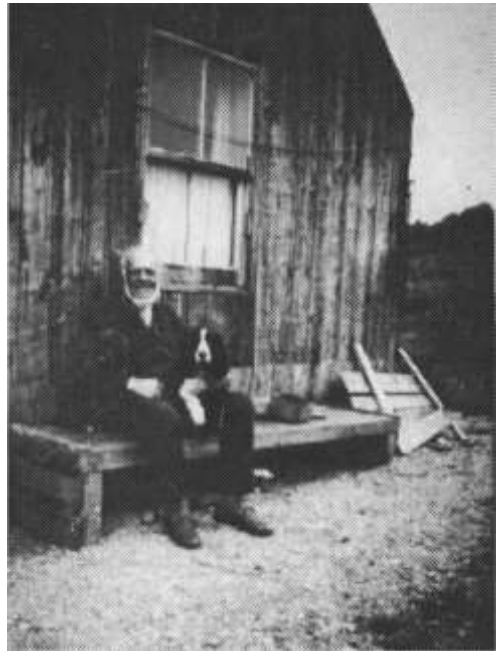


Jim Grieve produced three photographs taken in the late 1920's or early 1930's each showing William Davidson, with two of them showing part of The Hut.

*William Davidson outside  
The Hut with his dog Gip.*

On this picture William also has a black labrador under his right arm.

Jim Grieve spoke about trips out to Carrick at weekends when he was a boy in the 1920's. His father would cycle out to The Hut and return to Gatehouse with the pony and trap. It was a small two-wheeled vehicle with a door at the back and seats all round. He would then take the family out to the Shore and do the opposite three way trip to get his family and then his bicycle home.



*William Davidson on his cart with his dog Gip.*

The cart in this picture was the one he used to go out to the salmon nets on the beach at low tide. The pony and trap was used for road transport.

Jean Horn spoke of her great grandfather who was a blacksmith and lived at Prescott in Lancashire. When Great Grandfather made one of his visits to Carrick he would be picked up at Tarff Station by William Davidson in his pony and trap.



*Here we can see William and his daughter, Isobella, Jim Grieve's mother. Also in the picture are Jim leaning on Pat, the horse, Jim's brother Edwin and of course Gip.*

Jean was able to supply three old newspaper cuttings concerning William. Jim Grieve had told us that William was a friendly man who liked to meet and chat to people on the Shore. It would appear from the Kirkcudbright Advertiser dated Friday 26th February 1892 that William had his moments.

*"On Tuesday before Sheriff Lyell - William Davidson and Robert Davidson, fishermen, Fleet Street, Gatehouse, were charged with having on 16th February, on a vacant piece of land adjoining the seashore on the farm of Boreland of Girthon, behaved in a riotous and disorderly manner and committed a breach of the peace and assaulted Peter Hannah, shepherd, threatening to choke him. The charge against William Davidson was found proven, but as the case was a trifling one he was fined only five shillings. Robert Davidson was wholly acquitted and Mr Nicholson, jnr. who conducted the defence, complained that by his being included in the charge the defence had been deprived of an important witness. The sheriff - That is quite a fair observation."*

A copy of a cutting from the Galloway News of Friday 30th January 1925 gives an account of William and Margaret Davidson's Diamond Wedding celebrations.

*Gatehouse Diamond Wedding: Mr and Mrs William Davidson. An interesting event took place at Gatehouse on Wednesday last, when Mr and Mrs William Davidson, Fleet Street, celebrated their diamond jubilee. Mr. Davidson was born at Fordoun in June 1843 and Mrs Davidson at Friockheim in April 1843. They were married at Montrose in 1865 by the Rev. Mr. Burns, First Charge, Montrose, who was afterwards Dr. Burns of Glasgow Cathedral. Mr. Davidson took over the Knockbrev fishings in 1872, and four years later he rented the Cally fishings and those of Ardwall belonging to the late Mr. Walter McCulloch. Both are still hale and hearty and possessed good memory. Mr. Davidson still takes an active part in the Cally fishings, assisting his son Walter, who is now the lessee.*

*Mr and Mrs. Davidson have a family of six sons and four daughters, all of whom are alive except James who was drowned on a voyage from Bangor in Wales. There were 19 grandchildren, 16 of whom are alive and 5 great-grandchildren.*

*The Rev. J. Stewart, minister of Girthon, was present on the happy occasion and in proposing the health of the venerable couple congratulated them on attaining their diamond jubilee, which was almost a unique event in the district, and expressed the hope that many happy days would be theirs in the future.*

William lived until he was ninety one years old, outliving his wife, Margaret, by nine years. Surely this is recommendation enough to spend more time at Carrick! The third cutting supplied by Jean Horn is William's obituary.

### **‘Death of Gatehouse Nonagenarian’**

*A well-known personality in the Parish of Girthon has been removed by the passing of Mr. William Davidson, fisherman, at the ripe old age of 91. Mr. Davidson, who was born at St. Syrups, near Montrose, came to Girthon to work the fishings at Ardwall Isle sixty-three years ago. And two years later took over the fishings in that district of Cally Estate, where he had laboured till ill-health compelled him to retire some months ago. His home at Carrick, known as The Hut, was built by the estate for him and his family, and is well known to the very many visitors who have frequented that beauty spot at the mouth of Fleet Bay. The Hut was one of the most hospitable houses one could visit whilst Mr. and Mrs. Davidson were there. Fishing was a great pleasure to Mr. Davidson, and a labour he took a delight in as long as he was able, and the more stormy the sea*

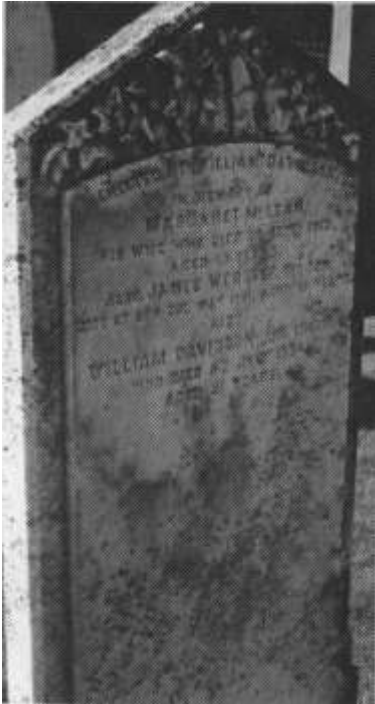




*the more pleasure there seemed to be in it for him. He was a keen gardener, and for years well known as a grower of potatoes and carrots. He was very fond of animals, and his pony, and dog were treated more like human beings. His pony, which survives him, is 45 years old, many a camera has snapped the pair. He had a store of entertaining stories which it was a pleasure to listen to, and his talks on fish and bird life were most instructive. Mr. Davidson has a heart of gold, and his generosity, as well as his familiar figure, will be missed. The funeral took place on Sunday from the house of his youngest daughter, Mrs. James Grieve, to Girthon Cemetery, and was a large and representative one, and was conducted by the Rev. John Stewart, M.A. Mr. Davidson was predeceased by his wife a few years ago, and is survived by a family of five sons and three daughters.*

William Davidson was without doubt the first Carrick nonagenarian but others followed; George Higgs of Chacara, Mrs. Duncan of High Tide and Will Rodgers of Whimbrels.

Jim took us to Girthon Graveyard to show us William's gravestone which reads:-



*Erected by William Davidson*

*In memory of*

*Margaret McLean*

*His wife who died 3rd September 1925*

*Aged 83 years*

*Also James Webster his son lost at sea*

*20th May 1891 aged 18 years*

*also*

*William Davidson the erector*

*Who died 5th July 1934 aged 91 years.*

Jim explained that his uncle, James Webster Davidson, was working on board a boat carrying slate from North Wales to Whitehaven when it was lost in a storm.

Jim remembers one evening in 1936 when he was on his way to 'a moving picture' show at Gatehouse Town Hall, seeing huge orange glow in the sky. He found out afterwards that it was the fire which destroyed The Hut on Carrick Shore.

Outside his house on Fleetside, Jim Grieve has lots of mussel shells making an attractive border to his flower beds. All were collected at Shell Bay on Carrick Point. Jim is still a frequent visitor to the Shore and on one recent trip, with a friend, they decided to go back to Gatehouse through the forest. At one point close to Cally Mains their way was blocked by a

gate, Although retired for over twenty years, Jim still happened to have the Forestry Commission key in his pocket and with the use of a little WD40 the padlock opened 'as sweet as a nut'. It was still the same lock over twenty years old, hopefully the Forestry Commission have a duplicate key.

But things do not end there. A friend of Jean Horn, on holiday in The Hut, claimed that he was about to go to sleep one night when he saw William Davidson's picture on the ceiling. This claim caused some amusement until Jean herself at a later date took a picture of a sunset from the Hut veranda. Does William appear on the picture? Comparing the sun's pattern on the water just below the opposite shoreline and a picture of William doubts begin to creep in. If indeed William Davidson's ghost is still on Carrick he is a most welcome visitor.



## The Early Years

Carrick Shore has certainly changed over the years. The main circular track around the Shore hasn't always existed. The back track was the first route through the Shore with a footpath following the coastline along the route of the present day front track.

Eventually the front footpath became a track and the circular loop was formed. Initially however it ran to the far side of Tigh-na-Mara and down the steep hill to the Monument Beach. After the track moved to its present position it was still possible to walk along the old course. Gwen Hirst can remember using this path in 1962 to collect water from the well when she was staying in Solway Spray. Eventually the old path became overgrown and everyone started to use the present track.

More recent changes to the main track on the Shore include the construction of the High Tide bypass and the development of the track through the Church of Scotland field to serve the new chalets.

A number of people told us about the walled gardens on the Shore. There were certainly several on Carrick neck, but the location of the others has proved hard to track down. Isa Halliday, née McLachlan, who spent her childhood at Carrick Farm, can remember there being gardens all over the Shore and this certainly fits in with the recollections of others.

Niall Duncan remembers the walled garden on the headland and another somewhere behind Driftwood belonging to the Davidson family, the fishermen who owned the Hut.

Sheila Mackay remembers that one of the gardens on the point grew raspberries and crab apples, whilst Isa Halliday can remember collecting rhubarb. Isa says that apples were collected from the garden near to Driftwood. This is possibly where William Davidson kept his hens. The Davidson family are believed to have grown daffodils in part of what is now Whimbrels garden although Jim Grieve could not recall this.

From the 1908 map a ford is marked at the first right-angled bend on the track. Niall Duncan remembers the ford and an old railway sleeper which was provided for people to walk across. Niall's aunt, Mrs. Jennifer West, one of his father's twin sisters, fell off the plank whilst larking about and landed full length in the burn. The story about Aunt Jennifer took on an altogether different aspect when Niall went on to say that the corner cottage had a toilet which straddled the burn, hygiene being fairly basic at the time. The ford was there until the early 1950's when the burn and field were culverted.

There were also three gates on the track. Jim Grieve recalled that the first one was at the corner of the Sandgreen road. When his grandfather, William Davidson, left the Shore a young boy from the corner cottage would open the gate for a penny and repeat the process when he returned. Each trip to Gatehouse about that time cost William tuppence. Rona

Bowers told us that the barefoot child which William Davidson always tipped was one of Donald Patterson, the Boreland of Girthon's ploughman's children.

When Rona Bowers first went to Sandgreen she remembers grass growing down the center of the road from the corner cottages to the gates at Sandgreen.

Jim McMillan can remember another gate just past Square Hut towards the Monument Beach, which probably marked the start of William Davidson's land. Both Graeme Duncan and Isa Halliday can remember as children opening the gates for cars and collecting the pennies which were thrown to them. Isa recalls that these were collected and saved until Sundays when Frullanis ice-cream van from Gatehouse used to call.

*Frullanis Ice Cream van  
departs leaving satisfied  
customers*

In the the late 1970's Jack Hirst remembers taking a metal detector around the gates and finding pennies which had obviously been lost by the gate openers. He also took the metal detector down into the Church of Scotland

field but all he managed to find there were old ring pulls probably left behind by Sunday School outings.



Nancy McGregor (née Dunn) found this photograph taken in 1937 showing the gate above Lichen Cottage, which was wooden at the time. Seated on the gate are Nancy and her cousin, Margaret Nichol.

Maurice Griffiths recalls that in the early days there was much less bracken about, no brambles other than on the point and little beach erosion. Marion Haining also remembers the Shore being very bare but she can remember the crab apple trees being there. She also remembers Miles Johnston, the artist, having a bullfinch

which he kept in a cage and hung from the crab apple tree behind his hut (now Cornerways).

On the right-hand side of the point, close to Shell Bay, there appears to be a man-made cut. The remains of some stone walls also remain. It is also possible that it was a store hut by the Carrick fisherman, William Davidson, although his grandson Jim Grieve cannot recall ever seeing it before.

We are all familiar with the roar of jet aircraft as they have low flying practice runs over Carrick but the area's connection with the RAF goes back much further. George Wishart spoke of the effect of the 1939-45 war on the area. In his book 'The R.A.F. in Galloway' A.T.Murchie mentions the 55 Air-Sea Rescue Marine Craft Unit being opened in March 1942 at Gibb Hill on the Dee Estuary. There was also an RAF presence at Wigtown across the Bay. George spoke of the remains of an aircraft, which crashed at the far end of Sandgreen Bay, still being visible. Also the temporary floating pontoon harbour, used in the Normandy Landings, and code named 'Mulberry' was constructed across the bay at Garlieston, indeed George's uncle R.J.D. Cowan played a major part in the project.

## Picnics

A number of people told us that their first memories of Carrick were of coming out to the Shore for a picnic. For many this was the start of regular trips to the Shore and eventually to the renting and buying of various huts and chalets on the Shore.

An early visitor to the Shore was Mr. Hastings who often came out to the Shore and sometimes stayed for a few days. Mr. Hastings took lots of photographs whilst on the Shore including the following one:-



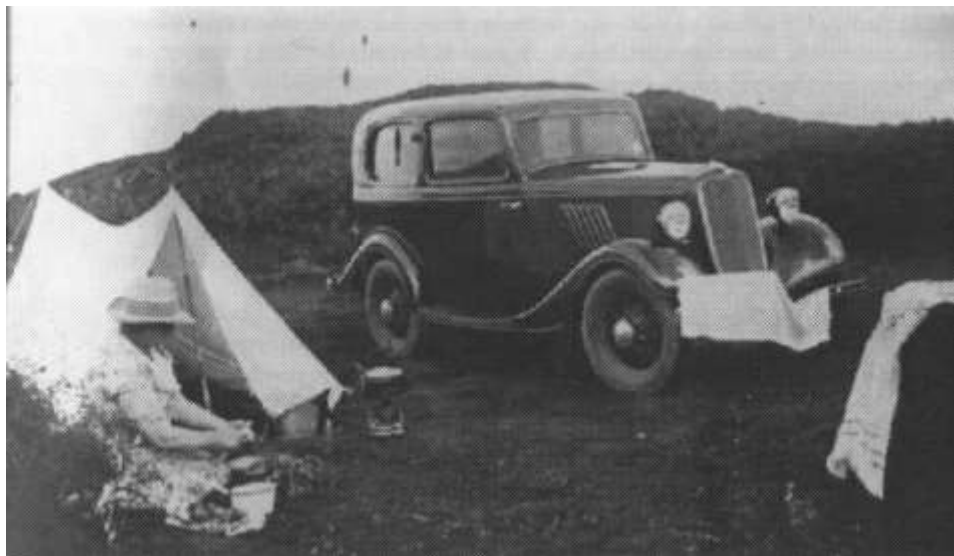
*Mr Hastings' caravan can be seen in the background. In the foreground is William Davidson, Pat and Gip.*

Mrs. McGregor's family used to come out to Carrick during the 1930's to picnic. The family had a farm at Dumfries and would come to Carrick on Sundays after milking was completed. They were often joined by other members of the family; uncles, aunts, cousins etc. from other farms in the area. They would picnic in the 'wee garden on the point' where Mrs. McGregor remembers apple trees growing. In those days there



was much less vegetation on the Shore, being mostly open grassland but she doesn't remember any grazing taking place.

The following photograph shows Mrs. Dunn peeling potatoes outside their tent. They look to have made camp at the start of the point on the patch of ground where Windward and Oyster Cabin currently park their cars. The photograph was taken before Outlook, and many of the other huts, were built. The car in the picture, draped with a towel drying from swimming is a Ford 8.



Sheila Mackay remembers pre-war weekend picnics when they came by car. Most Kirkcudbright people favoured the Dhoon for picnics and bathing but the more adventurous came to Carrick. Castle Douglas people seemed to choose Isle Mouth beach for their trips. Sometimes half the family would arrive by car and the others would cycle out, swapping transport for the return journey. The picnics and swimming took place from the grassy part of the Shore in front of Outlook but she recalls Miles Johnston and his wife always bathed from the end of the point, sometimes diving into the water.

The picnics continued during the war using 'leisure petrol' when the family were accompanied by the commandos who were billeted with them. They still continued the practice of cycling out and riding back or vice-versa. In fact Sheila still owns one of the bikes!

Fanny Yates, née Gray, of Ingleston, Borgue recalls visiting the Shore a great deal as a youngster. She remembers these years as happy and carefree and can remember annual family gatherings of all her relations, with her grandmother at the helm, visiting Carrick and picnicking in the cut-out coves of bracken on the left of the current car park. At that time she remembers, the beach was more `shelly' than now.

Jim Grieve told us that he once pitched a tent in the walled garden on the point and spent a holiday on the Shore with his friends.

## Sunday School trips

Regular trips were made by St. Cuthbert's Church in Kirkcudbright to Croft Cabin which was known as the Church of Scotland Hut for many years.

David Crosbie, a Kirkcudbright Parish Church Elder and former member of the Sunday School remembers camping in tents at both Rascarrel and Brighthouse Bay in the early 1930's He recalls that his first visit with the Sunday School was when he was eight in 1935 shortly after the Church Hut was built.



*The Choir in 1946 on one of many visits to the Shore.*

*Mr. Mothersill, the minister, can be seen in the middle of the front row stroking the dog.*

Thomas Welch, a former church officer, recalls visiting both Croft Cabin and Curlew. He remembers Carrick as a wild and rugged place which was great for both boys and girls camps. His last camp on the Shore was 38 years

ago.

Jim McMillan, a past chairman of the Carrick Residents Association, remembers his first visit to the shore. He came on a Sunday school bus trip to the Church of Scotland hut, the first of many such outings. Jimmy McLachlan, of Carrick Farm, used to mow the grass ready for races. It was on this first outing Jim remembers that James Kennedy stuck his head out of the bus window and caught it on the gate post at the 'posties hut'. At that time, Jim said, there was just the front track, the back track didn't exist.

Marion Haining also remembered the story about James Kennedy. Marion was a close friend his sister Barbara and she remembers his head having to be stitched. The Kennedy family later emigrated to Sydney, Australia.

Jane Howarth and Kathryn Newell, both née Hirst, can remember some of the last summer picnics by the Sunday School during June. They can remember helping to clear up all the rubbish left behind at the end of the day and being given ice-cream as a thank you for their efforts.

## Guides

Sheila Mackay has vivid memories of coming to Carrick on a Guide camp. "I was in Kirkcudbright 1st Guide Company", she said, "it must have been the 1st because there was only one". The camp took place during the early part of the war about 1940 or 41. They were not allowed to erect their white tents because they would be clearly visible from the air and vulnerable to German attack. Arrangements were made for the Company to use the Church of Scotland hut at Carrick. The minister at that time was Mr. Mothersill, who also had his own hut, Curlew, on the Shore. Mr. Mothersill was a Canadian whose daughter later emigrated there, but still at times visits Carrick. Sheila remembers collecting bread which was delivered to the postie's but and water from the burn by what was later to become the Monument Beach. Porridge, for breakfast, was cooked in a hay-box which simmered all night. Sheila was never a porridge fan but recalls being really hungry and enjoying the 'best porridge she has ever tasted'.

Marion Haining's earliest memories of Carrick date from her time in the Kirkcudbright guides. She remembers coming to stay at Croft Cabin where the bunks were made out of chicken wire. Each guide brought along a cotton tick, which they took down to the farm to fill with straw. Her mum had also made her a sleeping bag out of old quilts to keep her warm.

Drinking water was brought to the camp by Mr. Austin in milk churns. She remembers some of the cooking being done in the small kitchen but the majority was done outside. Another piece of equipment she had to bring was a washing-up stand. This she asked her dad to make beforehand, it consisted of three sticks lashed together.

Jean Phillips (née Hiddleston) also has fond memories of visiting Carrick when she was 16 in September 1938. She remembers that at the time everyone was pre-occupied with 'the crisis' which was about to start. She visited Carrick with a small group of Guides from Kirkcudbright and stayed in Croft



Cabin. She thinks that Margaret Dunlop (née Grierson) was in charge and the only other girl she can remember being there was Marion Rae.

Jean Phillips can remember going for an early morning swim before breakfast and walking along the Shore. She has since emigrated to Australia but visited Carrick whilst on holiday in 1997. She remembers walking along the Shore again and being amazed at all the new huts. On this occasion she took a number of photographs whilst at the Shore and has some good shots of sea pinks and whin blossom to remind her of her visit.

## The Huts

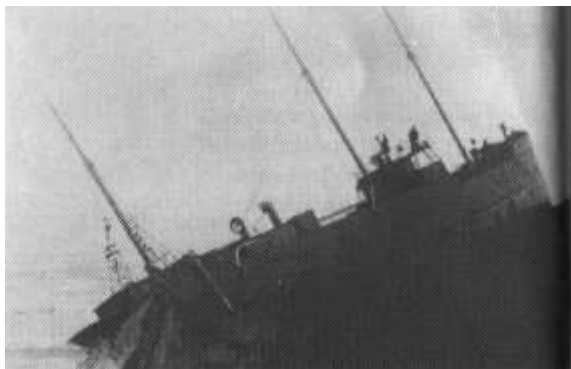
When Barbara Wheeler first came to the Shore in the 1940's there were only seven huts on the Shore plus the Church of Scotland hut, now Croft Cabin, in the bottom field. The seven were; Truda, High Tide, Square Hut, The Hut, Cornerways, Curlew and Oyster Cabin. We have attempted to uncover the history of some of these huts.

The Cally Estate archives are held in the Scottish Archives in Edinburgh. The main years which cover the Shore are 1959-67 although there is some documentation that pre-dates the National Trust ownership. The archives proved to hold a wealth of information which backed up by personal memories, allowed us to discover a great deal about Carrick.

## Truda

Barbara Wheeler told us about the original hut built, in two parts, from the timbers of the boat `Truda' which was wrecked on Barlocco in 1903. The hatches and a cabin door, which is still preserved, were features in the hut. Rona Bowers recalls that the original Truda had a very low pitch and most people had to duck to get in.

The Truda was a three-masted, 400 ton, steamer owned by Messrs WCC Smith and Co. Glasgow. On 27th February 1903 in the middle of a great storm it tried to find shelter in Kirkcudbright Bay but owing to the wind direction and the heavy sea it soon became fast the rocks off Barlocco Island. The Kirkcudbright lifeboat was called but it was unable to offer any assistance due to the unusual wind direction. The Whithorn lifeboat was also launched but it too was unable to assist. Finally a fishing boat manned by six men left the shore in the lee of the island and managed to effect the rescue of five of the nine crew



*The wreck of The Truda  
on Barlocco, February 1903*

A gravestone erected by public subscription for the sailors who lost their lives in the wreck, still stands in Kirkandrews churchyard.

The Truda gravestone in Kirkandrews graveyard reads :-

*Erected by the Parishioners of Borgue in memory of Thomas Brown, James Duffy, Albert Gough and Frank White who lost their lives by the wreck of the steamer 'Truda' on Barlocco Island on 27th February 1903.*



The original owners of Truda were two elderly sisters, Miss Jemima Beattie and Mrs. Ellen Martin, who used to collect and sell cockles, whelks and mussels, using a donkey and cart for transport.

Rona Bowers remembers that the donkeys used by the two ladies had huge panniers. They were led along the edge of the beach from Carrick to Sandgreen whilst the cockles were collected.

The 1891 Census of the Parish of Girthon has the follow-entry on Victoria Street, Gatehouse of Fleet :-

Name	Relation	Age	Occupation	Where Born
Jemima Beattie	Head	38	Shellfish Dealer	Kirkcudbrightshire, Dalbeattie
William Beattie	Son	14	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire, Gatehouse
Robert Beattie	Son	7	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire, Gatehouse
Thomas Beattie	Son	4	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire, Gatehouse
Ellen Martin	Sister	37	Shellfish Dealer	Kirkcudbrightshire, Gatehouse
Elizabeth Martin	Niece	5	Scholar	Kirkcudbrightshire, Gatehouse

It is believed that they shared their time between the two dwellings. Jim Grieve can also remember a stable for the donkey at the side of Truda.

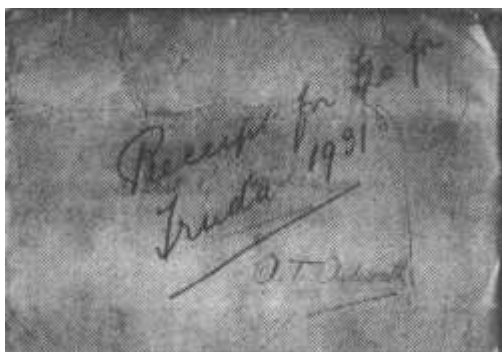
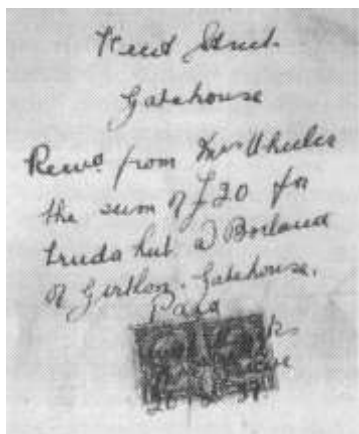
Truda today is still unique in having two buildings. The original Truda was located where the left-hand building is today, with the building to the right being a stable for the donkey. In later years, the stable was pulled down and the current hut built. The original Truda building remained for many years as a storage hut before being pulled down and replaced by additional living space.

Jim has found the grave of the Beattie family in the churchyard in Gatehouse. He has spoken to a relative of theirs in Gatehouse who says that they took their bags of mussels and whelks to Gatehouse station by donkey and cart, ready for transport to Billingsgate. They were paid 4/- a bag for mussels and 12/- a bag for whelks. Graeme Duncan remembers whelks being bagged ready for transportation and recalls that eventually the whelks were over-fished. At one time it was possible for one person to get a bucketful in half an hour, later it took four men over four hours to get half that amount.

Alec McLachlan recalled his mother and father talking of Ellen and Jemima and of visiting them for a drink and a chat in the evenings. Noel Brown also had a story to tell about them. She recalls visiting one day and of Jemima saying about her sister, "Ellen's made more scones on her backside". She meant that she had made them sitting down but the words conjure up a far more interesting possibility.

Jim Grieve's mother, Isobella Grieve, bought Truda from the sisters and owned it for a short time before she sold it during the 1930's to Barbara Wheeler's husband Geoff's parents George and Emily Wheeler.

George and Emily had until then spent their holidays at Broom Cottage, Sandgreen. An early receipt for 5/- being the annual ground rent for Truda still survives. Also surviving is the original receipt for the purchase of Truda. It is dated 20/08/31 and is signed by Mr. Murray-Usher.



The

original Truda was replaced in two phases, the first in 1968 and the second, when the cabin door was preserved in 1977.

In October 1967 permission was sought for a new hut to replace the building nearest to Sandgreen. The new hut was to be a cedarwood design. Included in the various correspondence about the fabric and size of the hut were costings for carriage of 2/- a mile from the factory in Shropshire.

The only remaining part of the original Truda is a hatch cover used as a picture frame.

## High Tide

High Tide was built at Carrick in 1937 having previously been a joiner's workshop at

Glencaple. It arrived at the Shore in sections on a lorry and the load was too heavy for it to cross the wooden bridge by the rubbish dump. Graeme Duncan can remember his father carrying a section of the hut, up the track, on his back.



the Liberal Party.

## Square Hut

Almost everyone we have spoken to has told us that the original Square Hut used to be on Castle Douglas Station. A search through the archives revealed two pictures which appear to show the building on the station.



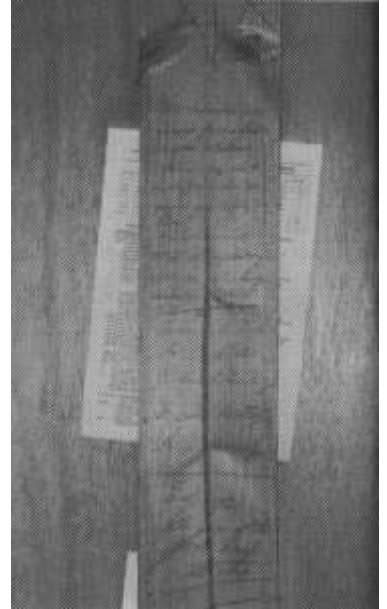
*Is Square Hut the building on the left just beyond the lamp-post ?*





*The same building can be on the left of the footbridge.*

During the rebuilding of the hut in 1997 a piece of wood was found in a partition, giving details of the history of the building. Written on a piece of tongued and grooved board, and now preserved in the new building, it reads:



*This house was removed from Castle Douglas Station having sat there for over 60 years as a refreshment bar. It was removed by W McNaught for Mr. M. Meebury (the next word is difficult to read but could be) Boreland.*

*James M. Corham  
A. Muir  
J. Landsbury  
F Douherty  
A Varner*

*May 1921  
The Year of the Great Coal Strike*

A number of people recalled staying in Square Hut at various times:-

After Noel Brown had completed her course at Edinburgh University in the 1930's she regularly stayed in Square Hut, which her friend Rita Saunders' family hired every August. Square Hut was at that time owned by Mr. McMiken, who owned a farm called Westlogan in the Haugh of Urr area. The McMiken's grandson, Willie Watson now lives at Boreland.

Prior to building High Tide the Duncan family hired Square Hut for a holiday in 1936.

Mr. McMiken eventually sold Square Hut to Mr. Heuchan who in turn sold it to Mr. Bessey.

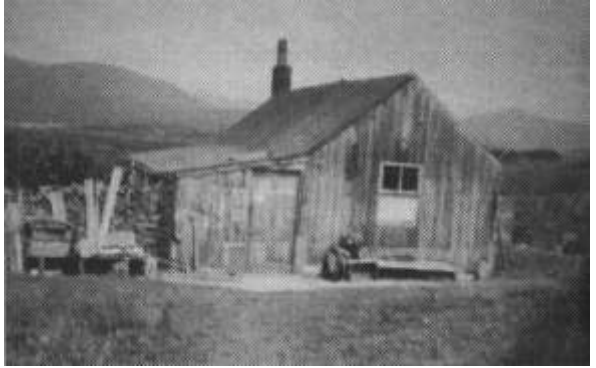
During the war Maurice Griffiths and his mother were evacuated back to Gatehouse from Durham. In 1943 they had a holiday in Square Hut where Maurice had a serious attack of

whooping cough. The local doctor was called and recommended ice as part of the cure. His mother asked how he imagined she could possibly get ice on Carrick Shore, especially in the summer. The question left the doctor non-plussed.

## The Hut

The original fisherman's hut where William Davidson and his family lived was burned down in 1936.

When Barbara Wheeler first came to Carrick in the 1940's 'The Hut', which had been rebuilt, was owned by David Sassoon, the cousin of David Sassoon, the British poet and writer (1886 – 1967).



*The first rebuild of The Hut by the Sassoons*

*The entrance to the new hut*

David Sassoon's son, Joe, still lives in Kirkcudbright and both he and his wife told us of their memories of the Shore.

Although Joe Sassoon cannot remember the fire of the original hut he recalls that his father had the plot cleared following the fire. All that remained of the

original hut after the fire was the chimney. His father, David Sassoon built their hut in 1936.

The hay byre had by this time fallen down through neglect and Joe remembers it in a very decayed state. He was unsure if the remains of the trap were still there or not.

The herdsman at Carrick Farm was Mr. Muir and he used to supply them with milk whilst they were on holiday before the McLachlans

The new hut was called J and J after Joey and Jackie. Joe can remember his father painting the name above the porch in large letters. All the original huts had to be black, tarred and sanded. Joe Sassoon recalls that they only rented the land on which the hut sat. The land immediately around belonged to the Cally Estate.

Joe can remember the fisherman, Bob, who worked out of Cardoness coming across the sands at low water to check the nets near Ardwall. He used to come to their hut for breakfast.

Barbara Wheeler also remembers the fisherman coming to collect his catch in the early morning. He would often sell them a bucket of dabs (plaice) for 6d which they had fresh for breakfast.

Joe recalls that the family came out to the Shore in a taxi when they came on holiday. At other times they would catch the Campbell's bus, get dropped off at Knockbrenn and walk down to the hut.

In the semi-circular rocks below the hut Joe can remember building a house and thatching the roof with reeds. The children had hoped to sleep in it when it was finished but they weren't allowed to. He remembers that they all cut their hands on the reeds during its construction.



The Sassoons sold their hut on 30/5/1960 to two cousins from Kirkcudbright, J Livingstone and Jean Wallace. Previously it was rumoured that it was them rather than the Sassoons who had renamed 'The Hut', 'J&J' (after themselves), but they nevertheless kept the name. It was in fact, always known by

people on the Shore as the 'Twa Jeanies'. Later still Bob Derby from Castle Douglas, bought it and renamed it yet again, this time after his three children Lindsay, John and Tom and it became Linjoto'.

In 1966 we learn that Mr.Derby wrote to Mrs. Murray-Usher requesting permission to build a verandah on the front of the hut. On 6/5/66 Mrs Murray-Usher wrote to her solicitors complaining that the plans submitted didn't have any scale or elevation on the map and so she couldn't approve them. She suggested that Mr.Derby employ an architect to properly draw the plans. The letter included the phrase:-

*'This hut is the old fisherman's hut and I think it is important that it should look right.'*

Mrs.Murray-Usher was obviously very concerned about the appearance of 'Linjoto' and in a subsequent letter to her solicitors about the proposed extension she wrote :-

*'This particular building has grown from the original old seaman's hut. Occupied by Davidson, fisherman, and the rake of the roof is fairly steep.'*

The word seaman was crossed out and lobster-man had been written by hand above it.

Jean Horn, who is secretary of the Carrick Residents Association, is the two times great grand-daughter of William Davidson who owned the original hut



undergrowth walls which were part of the original hut.

## Cornerways

Graeme Duncan can remember when



on the Shore. When Jean bought Linjoto from the Derby family of Castle Douglas she changed the name back to the original, 'The Hut'. Although the first hut had been burnt down around 1936 Linjoto stood on the same site and Jean had found in the



Cornerways, then called Crab Tree, faced the other way down towards the Church of Scotland field. At that time Cornerways was owned by Dr. Glover who later sold it to Miles Johnston, the artist, who at that time had a shop on Castle Street, Kirkcudbright.

Miles Johnston had the hut turned round to the present position for a better view.

Mr and Mrs Miles Johnston had three children: Tony, Cecile and Pat. Cecile and Pat were pupils at St. Trinians in Edinburgh, but were evacuated to Kirkcudbright during the second World War. During the war, amongst the commandos who were billeted in Kirkcudbright was Ronald Searle, who stayed with the Miles Johnstons. Later he was to base his books the 'Belles of St. Trinians' on Cecile and Pat.

On 17/5/61 Miles Johnston sold the hut to Mrs. Craw. In 1962 Mrs. Craw wrote to the Cally Estate requesting an extension to the hut. There were no details in the archives about the nature of the extension or whether it was allowed or not.

On 17/6/64 Mrs. Craw wrote to Mrs. Murray-Usher about 'Cornerways':-  
*As Mrs Groves, her sister, had been sharing the running costs for the last three years and as she was shortly due to be emigrating to Australia she wanted the hut to be transferred to her name.*

This request was duly accepted and a memo in the archives simply says :-

*Craw transferred to Mrs. Groves.*

However by 1966 Mrs. Groves had decided to sell 'Cornerways'. A letter dated 26/8/66 from the solicitors Hewat, Dunn and Ramsay was sent to Mrs. Murray-Usher which said :-

*Mrs Groves has no idea what the hut is worth in its present condition and wants to test the market by advertising. If you yourself were interested in acquiring and would be agreeable to her advertising on the understanding that she would offer you the best price she obtained in response to the advert.*

By September 1966, Cornerways had been valued at £250. Another letter from the solicitors to Mrs. Murray-Usher read :-

*Mrs Groves is disappointed of that value. She and her sister paid £350 for the hut at a time when there was less demand for such holiday accommodation and they have spent over £450 on it. She understands that another house on the Shore recently sold for £970 and it was not in such good condition as hers. She would be willing to accept a figure of £850 for hut and contents.*

By the end of the year permission had been granted for Mrs. Groves to advertise on the proviso that Mrs. Murray-Usher was given first refusal to buy.

However things were not looking good for Mrs. Groves and by 13/10/67 Cornerways was becoming a mill-stone around her neck. With an increase in rent and the fact that the work involved in letting the property was getting too much for her, she decided that she was prepared to reconsider Mrs. Murray-Usher's original offer.

The next mention of Cornerways in the archives is that a Mary Weberling from Airtully, Kirkcudbright was willing to buy it and the missive of let was signed on 13/11/67.

This answered a long running debate in the Hirst household. When they bought the hut in 1971 a biscuit tin in the hut had the words 'Weberling' scratched on the lid. Various reasons for this have been debated for years. For example, was it a former name for the hut or was the tin bought at auction or left by someone who rented the hut? The idea that a Mrs. Weberling had ever owned the hut was never considered.

The Hirsts bought the hut in 1971 from the Kerrs who like Mrs Groves had decided that the work involved in letting the property was proving too much.



*This is how Cornerways looked in 1971. The building on the left behind the verandah was always known as the stable bedroom because the door into it was split in half. It is reputed to have been used for pheasant rearing originally!*

## **Curlew**

It was whilst staying at Square Hut in the 1930's that Noel Brown met the cousin of her friend Rita Saunders, Jessie Wallace. Jessie knew Carrick well, having had trips out from Kirkcudbright to the Church of Scotland Hut. It was Jessie who found out that Mr. Mothersill, the Minister, was going to sell his hut, Curlew, and Miss. Brown, Jessie and other friends bought it in 1963 for £250. It was just after the war in 1945 that Mr. Mothersill extended Curlew and advertised it in the 'Scotsman' for holiday lettings. His first clients were 'townies' who came, saw the primitive conditions which existed on Carrick in those days and left the same day.

Noel Brown has recently sold Curlew but decided to come out to Carrick for one last look at the hut., She was too late and she has some poignant photographs of her wandering around the debris of the demolished Curlew.



*Noel Brown surveys the wreckage of Curlew.*

## **Croft Cabin**

Croft Cabin, formerly the Church of Scotland Hut, was one of the earliest huts on the Shore. Barbara Wheeler remembers it when she first came to Carrick in the 1940's. There have been many stories told about the Sunday School outings to the hut and also about the annual Guide Camps



The Church Hut was built in July 1934. The building was bought from 'Wallace Builders, Kirkcudbright'. The company was owned by Jessie Wallace's father. Jessie jointly buying Curlew many years later with her friends.

The employee who actually erected the building was William McIlwraith. It was during construction of the Church Hut that he learnt that his son, Jack, had been born.

Tommy Welch, a church officer from 1946 until his retirement, recalls spending many happy times on the Shore and was responsible for a number of extensions and improvements to the hut. For those who can remember, the Church Hut used to have bunk beds, three storeys high all around the walls. It was Tommy Welch who built the bunks using timber obtained from Kirkcudbright tank range. He also built the 'tin soup kitchen' in 1947 with materials obtained from Millhall sawmill and the toilets in 1948.

Jim Grieve recalled what was known as the 'Tired Mother's Camp'. The minister at Kirkcudbright would bring the less privileged mothers and their children to Carrick for a holiday and a rest. Several of these camps were held each year.

A letter in the archives dated 31/1/64 from Mr.Mothersill to Mrs. Murray-Usher says :-

*With reference to the hut known as the Church Hut which was erected from the proceeds of funds provided by St. Cuthbert's Dramatic Club and is registered in the name of myself I, having retired as Minister of the church shall be obliged if you will have my name deleted in favour of Kirk Session of St. Cuthbert's Church, Kirkcudbright with I.S.Macdonald as treasurer.*

Later in 1964 a W.Leitch writing on behalf of the church requested that the rent be lowered due to the low usage of the hut. At the time, according to the letter the hut was used for two weeks as a holiday camp by children who otherwise wouldn't have a holiday and on two other occasions during the year, the Sunday School picnic and the Cradle Roll picnic.

Most of Donald Tait's memories of Carrick date from the time he bought Croft Cabin and began regular holidays with his family out at the Shore. He bought Croft Cabin in 1975 for £800 from Mrs. Murray-Usher and remembers finding lots of Gordon's Dry Gin bottles lying in the undergrowth around the hut. There are also the remains of a well behind the hut, but this dries out in summer.

## Outlook

During the 1930's Mrs. McGregor's father, Mr. Dunn, was given permission to erect a building at Carrick and he bought a hen shed from Shawfield for £10 and put it on his selected site.

*The original  
'Outlook'*



It was decided to name the new hut 'Outlook' because of its good position above the beach. Mrs. McGregor remembers the lifebelt on the front of the hut and the anchor, which is now outside The Cabin, used to be close to Outlook. Various letters in the Cally Estate archives help to give an insight into life on the Shore :-

On 17/3/39 the Missive of Let for Outlook was sent to Henrietta Dunn:-

- *Measure of bungalow will not exceed 18 foot x 12 foot and the outside, including the roof to be tarred or painted black with windows white and doors green.*
- *The charge for the site was a per annum payable at Whit Sunday in advance, beginning with the first payment of £2 Whit Sunday 1939 for the period ending 15/5/1940.*
- *To remove the bungalow at any term of Whit Sunday on two months previous notice in writing by either party.*
- *The owner of the site will not be held responsible for the sanitary or water arrangements nor for the owner's and occupier's rates on the building.*



Caravans were stopped from coming onto the Shore during 1959. On 4/8/59 Mrs. Fleming wrote to Mrs. Murray-Usher asking permission for a caravan to be pitched next to Mrs. Dunn's hut for 15-30/8/59 as a holiday had been arranged prior to the new ruling coming out. Mrs. Murray-Usher agreed to it on this occasion providing the rate of 20/- per week was paid in keeping with other caravan sites in the area.

In a letter dated 16/1/67 to Mrs. Fleming the following postscript was attached by Murray-Usher :-

*p.s. I use the word Cabin because 'chalet' always seems to me a rather too superior word, hut too inferior, so I have compromised on cabin for all of course not specifically yours.*

The final letter in the archives for Outlook was dated 2/8/67. Again it was a letter sent to Mrs. Fleming from Mrs. Murray-Usher :-

*I went to Carrick in the early hours of yesterday morning (this is the only time that I find I can see anything when there is no-one about).  
I must tell you how very nice I think your hut is. It is a model of what should be and is a credit to Carrick.*

However, there was a sting in the tail as the letter continued :-

*I assume the present paint is an undercoat, however and that it will be painted with the prescribed BSC 6-060?*

Mr and Mrs. Proudfoot from Dumfries used to hire Outlook each summer. They bred bulldogs and whilst they were staying on the Shore they were often to be seen walking their dogs around the track.

## **Barnacle**

After Noel Brown's holidays in Square Hut ended in 1936, she continued to have holidays in the area staying at Sandgreen and on the Shore in Barnacle during the days when Mr. Stewart owned it.

Maurice Griffiths, chairman of the Carrick Residents Association, recalls his parents buying Barnacle in 1938 from Mr. Stewart, then headmaster of Gatehouse School. They bought the hut and its contents for £250. Among the contents was a German pendulum clock which Maurice had valued many years later. At the time of the valuation the clock was worth £250, the same price as the hut and contents in 1938.

The Griffiths family and friends used to descend on Carrick each summer and extra sleeping space was provided by an old army tent which the children slept in. Barnacle itself slept six and a caravan which was towed from Edinburgh annually slept four. Mrs. Murray-Usher allowed this caravan to be brought onto the Shore each year as a special favour and a man was hired to bring it down. The caravan was a luxury on the Shore with its shower and loo. Water for the shower had to be carried up to a tank on the roof. In time the caravan became too old to be moved each year so Mrs. Murray-Usher, being a good friend of Maurice's mother, allowed it to be a permanent fixture. "Paint it the same colour as the hut", said Mrs. Murray-Usher, and if it ever moves it can't come back".

The original Barnacle was laid right on a sand base and in time the supporting timbers rotted away. These were replaced, but in time the replacements also suffered the same fate. Eventually it was decided to rebuild Barnacle and the present hut was, for a time, the largest on the Shore.

## **Seaspray**

Mrs McGregor's sister-in-law married Dr. Sharp who also built a hut on the Shore in 1946, using timber from an old tennis hut from Kippford. It was on the site of the present Seaspray and called 'Whares' because during the building tools were always being misplaced.

Joe Sassoon can remember the Sharps arriving. He recalled that Dr. Sharp only had to arrive on the Shore and one of his children needed medical attention within about five minutes, Dr.Sharp was an inspector of mines. Betty Sassoon recalls that he worked hard to improve working conditions down the mines.

David and Anne Wright bought Seaspray in March 1966 and extended the original hut in 1972. However the building gradually rotted away and had to be replaced with the current building in 1992.

## Oyster Cabin

In the 1940's 'Oyster Cabin' was known as 'The Point' and was owned by Jimmy Orr.

The Sassoons remembered Jimmy Orr as a tall man with a big beard. His claim to fame was that he could swim out from Carrick Bay, around Ardwall and back at high-tide.

Jimmy Orr sold The Point to Mrs. Bushby on 31/10/64. Many people recalled seeing the Bushbys around the Shore at that time when they were on holiday. However by the end of 1966 Mrs.Bushby had also decided to sell.

On 9/1/67 Mrs.Murray-Usher agreed to buy the hut and she renamed it Oyster Cabin. Heather Munro recalls that Mrs. Murray-Usher told her that the hut had been renamed after the oyster collectors in the area.

During the 1967 season Oyster Cabin was rented out. The archives contain copies of the 'rules and regulations' which applied to those renting the hut, including details of where the water hole was and that the nearest post box was located at Sandgreen. There was also a sheet listing places of interest in the area. The weekly rent at that time was :-

<i>Off season rent</i>	<i>£ 7- 7-0</i>
<i>Peak season (24/6-2/9)</i>	<i>£15-15-0</i>

Dr.Munro had made arrangements to visit the Shore in October 1967 to view Mrs. Grove's (Cornerways), but between making the arrangements and the proposed date to visit the hut had been sold and various memos in the archive exist debating what Dr.Munro could be shown when he arrived.

One memo discussing the possibility of showing them around Oyster Cabin had the line

*As far as I can gather the cabin has the estate china in it.*

The hut obviously was what the Munro's were looking for and the sale went through before the end of 1967. The hut was sold :-

*Including the contents, less the china.*

Betty Sassoon remembers Mary Murdoch building the hut by the gate. She was an infant teacher from Kirkcudbright who had taught Joe and later their children. Whilst staying on the Shore she made the point of swimming everyday no matter what the weather.

## National Trust for Scotland

The Carrick Residents Association was given permission to research the files on Carrick Shore held in the Trust's archives at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. The help and assistance given by archivist Carolyn Bain was much appreciated.

Negotiations for Mrs Murray-Usher to present 'my part of Carrick Shore (extending to approximately 25 acres) with two Murray's Isles that lie a short distance from it to the Trust' began 1936. On 26th June 1936 the Trust was invited by Mrs. Murray-Usher to discuss her proposals. The terms were negotiated with Mr. Arthur W. Russell of Messrs Strathern and Blair of 12 South Charlotte Street, Edinburgh.

Three days before this a Mr. Hastings had applied, through his solicitors Messrs Holmes, Son and Archer of Sheffield, to build a bungalow at Carrick of brick, rough cast with a slate roof. Mrs. Murray-Usher preferred wood and her reply included;  
*In conclusion I wish to emphasise that it is for me alone to decide whether my land is built on and I admit no obligation whatsoever to grant Mr. Hastings a feu at Carrick.'*

By 28th June 1936 it seemed definite that the foreshore and islands were to become the Property of the National Trust. In a letter of that date Mrs. Murray-Usher says:

*I should like to make the following points:*

- 1. Fishing and shooting rights to be reserved.*
- 2. Right to be reserved for a house to be erected, if desired, on the site of the previous fisherman's hut, recently burned down.*
- 3. Right reserved to draw from the ground conveyed a water supply should this be required at any time*
- 4. No camping, or huts, or other erections of any kind to be allowed on the ground which is to be kept as an open space.'*

The letter ends:

*I expect you have been very busy after the Kings visit.'*



A reply to this letter asked where the site of the fisherman's hut was. A map was sent marking the site but returned to the Cally Estate Office on request.

A letter dated 14th July 1937 discusses the land let for grazing and suggests:  
*'mainland to Walter Davidson, fisherman, High Street, Gatehouse at a rent of £4 per annum payable half yearly at Martinmass and Whitsunday. The Murrays Isles to Mrs. Johnstone and James Johnstone, Blacksmith, Gatehouse at £3 per annum.'*

There were concerns in March 1938 about people who had sites for huts on Carrick Shore. Mrs. Murray-Usher suggested that the Trust waive the first year's rent. In a reply to Patrick Gifford, Solicitors, the Trust said;

*'If huts are permitted during the first year rather an onus would be put on the Trust at the end of that year when the removal of the huts would have to be insisted upon and the Trust in requiring the owners of the huts to remove them would of course have to make it clear that the Trust were bound by the conditions of Mrs. Murray-Usher's gift to insist on the huts being removed.'*

So it appears that Mrs. Murray-Usher wished to use the Trust as a means of removing the huts and they in turn were prepared to squarely shift the blame for any such action onto the Cally Estate.

By 5th May 1938 Mrs. Murray-Usher has written to the Trust;

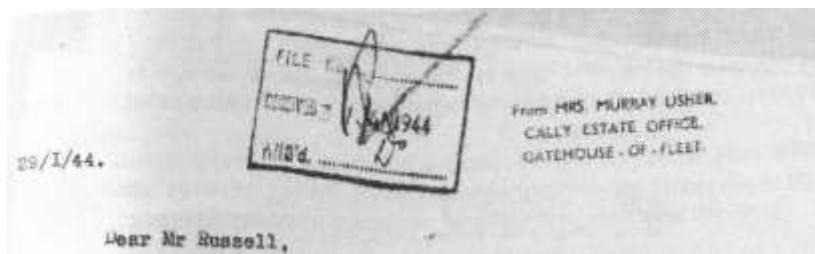
*'no additional huts but the existing ones to stay'*

Negotiations continue and on 24th March 1939 a letter from the Trust to Mrs. Murray-Usher states the Trust's concerns over shooting rights and wants to exclude Carrick Shore.

By April 1943 Carrick still didn't officially belong to the Trust but they were involved in developments in the area. About this time Mrs. Murray-Usher developed a 'restrictive agreement' on Cally Estate land, that building permission be refused apart from agricultural buildings or gamekeepers houses. The agreement also included tree felling etc. In effect Mrs. Murray Usher was well ahead of her time creating a green-belt before green-belts were the vogue The problem with such an agreement seemed to be the policing of it.

In April 1943 Mrs. Murray-Usher wrote to the Trust complaining about Mr. Gordon of Boreland Farm and the 'disreputable shacks' she had spotted by the foreman's cottage at the entrance to Carrick Shore. Although at that time the Trust did not own Carrick Shore, and certainly not Boreland Farm which was on the Cally Estate, they wrote to Mr. Gordon about the matter. Mr. Gordon replied suggesting that the

buildings had been erected just before the 'agreement' and were not bound by it. He went on to state that they were hen houses, a piggery etc. Negotiations continued and by 1944 the Trust were concerned about sanitation on Carrick. Mrs. Murray-Usher replied through the Trust's solicitor Mr. Russell :



Dear Mr Russell,

The National Trust, Carrick Shore.

*Thank you for your letter of 27th. inst., regarding Carrick.*

*I do not anticipate the difficulties you mention with the authorities.*

*It is quite possible to deal with sanitation with chemical closets and most of the huts do in fact deal thus with the problem, I think, and if they don't, it can be made a condition that they do. Though the tenure is so insecure most of the buildings are fairly substantial, and the class of owner is fairly high, for numbered amongst them is a Minister, a Doctor, the Rector of Kirkcudbright Academy, the Provost of Gatehouse, an Assistant-Inspector of Taxes, a prominent artist, and last but no means least the very competent Kirkcudbright plumber !. If the number of huts increases the onus to create an adequate central water supply for use as a communal source can be made to devolve on the hut-owners, who can easily deal with the problem by cooperation, under, I suggest the chairmanship of the plumber. There is a well, from which I understand water is at present carried.*

*Carrick Shore can be approached either from the Kirkcudbright or from the Gatehouse side by an adequate track (suitable for cars) which goes through a ford at the Boreland end. The road you refer to from Sandgreen past Boreland is of course a public road and the road through Carrick has always been used by the public and the right never questioned.*

Finally on 6th April 1945 the land was handed over to the National Trust for Scotland. A letter giving the names and addresses of the eleven chalet owners was sent to the Trust.

Arthur H. Russell Esq.,  
Messrs Struthers & Blair,  
11 South Charlotte Street,  
Edinburgh.

Telephone N° 200

R ✓

FILE No. _____
REC'D. 12 MAY 1945
Col. <u>Rate Office</u>

Gatehouse of Fleet  
10th May, 1945.

Dear Mr Russell,

Garrick Shore

I shall shortly be sending you the relative lists of let but meanwhile give you the following names and addresses and the amount of rent due for houses at Garrick on Whitunday so that you can notify them.

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| ✓ James Hamilton Esq.,<br>Low Knockglass,<br>Stranraer.                    | £2. 0. 0 |
| ✓ Mrs Dumb,<br>Paradise,<br>Aman Wood,<br>Lunfries.                        | £2. 0. 0 |
| ✓ T. McGill Dundas Esq.,<br>21 G. Hillside Wood,<br>Edinburgh 10.          | £5. 0. 0 |
| ✓ Rev. H. J. Rotherhill,<br>24, Southport's Lane,<br>Airdrie.              | £2. 0. 0 |
| ✓ George Maclean, Esq.,<br>Belochair,<br>Luffries Wood,<br>Castle Douglas. | £1. 0. 0 |
| ✓ David Macdonald Esq.,<br>3 High Street,<br>Airdrie.                      | £2. 0. 0 |

2-0

Over. £11. - 1 -

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| ✓ James Orr, Esq.,<br>Linneth, -here -street,<br>Kirkcubright,<br>-Highlandshire.                                    | £2. 0. 0 |
| ✓ Messrs J. & W. of the<br>Lots of J. N. Glover,<br>Messrs Gordon Buchanan & Son,<br>25 Alva Street,<br>Edinburgh 1. | £5. 0. 0 |
| ✓ D. G. Amey Esq.,<br>Gair Mindaie,<br>Kirkcubright  | £3. 0. 0 |
| ✓ James Littlejohn Esq.,<br>5 Darnley Street,<br>Kirkcubright  | £3. 0. 0 |
| ✓ David Griffiths Esq.,<br>Dunfermline,<br>Edinburgh of Fleet.   | £5. 0. 0 |

How  
to make Johnnie  
The Crafts  
Kirkcubright

Yours sincerely,

*Elizabeth Russell*

During 1946 a local farmer parked in front of High Tide and began to remove sand from the shore. After a heated exchange Mr. McGill Duncan wrote to the National Trust and their reply included the following paragraph :-

*'It may be that a public right of way exists on the road through Carrick Shore and we are looking into this matter but in any case this will be a right of passage only and the public would have no right to park cars or lorries away from the road on National Trust property.'*

By 1947 The National Trust had appointed a 'Shore Ranger', John McLean, who lived at Barrhill Lodge at the entrance to Fleet Forest, close to Girthon. Mr. McLean was responsible for arranging camping and caravanning sites for Mrs. Murray-Usher and the Trust.

The Duncans remembered John McLean being very zealous over his duties as warden and recalled him cycling round the Shore at regular intervals. Any transgression of National Trust rules was reported. Mr. McGill Duncan received a letter from the National Trust saying that it was noted that he had erected a tent on the Shore and that the charge would be 6d per night payable to the warden.

Maurice Griffiths also recalls that he once had an air rifle to shoot rabbits in the Church of Scotland field but was seen off by the warden. A few words with Jimmy McLachlan and moving over one field sorted this problem out.

In August 1944 the Trust wrote to Mr. Griffiths, 'Wellwood' hut, Carrick with a rent reminder. Mr. Griffiths replied sending a cheque for £4 and pointing out that, as he had already paid, the cheque was a donation. Furthermore he stated that his hut was called 'Barnacle' and not 'Wellwood'. Mr. Griffiths also complained that John McLean had tried to charge him 1/- per night for a tent next to the hut and that surely this rule should not apply to permanent residents. The Trust replied admitting the error, apologised, thanked him for his donation and didn't charge him for the tent.

In 1947 there were thirteen site holders listed on the Shore :-

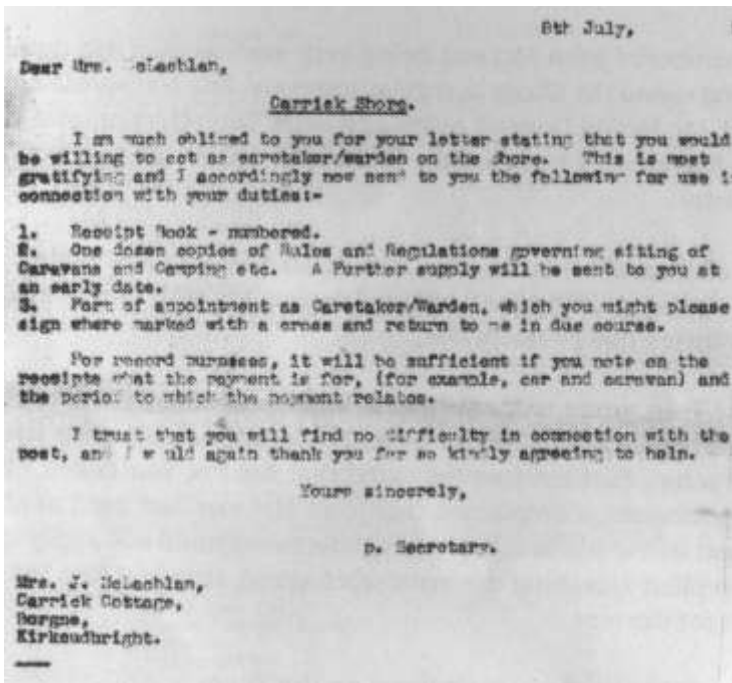
Mr T G McGill Duncan	Mr M Johnson	Rev E J Mothersill
Mr D G Ramsay	Mrs Dunn	Mrs Middleton
Mr J Henchan	Dr W Sharp	Mr D Sassoon
Mr D M Griffiths	Mr G W Wheeler	Mrs H K Holmes
Mr J Orr		

Hut rents were between £1 and £4 a year. Mrs Holmes was paying rent on a walled enclosure also at a rate of £1 a year.

On 25th June 1947 John Henderson, head of the schoolhouse at Borgue, wrote to the Trust, to ask permission for an annual school picnic to take place on Carrick Shore on 2nd July.

In 1951 the Trust were having problems with Mrs. Murray-Usher's 'restrictive agreement'. On 9th May 1951 Mrs. Murray-Usher wrote to the Trust to say that she felt that Trust rents from Carrick Shore were an income that should be used to police infringements. In this case the matter in question revolved around permission to fell trees at Enrick Farm and she didn't wish to be involved.

By 1952 Mrs. Jessie McLachlan had taken over duties as caretaker warden of the Shore.



8th July,

Dear Mrs. McLachlan,

Carrick Shore.

I am much obliged to you for your letter stating that you would be willing to act as caretaker/warden on the Shore. This is most gratifying and I accordingly now send to you the following for use in connection with your duties:-

1. Receipt Book - numbered.
2. One dozen copies of Rules and Regulations governing siting of Caravans and Camps etc. A further supply will be sent to you at an early date.
3. Form of appointment as Caretaker/Warden, which you might please sign where marked with a cross and return to me in due course.

For record purposes, it will be sufficient if you note on the receipts what the payment is for, (for example, car and caravan) and the period to which the payment relates.

I trust that you will find no difficulty in connection with the post, and I would again thank you for so kindly agreeing to help.

Yours sincerely,

D. Secretary.

Mrs. J. McLachlan,  
Carrick Cottage,  
Borgue,  
Kirkcubright.

During the time that the Shore was owned by the National Trust Isa Halliday (née McLachlan ) used to help her mother to collect rent from the caravans which came to stay. The caravans could be sited anywhere on the Shore. She recalls playing with Billy Spencer and his friend Mervin Hailey who used to stay in one of them.

On 6th August 1952 a rather interesting letter was sent by Mrs. Murray-Usher to the assistant secretary of the Trust: (see next page)

Telephone N° 200

Cally Estate Office.  
Gatehouse of Fleet.  
23rd August, 1952.

For August,

G. Drew, Esq.,  
Assistant Secretary,  
National Trust for Scotland,  
5 Charlotte Square,  
Edinburgh.

Dear Mr. Drew,

I should like to rent Murray  
Isles for wintering hogs. I do not know  
whether this would be a success or not. Would  
a rent of £5 appeal.

Trusting,  
Yours faithfully,  
Drew  
Assistant Secretary.

Yours sincerely,  
*T.S. Drew*

P.S. We are looking forward to seeing you ~~and~~  
~~and~~ when you can manage.

Members of the Carrick Residents Association may remember the AGM when the present chairman, Maurice Griffiths, was appointed. Maurice stood up at that meeting and stated that in future non-payers would be named and we all applauded this measure. Members may be interested in this letter in the Trust's files dated 23rd September 1952 and addressed to Maurice's father:

23rd September, 52

Dear Sir,

Carrick Shore.

I understand that the agreed charges for parking a Caravan  
at Carrick Shore have not been paid by you since 28th June.

I should be glad to have payments due to date.

Yours faithfully,

T.S. DREW,  
Assistant Secretary.

D.M. Griffiths, Esq.,  
Boatcoun,  
SOUTH CUNNINGHAM.

In October of that year the Trust wrote one of its many letters to Mrs McLachlan :-

Dear Mrs. McLauchlan,

Carrick Shore.

I am much obliged to you for your letter sending the ~~Receipts~~ Receipts Book along with remittance of £3 being balance of amounts received by you. I now have pleasure in sending you herewith Money Order for £12.9.5d., in payment of remuneration to you (£10) for the season and commission on amounts received from Campers etc., (20% of £12.7/- i.e. £2.9.5d.). Kindly sign and return to me the accompanying form of receipt.

I also enclose the Receipts Book which please retain carefully for use next season.

May I again say how grateful the Trust are to you for so kindly agreeing to act as caretaker warden. It is not expected that there will be any further campers etc., this year but please let us know immediately should there be anything you find difficult to deal with.

Yours sincerely,

p. Secretary.

Mrs. J. McLauchlan,  
Carrick Cottage,  
Borgue,  
Kirkcudbrightshire.

In December 1952 the Trust wrote to Mr.G.Wallace of Gatehouse with an agreement for him to take rabbits off the Shore on a 50/50 basis. "Start trapping at once", ended the letter.

During January and February of 1953 many letters were exchanged between the Trust and Mr. Wolffe of Gatehouse. Trust inspectors had visited the Shore, but initially found it difficult to locate; the letters were about direction signs to be sited at Enrick and the start of the track,

The Trusts days on the Shore were coming to an end and the return of the property to donor, Mrs. Murray-Usher was scheduled for 1st February 1959.

Niall Duncan from his Carrick files produced two cuttings from the Scotsman. The first dated January 1959 had the headline, 'National Trust Accused of Mismanagement' followed by 'Solway property handed back.' The second dated 7th February 1959 bore the headline 'National Trust Accused of Neglect' followed again by 'Solway Property Handed Back'

The Trust sent a list of site owners to Mrs. Murray-Usher:

DISTRICT NOTES

List of Notable Births, August 21, 1906

Births given to mothers in jail

1. Louie B. Ford, Mrs.,	16 Victoria Park, Kirkcubright.	£ 3.15.-
2. Mrs. M. Hudson,	Glenduck, New Galloway, Castle Douglas	4.10.-
3. Mrs. D. Dalziel,	Lawson, Kirkcubright	3.15.-
4. Mrs. G. Nicholson,	Barnside Poultry farm Kirkcubright.	5.15.-
5. Mrs. S.F. White,	118 High Street, Kirkcubright	3.15.-
6. Mrs. A. McDonald, Mrs.,	Bank of Scotland, 15 St. Mary Street, Kirkcubright.	4.10.-
7. William Kerr, Mrs.,	Clutha-son, Beatrix Park, Kirkcubright	4.10.-
8. H.V. Taylor, Mrs.,	4 Southern Road, Droghda.	4.10.-
9. R.W.J. Sullivan, Mrs.,	41 Victoria Park, Kirkcubright.	3.15.-
10. Mrs. M. Dunn,	Paradies, Linn Road, Droghda.	3.15.-
11. T.D. McGill Brown, Mrs.,	55 Salween Terrace Droghda, Perthshire.	3.15.-
12. Joseph Stewart, Mrs.,	5, High Street, Kirkcubright	5. 5.-
13. J.V. Dunlop, Mrs.,	F.O. Lodge, Kirkcubright.	3.15.-
14. W.H. Johnston, Mrs.,	The Gracie, Kirkcubright	5. 5.-
15. H.V. Brown, Mrs.,	Inverurie, Kirkcubright	3.15.-
16. Mrs. Middleton,	High Street (west), Droghda, Glasgow.	3.15.-
17. D.H. Griffiths, Mrs.,	Scotland, South Dumfries.	4.10.-
18. Dr. W.C. Sharp,	2 Cause of Good South Edinburgh S.	4.10.-
19. John Kerr, Mrs.,	Franklin, Kirkcubright.	4.10.-
20. S.G. Watson, Mrs.,	National Bank of Scotland Buildings, Kirkcubright.	3.15.-
21. Mrs. J.S. Laws,	Scotland, Kirkcubright	3.15.-
22. H.H. Faithfully Mrs.,	45 Fishation Drive, King's Park, Glasgow.	3.15.-
23. E. Deasy, Mrs.,	1 St. George's Crescent, Glasgow.	5. 5.-
24. Mrs. J.V. Fothergill,	16, Octobert's House, Kirkcubright	4.10.-
25. H.B. Wheeler, Mrs.,	27 Main Road, Kirkcubright, Linn.	5. 5.-
26. Major T. Skelton,	Donholm, Glasgow, Castle Douglas.	4.10
27. Miss H. Macleod,	Miss Croft, Kirkcubright	3.15.-
28. T. Anderson, Mrs.,	7 Bridge Street Kirkcubright.	4.10.-

S.S. Miss H. J. was allotted to Mr. J.C. Jamieson, 33 Bathman Street, Kirkcubright, but he failed to get cleaning permission (due to our short-coming regarding water and sanitary arrangements) hence there is no 5/- on the ground and no rent is charged.



In January the Trust also wrote the following letter to Mrs. Murray-Usher.

9th January, 1959.

Mrs. Murray-Usher,  
Cally Estate Office,  
Gatehouse-of-Fleet,  
Kirkcubrightshire.

Dear Mrs. Murray-Usher,

Carrick Shore

Your telephone call yesterday was at a very opportune time. I was called from attending a meeting of the Executive Committee, (at which Lord Wessles and Sir Angus were present) to take your call, and arrived back in time to hear Carrick Shore being discussed.

I immediately told them the purport of your message, i.e., that you wished us to give the Carrick Shore tenants notice to quit so that you could start with a "clean slate".

The Committee decided, however, that the Trust really could not take this action.

The draft press release, and the contents of the proposed letter to tenants (and in particular the last paragraph thereof) were submitted to the meeting. Both were approved.

Under the circumstances, I hope that you will agree to proceed as I suggested in my letter of yesterday.

Yours sincerely,

S.W.N. Kellas  
Assistant Secretary.

In February 1959 the Trust wrote to Mrs. Murray-Usher to say that their Master of Works, Mr. Warwick had collected the litter bins from Mrs. McLachlan and also taken away the sign from the cairn. It continues 'Ref your letter of 10th Feb, I am certain that we never collected rent for the Church Hut but don't know what happened before'.

On 17th February the Trust wrote to Mr. Robert Gatcliffe of Golders Green, London concerning, an article, that appeared in the Times about the return of Carrick to the donor.

Re-article in Times

*'Unfortunately the Times omitted the two important statements that the property was alienable and that the purpose of the gift had failed and that was why it was being returned to the donor. It was a pretty good mess and the Trust had either to keep it as a pleasant haunt for the few hut owners or else it had to encourage the public making it no longer attractive for the few. We were in a cleft stick and it was uneconomical, the object of the gift being that it might provide some free funds for the Trust's work in the Country'.*

A letter on 18th February 1959 from Mrs. Murray-Usher to the Trust, who had written to ask about money in the Cairn collecting box said:

*'Somebody had been sent down to Carrick to collect money from the till.  
Unfortunately it was frozen stiff and the key could not be turned'*

Next follow several letters between Mrs. Murray-Usher and the Trust regarding a water supply at Carrick. One dated 20th February 1959 says:

*New water supply point at Carrick Shore is complete except for the fitting of a semi-rotary pump. Estimate for fitting £15 Thomas Jardine and Sons.'*

A letter from the Trust to Major T. C. Dickson says that his cheque for £4-10-0 was being returned because the property had been given back to the donor.

Betty Sassoon's first trips to the Shore were in 1947, after she had met Joe. She provided us with a fascinating insight into what life was like on the Shore during the National Trust days.

Joe and Betty Sassoon can remember the gardener at Knockbrenn giving them some tomatoes as they strolled past one evening. Recognising that they were courting he told them that they were love apples.

Joe and Betty Sassoon married in 1948 and had their honeymoon at 'The Hut'. As they opened the door Betty remembers a bucket of sand falling on them. Apparently Isa McLachlan had been around and set it up. Betty also remembered that Isa and her mother, Jessie, had gathered a big bunch of violets and left them standing in the centre of the table ready for their arrival. When they entered the hut after escaping the sand, they found that the room was filled with the lovely aroma of fresh flowers.

Joe and Betty used to live out at the Shore from Easter until October until their eldest daughter, Tanya, went to school. Betty described these periods as living like 'tinkers' on the Shore. They often went around barefoot and used a kind of bartering system to swap food with others staying at Carrick.

Betty recalls that Jessie McLachlan was a lifeline on the Shore. They used to trade scones and lettuces for milk and rabbits for lobsters. All their milk, eggs and bacon came from Jessie. Any milk left over at the end of the day was hung on the washing line in a muslin overnight and then in the morning they could have a type of cheese known as crowdie for breakfast.

Joe recalled leaving Tanya, their eldest daughter, in an orange box at the farm door whilst they went off collecting mushrooms and brambles. Later they would share their spoils with Mrs. McLachlan in exchange for her baby sitting duty.

Rubbish was burnt on bonfires on the beach. They would bake potatoes in foil and cook sausages on sticks in the evenings around these fires. The water hole was a regular meeting place on the Shore where people tended to congregate and discuss the day's business.

Betty remembers walking up to the triangle at Knockbren in a morning and leaving a note and some money on the stone. Later she would return and collect her meat. Looking back Betty realises she never considered the possibility that an animal might pinch it before she returned.

At the Boreland of Girthon end of the track a similar operation was repeated. Here she would hang up a knitted bag in the garage with her money inside and return later to collect her bread.

Inside the but they cooked on a Primus stove. Betty can remember one wild and wet evening when she had nappies and tea towels hanging all across the room on a string drying. Unfortunately she forgot to pump up the stove correctly. The result was one of the tea towels catching fire and the but began to fill with smoke. Betty's dilemma that night was whether to take her baby, Tanya, out into the night or whether to put the fire out. In the end she put the fire out with a wet nappy.

Their memories of the Shore at the time were of gooseberries growing in the garden in front of their but together with lily of the valley and blue violets. On the bank behind their hut, they recalled the wonderful sight of watching glow worms on a summer's evening and of looking at the phosphorescence in the water on clear nights when the moon was out. The children thought that they were looking at diamonds sparkling upon the water.

Betty can remember the weeks before their annual holiday being hectic as she used to bake and fill up all her tins ready for the holiday.

Visitors were always welcome at the hut providing they brought a loaf of bread and a pound of tomatoes with them and during the summer months they had a regular flow of such visitors.

In winter, when they left the Shore, they would store dry foods and candles in a tin trunk in their hut. Betty left the key with the McLachlans in case they were snowed in at the farm and needed extra supplies. Joe and Betty recalled that snow was more common then than now and that there was a greater risk of being cut off.

During the long summer Joe used to leave the Shore at 7:30 each morning and cycle to Enrick where he would catch the bus into Kirkcudbright for work. He would return to the Shore about quarter past six. Betty recalls that within half an hour, after having eaten his tea he would be a dot on the horizon out in his boat.

The Sassoons sold their hut in 1961 around the time a large number of new huts were being constructed. During the National Trust days the number of huts on the Shore increased from eleven in 1945 to twenty eight in 1959.

Many of the people responsible for building huts at this time are still Carrick residents and many of them have stories to tell about their huts.

## **Blackthorn/ Whins/ Solway Spray/ Panorama**

As we are aware, shortly after the war Mrs. Murray Usher gave Carrick to the National Trust. Mrs. Nicholson, the wife of George Nicholson of Kirkcudbright, wrote to the Trust asking for permission to build a hut on the Shore but was refused. Later she received a letter saying that the National Trust intended to develop twenty sites at Carrick. George Nicholson, James McMillan senior, Jim McMillan and his friend Leslie Park all applied and the four chalets; Panorama, Whins, Blackthorn and Solway Spray were all built together by the new owners as a team. This building took place in the mid-50's when the ground rent was £4-10-0. per year.

Marion Haining remembers the four huts being built. Maximum dimensions were imposed on the new buildings (13' by 18'). She recalls that the huts were designed by Leslie Park, a woodwork teacher. The outside shape of the buildings was identical but each prospective owner varied the interior layout. Marion recalls the huts being built on a limited budget. Her family even chose a small name `Whins', so that they didn't have many letters to buy.

During the planning phase of the huts Marion remembers a picnic at Kippford where they watched some boys set fire to the bushes. This incident resulted in asbestos being selected for the outside of the new huts as a fire retardant. The windows originally used in the buildings were old ones from prefabs and some of these still exist today.

## **Tigh-na-mara**

It would appear that Square Hut isn't the only one on the Shore with railway connections. Marion Haining recalls that the sun-lounge at the front of Tigh-na-mara was part of the signal box from Kirkcudbright station.



Jack Hirst remembers staying in Tigh-na-mara in the days before he bought Cornerways. On one evening during each holiday, the owner, Tom Anderson would come out to the Shore and spend a pleasant evening with them.

## The Cabin

A letter in the National Trust archives dated 30/6/1960 explained that Mrs. Middleton bequeathed the hut to Mrs. Dorothy Clingoe in her will as they always came to the Shore together.

On 18/7/61 Mrs Murray-Usher wrote to all hut owners on the Shore requesting that everyone put up a fence around their hut. However she initially wanted everyone to mark out their boundaries so she could come round and inspect them prior to the fences being erected. It is not known how discussions developed but the fences were never erected. Another reference to a fence following this letter from Mrs. Murray-Usher was to be found in Mrs. Clingoe's file in the Cally Estate archives. On 26/7/61 she wrote :-

*The fence around the hut on two sides is so close that one person with difficulty can walk between the fence and the hut. Permission is sought to extend the perimeter. The recent fire on the Shore has prompted this as the flames licked the hut and scorched the paintwork on the side. The bracken outside the perimeter was devoured by the flames. I would endeavour to remove all bracken within the perimeter thus providing some safety to the hut.*

## Stalker

Marion Haining remembers the hut Kathmar in front of Whins being constructed from an old garage. Mrs. Murray-Usher disliked the garage doors and made the owners change the gable end to remove them. It was erected by a lady called Mrs. White who used to come to the Shore with her daughter. They often held Scottish dances in the hut. Mrs. Murray-Usher wasn't happy with the low pitch of the garage roof either and when the hut was sold to Mrs. Simpson in 1967 she insisted that the pitch of the roof was altered as a condition of the sale.

When Mrs. Simpson first started enquiring about buying a hut on the Shore she was offered Mrs. White's hut by Mrs. Murray-Usher. Upon enquiring where the hut was she was told it was up on the hillside behind 'Solway Spray'. I doubt if such a description would locate the hut today.

On 28/6/67 a letter was sent from Patrick Gifford, Solicitors to Mr. and Mrs. Simpson :-

*Mrs. Murray-Usher has asked me to remind you that she has asked you to improve the roof of the hut which you have purchased as it is at present, most unsightly and unsatisfactory. She suggests that the roof should be made either absolutely flat or alternatively raised to a greater angle than it is at present. Mrs. Murray-Usher wishes this improvement to be carried out within 3 years.*

The required changes must have been agreeable to the Simpsons because a letter dated 3/7/67 was sent acknowledging the receipt of a cheque for £185 from Mr.Simpson in payment for the cabin on site 6, Carrick.



*Stalker with the original low pitched roof*

When John Simpson was a schoolboy he spent most of his school Summer holidays with his Aunt and Uncle in Edinburgh. Uncle Archie was a saw doctor for the Forestry Commission and it was part of his job to visit various forest sites throughout Scotland. John used to accompany him on his travels which were all taken by public transport: bus, train and Clyde steamers. "One of these days, when you're here", said Uncle Archie, "we will have to go to Gatehouse of Fleet, it's a beautiful little spot". This trip never came about but the name stuck in John's mind. When Mr. and Mrs. Simpson first bought a car they decided to have a look at this place for themselves and found all that Uncle Archie had described and more besides. During their visit they met two people they knew from schooldays; Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler who owned Truda. The following year they hired the Wheeler's hut for a holiday and thus began their association with the Shore. When, eventually they bought Kathmar they renamed it Stalker after Uncle Archibald Stalker who had inspired them to come to the area.

In 1997 the hut was demolished and rebuilt. Mrs. McGregor took the following rather sad photographs of the demolished hut.



## Chacara

In 1966 when Mr.Shankland purchased the hut it was known as LaLavendou. He changed the name to Bracken Bush. However his stay at Carrick was short lived and by early 1967 he was wanting to sell it.

He was offered £120 by Ian Crooks, a lecturer at Dumfries Technical College but Mrs. Murray-Usher decided to buy it instead.

Later Mrs. Murray-Usher sold the hut to George Higgs. It was sold on condition that some alterations were made. It was no surprise therefore to find in the archives shortly after the sale a letter from Mr.Higgs to Mrs. Murray-Usher outlining his proposals for the alterations. He asked if the windows could be repositioned so that they could see out of them when seated and also whether he could add a verandah and remove the dilapidated porch on the south gable.

It is presumed these alterations were given the go-ahead.

## Whimbrels

The original hut was a foresters hut at the Dhoon, near to Kirkcudbright, in the 1920's or 30's. It was erected on Carrick after World War II. It first belonged to the McDonalds of Kirkcudbright where Mr.McDonald was the bank manager. The chalet was originally called Brugarth, meaning clearing on the hill but was changed to Whimbrels in 1969 when the Rodgers purchased it.

## Fourways

George Faithfull and his wife used to rent Outlook for holidays. Mr Faithfull was a coach builder and worked first for Penmans in Dumfries and later in Glasgow. Just after the war during National Trust days, George Faithfull sought permission to build his own hut at Carrick. A letter in the Trust's archives in Edinburgh dated 27/09/50 asks Mr. Faithfull to contact Mr. John MacLean at Barrhill Lodge near Girthon to discuss the proposed construction. The negotiations must have been successful because Mr. Faithfull built 'Fourways'. He maintained the hut until Mrs. McGregor bought it from him when he left Carrick in the 1970's.

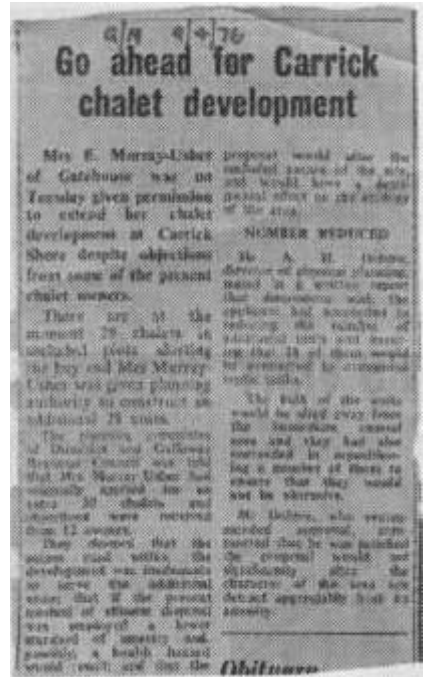
## Carrick Post National Trust Days

After the land was passed back to Mrs. Murray-Usher from the National Trust there was a period of stability on the Shore with no new buildings appearing. This was despite several articles in the local papers over the years talking of further developments and the granting of planning permission. One such article in the Galloway News in 1976 is shown to the right.

It wasn't, in fact, until 1989 that the next round of building activity was to be seen on the Shore, with permission for 24 additional sites being given.

One of the memories from this period held by a number of people was of the annual christmas cards (see next page), from Mrs. Murray-Usher. We heard that these were considered a treat to receive as they contained a number of old photographs of the area. Many of the pictures used in the cards over the years can be seen around the Murray Arms today.

We wonder how many people still have the odd card lying around at home.



How many people can remember the Carrick Monster which spent one summer scaring visitors to the Shore? It was known to run after cars and quietly follow people along the track.

The Carrick Monster





*Some Christmas cards from Mrs Murray Usher*

See more of Mrs Murray Usher's Xmas cards at the following web address  
<http://www.gatehouse-folk.org.uk/detailpage.asp?d=168&ID=13>

## Recent Times

Perhaps the one person who has changed the face of Carrick Shore most in recent years is Ken Morton.

In 1989 Ann Chaudhry and her sister Jimpy Clark approached Ken Morton to build two chalets to their own specifications. Permission had been obtained to develop Carrick and A.C.Wolffe and Partners of Gatehouse had divided the Shore into plots under the direction of Mrs.Murray-Usher. The existing plots, with huts on them were already numbered and the new sites were identified by letters. Whilst he was working on these two chalets, later to be named Green Patch and Vital Spark, Ken was approached by Christine and Richard Mayson to build another one for them on their site, Plot V.

By 1990/1 Ken and Antoinette Morton had fallen under the Carrick spell and wanted a site of their own. Only two sites were available and both were in the swamp at the back of the Church of Scotland field. These two sites presented problems concerning the installation of septic tanks and Ken approached the Solway River Purification Board for advice. They suggested that a French drain, a metre square and several metres long be made to filter any overflow before it went into the stream along with drainage from the swamp. Due to the work involved Ken decided to purchase both sites and build one chalet for his own use and one for sale, both connected to the drain.

From that point on work snowballed including new chalets, rebuilds and refurbishments. Ken has now been involved in working on fourteen of the Carrick chalets.

### Carolside

The Wishart's account of the purchase and building of their new chalet appears to be a common story amongst the recent additions to the Shore:-

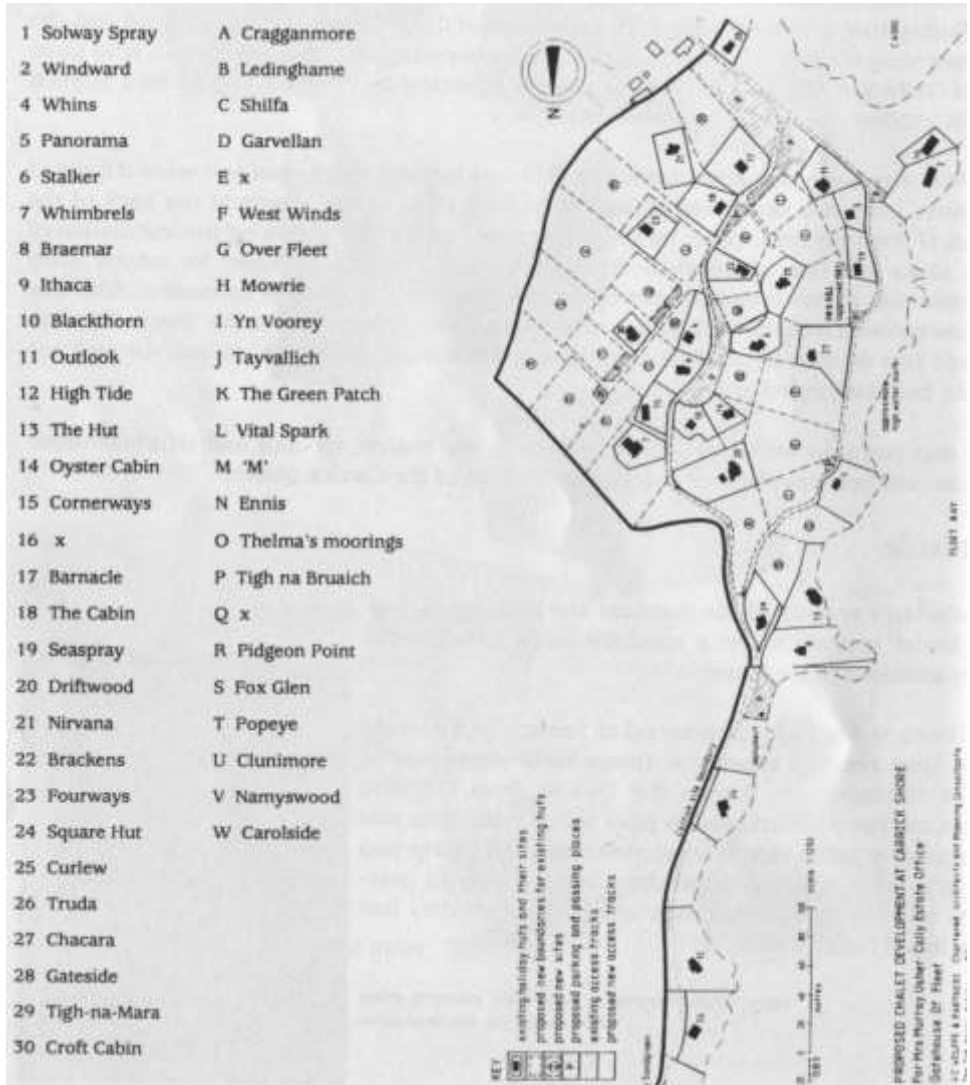
The Wisharts originally caravanned at Sandgreen for many years. They became aware that things were happening at Carrick through their friends the Quinns from Outlook. George and Mary looked at a few plots before settling on plot W because it had a terrific view. However they nearly had regrets prior to building when they found it was so overgrown in summer that they were unsure whether they had really found the best plot.



*Mary Wishart trying to determine where to place their chalet for the best view*

In 1991 they began looking at chalet designs but were unimpressed with what they saw until they looked at the building site just down the hill from them at the Vital Spark. The result was the start of Ken Morton's influence around the Shore. Their first holiday in the new chalet was in the summer of 1992.

The name Carolside was chosen because it was the area in Edinburgh where they were both brought up. They both attended Carolside Primary School and met when George was eleven and Mary seven although it was several years later before they met again.



## Amenities

### Water



Originally the only water supply for the Shore was via the spring and small well beside Monument Beach, between Tigh-na-mara and Square Hut. Collecting water from the well seemed to dominate early life at Carrick.

*Joe Sassoon collecting water.*

*Note the gate on the track in the background.*

Barbara Wheeler spoke of collecting water from the stream and of one day having an argument with a lady who was encouraging her four spaniels to drink from the water-hole.

Isa Halliday recalled that the water for the farm was obtained from a well beside the washhouse but she can remember dipping her hands into the water-hole by the monument for a quick drink whilst out playing.

Mrs McGregor felt that it was quite a treat to be sent to the well for water. Her journey from Outlook took her along the old line of the track past 'The Hut' where she often saw Mr. Sassoon sitting out painting.

*Water collecting at Carrick, from Mrs. McGregor's family album*

Maurice Griffiths can remember collecting water from the water-hole and carrying it in two buckets back to Barnacle using an old farm yoke. In the early days the water was crystal clear and fresh. It wasn't until later that evidence of bugs made boiling necessary, before use.



Gwen Hirst's earliest recollection of coming to Carrick is of standing on the rocks in front of Solway Spray brushing her teeth using a mug of water collected from the well. With the coming of mains water in 1973 there was the gradual introduction of running water to the huts. The Summer of 1973 saw a hive of activity on the Shore as hut owners dug their own trenches and installed connections to the mains.

To celebrate Mrs. Murray-Usher's 80th birthday Carrick residents were invited to submit articles, poems etc for a book which was commissioned to mark the occasion. Alison Barnes and Janice Spencer of Whimbrels were inspired to write the following article which sums up the impact mains water had on the Shore.

## *The Pipes of Pandemonium on Carrick*

*(An account of the lighter side of life as seen by two of Carrick's casual labourers in 1974).*

The well had somehow become known as 'Usher's Well', being situated alongside the National Trust collection box which was known as 'Murray's Monument'; from which the bay became Murray Usher Bay. The following is an updated version of:

### THE BALLAD OF USHER'S WELL

*There was a spring called Usher's Well  
Where water flowed full free,  
Where we could fill stout cans brim full  
Beside the salt blue sea*

*An a' on Carrick Shore wad say,  
'Bring water from the well.  
Some day we'll hae it a' on tap  
But when... we canna tell!'*

*We hadna been a year, a year,  
A year but barely two  
When word came from the Water Board  
That pipes were comin' thro'*

*Yes, word from the Water Board  
That pipes were comin' thro'  
We'll lay the pipes along the track,  
The rest is up tae you.'*

*We hadna dug an inch, an inch,  
An inch but barely ane  
When oor pick axe struck something hard  
Which brak the shaft in twain.*

*It fell aboot the Whitsuntide  
When days are lang and licht  
That sons O' Carrick toiled a' day  
An' workd wi' a' their micht.*

We hadna dug but scarce a week,  
A week, but barely three,  
When a' agreed for this toil  
Piped whisky it should be.

Then up there drew a JCB  
Which digged both trench and ditch  
Through sand and soil and solid stane  
It kenned na which was which.

`Bide still, bide still and rest a while,  
Throw water pails away'  
o that is why the Usher's Well  
Is clogged wi' weed today.

The coming of mains water to Carrick also brought about the other inevitable problems - bursts. One such incident occurred on 30th May 1980 when water was spotted seeping out from under the door of Ithaca. Eddie McCabe from the Barnacle broke into the hut to turn off the water and everyone on the Shore came to the rescue to help mop-up. The carpets were removed and taken to Whimbrels where they were spread out on the roof to dry out.

On another occasion winter visitors to the Shore saw water pouring from the seams of Oyster Cabin. A peep through the window revealed a fountain of water rising from near the sink. A phone call to the Water Board resulted in a flurry of activity on the Shore.

## Sewage

Without running water most of the huts had their own Elsans which were emptied during the season on a regular basis. The Sandgreen Warden, who undertook this task, had a two-wheeled metal truck with a lid which was opened at each hut and the 'offering' was poured in. George Wishart recalls that up until 1955 the warden used a horse on his rounds and then in 1956 he became mechanised when a tractor was provided for the job. Each hut owner had their own special name for the cart which included 'Lavender Cart', 'Yelloway', 'Happy Truck', etc. Whilst doing this job the warden, who was also christened with a number of names, (eg Dan Dan the Elsan Man) wore a very large pair of rubber gloves. He also came with a different trailer attached to his tractor to collect rubbish.

Noel Brown remembers that the 'Lavender Cart' used to rattle up the slope to Curlew maybe twice a week and give an excellent service. "It is hard to understand how anyone could undertake such a task", she said.

With the coming of water it was now possible to improve on the sanitation arrangements around the Shore and Mrs. Murray-Usher instructed everyone to install Perdisans - a sort of half-way house between the Elsans and proper flush toilets. For a time the talk of toilets dominated the Shore and once again everyone was busy, this time digging soak-aways for the Perdisans.

Once again Alison and Janice put pen to paper with the following :-

### **OUR LITTLE GREY HOME IN THE WEST**

*When the golden sun sinks in the west  
And the toil of the long day is o'er,  
When you've worked in a drain  
In the sun and the rain  
You forget you've been weary before.  
Far away where the loo shadow falls  
You may come to completion and rest  
When the waste of the day  
Can be all drained away  
From our little grey home in the west.*

*There are hands that are blistered and sore  
There lips that would welcome a drink  
There are two men who swear  
When they think we're not there  
And say words which they ought not to think.  
To the Water Board men from Dumfries  
It is only a shack at the best,  
But as they don't live there  
Why the hell should they care  
For our little grey home in the west?*

Eventually septic tanks were permitted by the Cally Estate and gradually everyone replaced their Perdisans with flush toilets.

## **Electricity**

Originally there was no electricity on the Shore. Most people used Calor Gas for both cooking and lighting and had paraffin heaters to keep warm.

Mrs. McLachlan used to sell Calor Gas. When she retired Alec and Sarah continued to do so. Miss Brown remembers Calor Gas being obtained from Alec for 7/6d a canister.

The first electricity on the Shore was by private generators which were installed at a number of huts including Driftwood. Mains electricity was brought close to Carrick in the late 1970's and people were invited to connect up. However as all

wires had to be underground the cost of reaching the mains prevented most people from taking advantage of this.

One of the three huts which took up the offer was Solway Spray. Shortly after it was installed a heater was accidentally left on when the but was shut up at the end of the season. A number of people spotted the electricity meter's wheel whizzing round outside but had no way of contacting the owners to let them know. We have no idea what that quarter's bill was but plenty of people around the Shore were speculating about it at the time.



## Post

Next to the far gate, on the road to Knockbrev, was an old Nissen-type hut, with a brick built chimney, used as a farm building. The concrete base and part of the chimney still survive. Mrs. Wheeler knew this as the 'postie's hut', it was here that the postman on his way from Kirkcudbright would have his breakfast when delivering to Carrick Farm.

Isa Halliday can remember the hut being well fitted out and even having a bed in it so the postman could have a lie down.

Joe Sassoon remembers the 'postie's hut'. The postman, who used to come from Castle Douglas to Borgue would spend one or two hours at the hut before starting his return journey. Joe remembers that he always had time for the children who visited him. Joe recalls looking through his collection of matchbox covers on occasions.

The hut was very cosy, especially on wet and windy days. The postman was a veteran from the Boer war. There was also a 'postie's hut' at the other end of the Shore where postmen on bicycles delivered as far as Truda.

In later years the postman came from Kirkcudbright and he used to be good at pre-sorting the Sassoon's mail. He used to take the interesting mail with him to Carrick and leave the rest, including the bills, at their house in Kirkcudbright. The Sassoons would collect this post from time to time as they returned home during the summer for a bath.

Fanny Yates recalls that the local postman was called Peter and that he used to allow her to travel with him on his rounds from Ingleston to Carrick, where they had a picnic lunch in the green hut beside the gate. On their return they collected letters from a number of boxes at the end of farm roads. Peter, she recalls had an exquisite waxed moustache of 2 to 3 inches each side, or so it seemed at the time.



## Sailing

Maurice Griffiths told of Nick Bessey designing a boat named the 'Hobbit' for his firm, Cumboco, the Cumberland Boat Company and Maurice, a keen yachtsman, sailed one at Carrick for years.



Maurice also remembered the story of an upturned boat, which he landed on Carrick beach in the middle of a hot sunny day in August 1983 and the excitement it caused. He was out sailing when he came across the boat with its nets loaded with fish. After ensuring that there wasn't a body underneath it, Maurice took it in tow from near Mossyard and returned to Carrick.

By the time he reached the Shore two police cars, the coastguard and an air-sea rescue helicopter from Valley on Anglesey were waiting.

The helicopter first tried to land in the Church of Scotland field but finally landed close to the track between Carrick and Isle Mouth, where a big orange flare was let off. Later the helicopter flew over the Fleet Estuary in lines doing a search and the police towed the boat away using a trailer supplied by Maurice. When the owner was found he valued his boat and nets at £200 and left £20 with the police for Maurice. The money was donated to the RNLI.



## Rugby

Mrs. McGregor's two nephews Gregor and Clarke Sharp both played rugby for Edinburgh and Gregor became an international. Clarke was also connected with the national team and still travels with them world-wide in an official capacity. Maurice Griffiths remembers that they were often seen training on Carrick beach whilst holidaying in Seaspray.

*Mrs. McGregor provided this photograph taken outside the original Outlook in about 1948. Clarke Sharp Friend Gregor Sharp Einna Roy Sheila*



The Sharp brothers aren't the only rugby internationals to have holidayed at the Shore. In the 1970's Dave Cotton and his family often stayed on the Shore. One year whilst staying at Linjoto they were joined by his brother, Fran and their parents. Fran Cotton was a former England Rugby Union Captain. One day Fran and Dave decided to walk across the sands to Cardoness. Unfortunately they mis-timed the return journey and ended up wading back across the Fleet up to their chests in water with their valuables held high in the air above their heads.

## Superstars

Mrs McGregor showed us a picture on the wall of Fourways recording the Carrick Superstars of 1982, an event by Rhona Lawrence (nee Tait). Mrs. McGregor recalls it provided more excitement and entertainment than the Olympics did that year. There were a number of competitions including an obstacle race, running, cycling, swimming and football penalties.

*Photo - left to right  
Alison Oldam,  
Raymond Nichol,  
Jamie McMillan,  
Ewan Rogerson, Mark  
Oldam, Donald Tait,  
Eddie McCabe, Peter  
Oldam, Callum  
Rogerson, Emma  
McCabe, Rhona Tait,  
Rachel Nichol, Isabel  
Tait, Sheila Rogerson,  
Brian Goudie, ???,  
Rate Hirst, Jamie  
Quinn and Badger.*



## Tennis

In 1985 Rhona Lawrence won the Kirkcudbright Academy Ladies singles trophy and was surprised to learn that she wasn't the only tennis ace on Carrick. Previous winners included Noel Brown and Eudora Watson.

## Raft Race

For a number of years as part of the Kirkcudbright Festivities a raft race was held. In 1982 a team from Carrick entered on the Fleet Forager. There was much support from the Shore at the event. It was decided some years later that a better raft could be designed, to be capable of taking on some of the more professional rafts which were appearing.



*The Carrick Clipper heads upstream on its first race*

In 1985 a good deal of the summer holidays were taken up with designing and building the new raft. Donald Tait undertook the design with Jack Hirst doing most of the construction, helped by an army of others. Sea trials were held in Carrick Bay and various combinations of crew were tried out.



*The Clipper crew rest on their oars as they look up at Carrick supporters on Kirkcudbright bridge.*

The eventual all female team launched the Carrick Clipper on what was to be the first of its many runs. On that occasion the team consisting of Rhona Lawrence, Sheena Taylor (nee Tait), Sue Wright and Kathryn Newell (nee Hirst) were the second ladies team home.

In 1987 a team comprising of John and Kirsten Higgs, Peter Oldam and Kathryn Newell took to the water as entrant number 13. A total of 45 supporters from the Shore were in attendance at the event and although the Clipper once more failed to win it did receive the best fancy dress award.

*The 1987 crew pass the fishing boats in Kirkcudbright harbour.*

On 14th August 1988 another motley crew was recruited for the race. This time the entrants were Catherine Heywood, Donald Tait, Gwen and Kathryn Hirst. The team, in full fancy dress were prepared for the off when the lifeboat was unexpectedly called to assist a



sailor in distress off Balcary Bay. The race was postponed for a week and a reserve crew was amassed after some of the occupants of the original crew got cold feet. The race on 21st August was different from previous races in that it involved racing out and around the lifeboat and back. The crew of Fiona Livingstone, Fiona and Donald Johnston and Jamie McMillan finished in second place and earned themselves a half bottle of whisky each. Unfortunately Jamie, being under-age had to hand it over to his father for 'safe' keeping. Did you ever get it back Jamie?

The final voyage of the Clipper was on 6th August 1989 from the sawmill to the bridge in Kirkcudbright. The rowers of Sheena Taylor, Jamie McMillan, Kathryn Newell and David Heywood finished in third place and earned themselves a quarter bottle of whisky. They also received a bottle of wine as the only crew to contain any ladies.

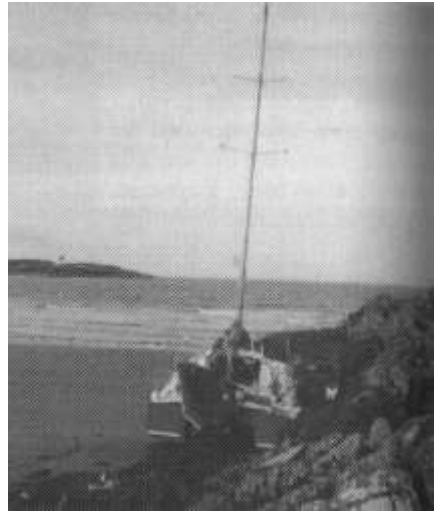


*The 1989 crew pose before the 'off.'*

Eventually the Carrick Clipper was destroyed in a successful attempt to prevent the catamaran, Misty Millar, from smashing onto Carrick Point, after slipping its moorings during bad weather in August 1989. The various buoyancy aids from the Clipper managed to keep the boat afloat and off the rocks until the tide turned.

## **Tug of war**

In 1988 a fundraising day was held on the beach at Sandgreen and was well attended by Carrick residents, particularly as it was held on the same afternoon as the postponed raft race. The Carrick boys of Callum and Ewan Rogerson and Jamie McMillan entered a team and had high hopes of a place in the grand final until they were drawn against the Anwoth Team. The 20 stone anchor man soon put paid to their progress in the competition despite the roars of encouragement from the crowd.



## **Previous Visitors to the Shore**

Alison Barnes and Janice Spencer told us that Dorothy L Sayers had visited Carrick Shore. In fact she cited an incident from her book, *Five Red Herrings*, at the large tombstone-like rock between Lichen Cottage and Isle Mouth. This was even used in the film in which Ian Carmichael starred, based on the book and also called *Five Red Herrings*.

## **Painters**

There has been a long association with painters at Carrick. Most people recalled having seen someone at some time or another painting around the Shore.

Jim McMillan spoke of an artists' colony out at Carrick. All painting about the same time were George Wheeler of Truda, McGill Duncan of High Tide, David Sassoon at J&J, Miles Johnson and Dorothy Nesbitt at Cornerways and Miss Cuthbertson, an art teacher from Kirkcudbright Academy, at Gateside.

## **George Wheeler**

George Wheeler was a quiet shy man who kept himself to himself. Few people at Carrick actually knew he was an artist. It was many years before 'Tiger' Duncan at High Tide, his next-door neighbour, discovered that he was a painter. George enjoyed walking and found Carrick to be an ideal place to walk. He always carried his sketchbook with him and would stop to sketch when the mood took him.

George Wheeler was an art teacher at Rochdale College of Art. Most of his work was in water colours and at an exhibition held in Rochdale Art Gallery his work was likened to Constable. George never sold his paintings preferring to paint for his own pleasure.

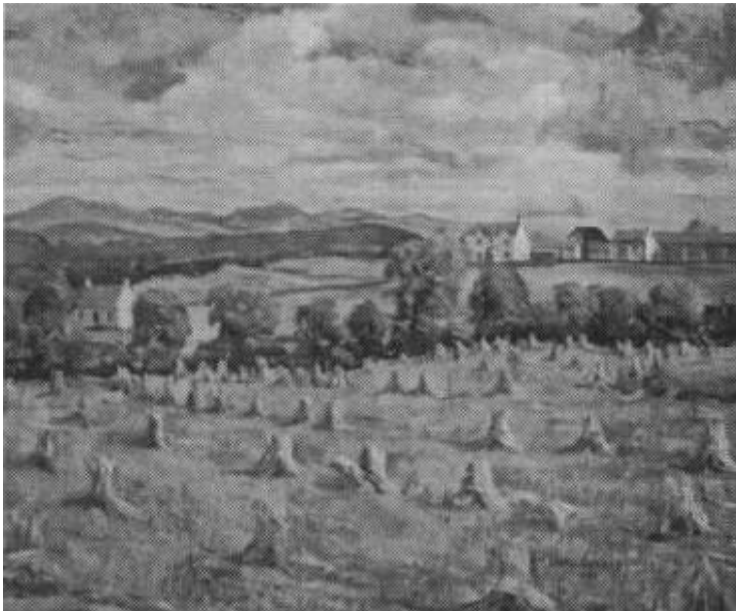
## McGill Duncan

Both Niall and Graeme Duncan spoke about their father Thomas George McGill Duncan who was a tax inspector, but was far more interested in his work as an amateur painter. Barbara Wheeler of Truda always refers to McGill Duncan as 'Tiger' and Niall tells us that this was a nickname he gained during the first World War. McGill Duncan, as he always signed his paintings, had pictures hung in Edinburgh by the Royal Scottish Academy and in Glasgow by the Royal Glasgow Institute. The directory of British Artists Working 1900-1950 by Grant M. Waters lists McGill Duncan –

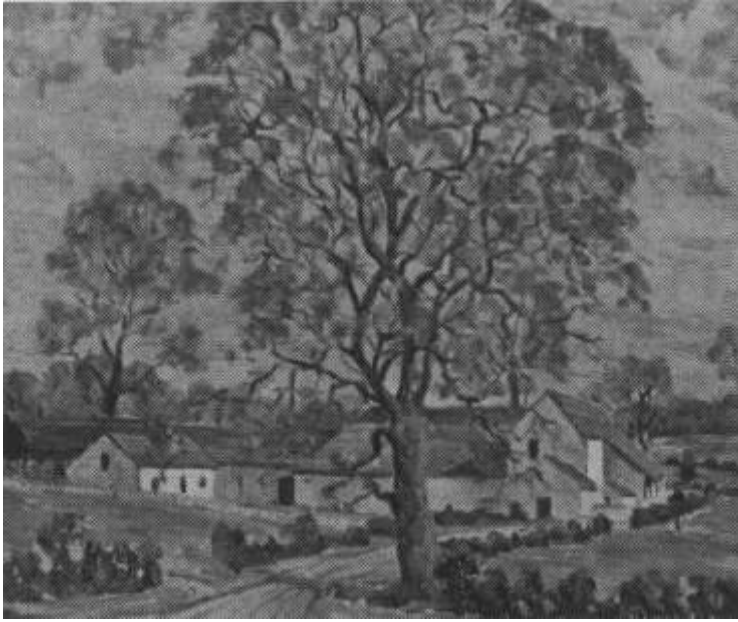
McGill Duncan T.G. born 1896

*'Landscape painter in oil and water colour. Born on 9th January 1896. Studied at Edinburgh College of Art. Exhibited at the RA, RSA, SSA, GI, Principal works include Carrick Shore, Galloway, Conway Valley, Wigtown Bay and Cumberland Mountains. Lived in Edinburgh.'*

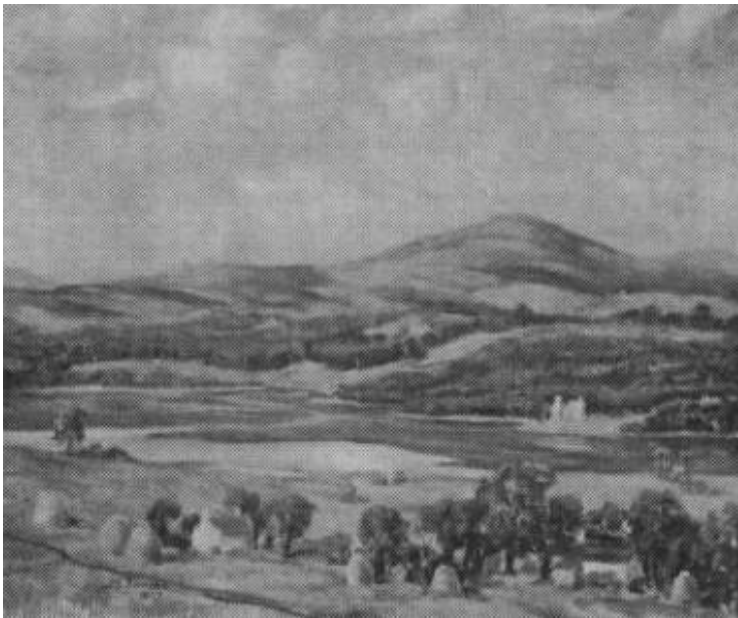
McGill Duncan moved with his family from Edinburgh to Dumfries in 1936. The Doctors Craig, two brothers, who he met in Dumfries, said that as a painter he should look at Carrick Shore and so began their long association with the Shore.



*Corn Stooks near Carrick Shore*



On the Road to Sandgreen



The River Estuary near Gatehouse



David Sassoon with his wife and family picnicing outside J&J

We found the following entry listed in the Dictionary of Scottish Painters 1600-1960 :-

Sassoon, David 1888 – 1978

*Born Walton-on-Thames, moved to Kirkcudbright in early 1920's where he painted landscapes of SW Scotland.*

David Sassoon exhibited his paintings at a number of galleries including Paul Gaupe Gallery in Berlin, the Society for Scottish Artists and the Walker Gallery in Liverpool. The Imperial War Museum also has some of his watercolours.

## **Miles Johnston**



William Miles Johnston was born in Edinburgh in 1893 and studied at the Edinburgh College of Art where he won a special prize for his animal studies. He spent some time in America painting in pastels and was commissioned by a scientific laboratory to make studies of poultry. He first came to Kirkcudbright during the 1914-18 war but it wasn't until the 1940's that he moved there permanently with his family.

Miles Johnston also worked with Sir Robert Lorimer on the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle where he was appointed heraldic blazoner.



Maurice Griffiths remembers that Miles Johnston was not only an artist but was in fact more famous for his pottery. He decorated pottery and incorporated into the design of each piece the word 'Zoo'. These pots are now collectors items.

## **Dorothy Nesbitt**

Born in Musselburgh in 1895 she trained and worked at Edinburgh College of Art before moving to Kirkcudbright with her husband, William Miles Johnston.

Along with Lena Alexander she started the very successful summer schools for artists in Kirkcudbright and she was responsible for saving the Harbour Cottage Gallery from demolition. She frequently painted at Carrick, whilst staying at their hut and many people on the Shore recalled seeing her, amongst others, painting around the Shore. Isa Halliday was able to show us paintings hanging on her walls painted by Dorothy Nesbitt.

Other artists not directly connected to the Shore have regularly come to Carrick over the years. It is reputed that Hornel used to visit Carrick to paint at about the turn of the century, in a 'posh' chauffeur-driven car.

E.A.Taylor and his wife, Jessie M. King, were also thought to have visited Carrick to paint. In a recent exhibition at the Harbour Cottage Gallery, Kirkcudbright various paintings were exhibited including an oil painting by E.A.Taylor entitled 'Road to Carrick'.

A number of local artists also used to cycle out to the Shore to paint.

Joe and Betty Sassoon recalled some of these regular visitors, seen during their annual holidays in the 1950's :-

Albert Dodds, who lost a hand in the first World War, regularly used to camp at the neck of the point in summer. Born in Edinburgh in 1883 he trained at the Edinburgh College of Art and the RSA schools. He was also used as the model for the art master in Muriel Spark's novel 'The Crime of Miss Jean Brodie'. He was well known for his landscape paintings.

Robert Sinclair Thompson was another regular to the Shore. He used to pitch his tent behind J&J on the land where William Davidson used to stretch out his nets for repair and tar. Unusually for those days he arrived at the Shore on his motorbike.

Both Robert Sinclair Thompson and his wife Florence were potters. In 1950 he became a full-time potter, after first becoming interested in ceramics whilst studying at the Glasgow School of Art under Hugh Adam Crawford. He also painted landscapes in oil, pastel and watercolour.

Tim Jeffs, another well-known artist used to holiday on Ardwall Island. Joe and Betty Sassoon recalled that he originally trained as a motor engineer with Arrol Johnston and later became a test driver.

He is best remembered for his illuminated scrolls, which were produced amongst others for Sir Winston Churchill and General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The tradition of artists still continues at Carrick both amongst the residents and by visiting local artists. Some of the current residents include Marion Haining, Wendy King, Nan McGregor, Janice Spencer and Jane Howarth.

Nan McGregor, herself a self-taught artist is a member of Gracefield Gallery, Dumfries and has sold many paintings. She first painted in oils and watercolours but now uses acrylic.

Marion Haining is another keen amateur artist keeping up the tradition of artists on the Shore. She has also had some of her pictures exhibited at Gracefield Gallery.

More recently Jane Gibson painted the picture below and the Wisharts realised it included the site of their new chalet. It was painted before Carolside was built and reminds us how their plot originally looked. Jane Gibson kindly gave us permission to reproduce the painting.



## Poets

As well as inspiring a number of people to take up painting, the Shore has lead others to take up writing poetry. Here is a poem written by Alison Barnes and published in the Galloway News in the 1970's :-

## MEDITATION AT SUNSET: 1970

As sunset glows on Carrick Shore this warm midsummer night,  
Beneath black hills the western sea reflects its borrowed light  
The plaintive cries of curlews break the silence of the sea  
And the spirit of this lonely shore evokes eternity.

And musing here amongst these rocks of greyest granite worn  
By countless hours of sun and rain, by frost's white fingers torn,  
I think of all those people who before me watched this scene,  
And like me thought it changeless in its loveliness serene.

Only forty years before me a crofter tilled this soil  
Some lilies and a dry-stone dyke are witness to his toil.  
Whilst living legends of him, they still locally recall  
In time his only mark on life-- his crumbling garden wall.

Whilst out on Ardwall Island the graves of Christians wait  
For scholarly pronouncement of likely burial date.  
Above me on the hillside where the plover trails his wing,  
I conjure up the Bronze Age from mute marks of cup and ring.

Thus patient archaeology revives forgotten years  
Revealing facts about past lives, but not their hopes and fears.  
And so by mental process, we extend our mortal span  
To comprehend the centuries back to primeval man.

Through the pageant of antiquity this tide has ebbed and flowed,  
On unknown deeds of faceless men have countless sunsets glowed  
And yet this vast abyss of time since man first trod this turf  
Is just the last short chapter in the story of the earth.

I strive to wind the film reel backwards from the present scene,  
But find imagination quails before the Pleistocene.  
And have these unseen landscapes which predate the birth of man  
Evolved out of the mists of time without a Master Plan?

My meditative movie breaks and will no longer roll  
For the beauty of this evening scene has touched my inmost soul.  
To me the sunset poses the eternal how and why  
And I seek, like those before me, the answers in the sky.

## Films

During Easter 1979 filming took place around the area for the BBC film King Arthur. Much of this near to Rainton and also at Isle Mouth. At one point a rumour spread around that they were offering £20 for a local to submerge in a local loch and raise the sword, Excalibur, out of the water. Whether there was any truth in the rumour isn't known, but it certainly created a great deal of debate on the Shore over who might offer to do this. A few days later it was suggested that someone from Sandgreen had volunteered. When the film was eventually televised the shots at Isle

Mouth were over in seconds and the mysterious hand arising out of the water wasn't to be seen anywhere!

## Weather



*February 1987*



*Carrick Bay - August 1988*



### High Tides

Jack Hirst often sees evidence of high tides, seaweed and shells having been washed up when he arrives for his February half-term holiday.

On one occasion Kathryn Newell can remember having to lift seaweed off the track before her car could pass. At very high tides the Shore can become cut off. The tide has been known to cross the track both at the Monument Beach and at Carrick Beach and the field at the start of the track has been submerged with sea water.

### Erosion

There has been an increase in the rate of erosion at Carrick Bay in recent years (See discussions at CRA AGMs). Dr. Heather Munro recalls that soil erosion around the peninsula opposite Oyster Cabin prevented any further applications for sites along the point.

Erosion was discussed at length at the 1999 AGM. Several photographs of the previous winter gales were displayed by George Wishart of 'Carolside' to illustrate the severity of the problem.

## Snow

1978/9 - New Year. Jack Hirst recalls this as a particularly cold time. Ice several centimetres thick could be seen floating along the edge of the sea. Jack had taken his cine camera up to the Shore to record the holiday but unfortunately the cold prevented the camera from running at its usual speed. The result was a film which when played had everyone walking at double speed and looked more like a sketch from a Charlie Chaplin film than a holiday at Carrick. At one point it



*Close to the postie's hut*

has a shot of a tractor pull-starting a car just outside Whins, the tractor sets off at speed down towards the Shore as though it was entering a grand prix. On January 1st that year there was a heavy fall of snow and Carrick beach turned white and acquired a magical quality all of its own.

*Climbing the hill at the far side of Isle Mouth*

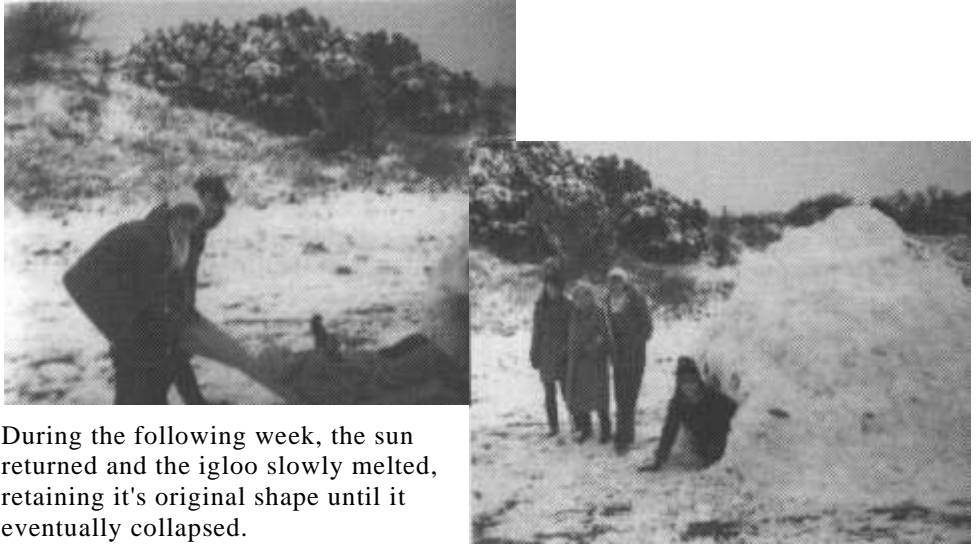


Gwen Hirst can remember that New Year visit. It was during the petrol strikes and the family had been promised a fill-up of petrol at Eastriggs on 3rd January. As the last car was pushed off the Shore on New Year's Day she knew that they had to stay and wait while the snow fell. That evening, with the Calor Gas hardly flowing because of the cold, her mother Marian Hinchliffe wrapped her eiderdown around the Calor Gas bottle in an attempt to

keep it warm. During the dark evening hours everyone's thoughts were recorded. From Jane and Kathryn's who thought 'it was brilliant', to Marian's who 'could feel ice running through her veins' and Gwen who 'would be glad to be home'. Needless to say they did survive to fight another day.

At February half-term (21-25th February) 1981 there was another quite heavy snow fall - enough in fact for Jane Howarth and Kathryn Newell (both nee Hirst) to create an Igloo in the Church of Scotland field. Eight people could comfortably fit inside the construction. It was surprising how warm it was inside. Marian Hinchliffe, despite being well into her seventies, and

unable to bend down to crawl through the entrance was determined not to miss out on all the excitement. This resulted in her lying on a deflated lilo and being pulled inside.



During the following week, the sun returned and the igloo slowly melted, retaining it's original shape until it eventually collapsed.

## **Effects of the Weather :- Emma Laura**

In February 1883 the Galloway News reported that a public sale was to take place at Carrick Bay, Borgue of the wreck of the Emma Laura including the hull, masts, sails, rigging, ropes, anchors, chains and a quantity of best quality coals.

The Emma Laura was due to deliver coal to Gatehouse but rough seas forced her to anchor off Ardwall Island. As the night drew in and the wind increased the Emma Laura began to drift. The crew fearing for their lives abandoned ship and sought refuge on the island. The schooner, pushed by strong winds, went aground on Carrick Shore. The crew were eventually rescued the following day by William Davidson, the local fisherman.

Donald Tait, whilst digging a mooring buoy in the bay in the late 1970's, came across the stern post of a schooner. It was 1-2 feet below the surface, fairly close to the shore. He thinks this could be the remains of the Emma Laura.

## **Windward**

Gwen and Jack Hirst both remember coming to the Shore after some strong gales and finding Windward's roof had been completely lifted off and was lying in the bracken behind the hut.

Once again Janice Spencer from Whimbrels wrote the following which were published in the Galloway News in 1968:-

### **Evening at Carrick**

*Mud-soft worm-coils mould to my feet  
Unshod for wave-ribbed, wet fizzing sands,  
As whaups' notes bubble over Fleet,  
Mirrored light lingers by night-black strands;  
Of sharp rock, stark by white, wet shells,  
As evening breathes its dew-cool smells.  
Blue moths hover, drawn to the hedge  
By pale waxen honeysuckle's scent.  
Firm turf prickles by green beach edge,  
Where soft sand falls in a fresh hoof dent.  
Those hoofs strike sharp the granite track,  
As night air rolls their echoes back  
To where I stand on dew damp ground,  
Still rooted to watch the evening drain,  
And watch the whole horizon round  
Grappling the wide scene to my brain  
And with each sense absorb my fill  
To hold with words the image still.*

### **Sonnet to Carrick**

*Night clouds have gathered as the sun casts low  
Last spotlight beams in readiness to set;  
I watch the wid'ning spread of damson glow  
While hills become a stark black silhouette.  
Wet sands become a ling'ring pool of light;  
A distant curlew's liquid notes descend;  
Reluctant day recoils into the night,  
But Carrick's haunting beauty does not end.  
A barn owl like a wraith with eerie hoot,  
As bats swoop noiselessly in drunken flight,  
Answers with hollow call the curlew's flute,  
Claiming the shore for creatures of the night.  
I too reluctant, change this world for sleep;  
Thought overwhelmed by nature's myst'ries deep.*

A number of residents have kept nature diaries on the Shore recording the more unusual visitors seen. Here are a few of their memories:

## Spring

### Flowers

February sees snowdrops and gorse coming into bloom and daffodils coming into bud. Gorse is reported to be in flower throughout the spring months from early February into May.



The periwinkle just beside the farm cottage always appeared in the diaries and was a good sign that spring was here.

Into March and a profusion of flowers most noticeable being the daffodils. Towards the end of April broom and bluebells are just beginning to flower. (Bluebells are almost always found in a woodland situation, but the open spaces of Carrick in May are solid blue, interspersed with Red

Campion, evidence perhaps of earlier woodland coverage of the site). The bluebells are at their best by mid May - a good time to see the Shore. As the month progresses more and more flowers are reported. In 1977 a total of fifty six flowers in bloom were identified with a number not yet in flower.

### Birds

Owls can be seen on occasions flying over the Shore. Over the years there have been a number of sightings. Typically the owls are seen at dusk and often for a number of consecutive nights at about the same time.

Pheasants are often seen in spring and this report from Easter Sunday in 1977 is typical :-

*A large cock pheasant was seen strutting about the grass at the front of Stalker with several others in bracken around. Later still two cock pheasants were reported to be fighting near Chacara. The heavy rain hadn't dampened their spirits.*

Swans have regularly nested on the loch in the fields behind the Shore. On occasions the swans have been seen flying over the Shore and swimming on the sea. In 1975 a recording of eight swans flying over the Shore and out towards the islands was made.



Swallows start to arrive at Carrick in spring and use the corners of chalets to build their nests.

In 1981 it was noted that the drainage of the field along the Sandgreen road had affected the bird life. Fewer sea birds than usual were recorded and this was thought to be due to the disappearance of the swampy areas in the field which may have robbed the redshanks and lapwings of their nesting places.

By 1984 this ongoing reduction in the number of waders was still being reported. Only a single pair of redshank were reported to be nesting and their nest was being plundered by a crow. Oyster catchers were seen nesting beside the 'straightened' stream on the Sandgreen road and were reported to be very cautious of visitors. It was also reported that there were no shellduck near Truda this year.

## Wildlife

At one time deer were seen on and around the Shore at regular intervals. Now sightings are less common. Gwen Hirst, arriving at the Shore at dusk on 15th March 1973, recalled seeing three deer on the hillside behind Ithaca.

In 1974 a deer was spotted on the Shore close to the monument. After being disturbed it then ran off along the beach towards Square Hut.

In 1980 a deer was reported to be grazing below Stalker close to the swampy area behind where Westwinds now stands. It stayed for some time before departing and returning half an hour later with its young.

Deer have also been seen during February on Ardwall and up by the loch.

Easter marks the first visit to the Shore in the year for a number of people and not surprisingly this period is well covered in the diaries.

On one occasion somebody had forgotten to close the farm gate and all the cows had found their way around the Shore. Gwen Hirst remembers waking up one morning to be greeted by a cow standing on the grass in front of Cornerways. It wasn't long before they were being rounded up by the farmer.

Rabbits, as we all know, are very common inhabitants of the Shore but occasionally hares are seen. A particularly large hare was spotted on several occasions on the Shore in 1978.

A number of people take their pets to the Shore with them. Over the years a variety of animals have been reported including dogs, cats, tortoise, hamsters and rabbits. Easter 1978 was a particularly momentous occasion for Joan Simpson, who had taken her cat with her for the holiday, as she witnessed the birth of Susie cats first kitten at 1:30. Later all the children on the Shore took turns to visit and look at the happy family.

Stoats, weasels and mink have all been seen on the Shore.

Adders are always present and can often be seen sunning themselves in secluded spots. They are harmless if not approached, as Jim McMillan's dog found out to its cost.

Following the winter storms, one February in the early 1970's, a porpoise was washed up onto the beach below where Lichen cottage now stands and most people staying on the Shore clambered over the rocks for a viewing.

## Summer

### Flowers

A profusion of flowers has been reported over the years including yellow flag, which greets our arrival from the Sandgreen end of the track.

The variety of vegetation around the Shore is perhaps best summed up by an entry in a diary made by a regular visitor to the Shore in 1988:-

*This is our first visit to the Shore in July. We usually stay during Whit. The difference is marked. The bracken is high and the Rose Bay Willow Herb even higher. The spring flowers have been replaced by the purple and yellows of late summer; Ragged Robin, Oxeye daisies, Yellow Flag, Bloody Cranesbill and Dyers Greenweed abound. We found lots of Orchids close to the far gate and discovered some enormous field mushrooms for our tea.*

By late August the follow entry in 1990 is typical of what to expect :-  
The scabious, harebell and knapweed make a beautiful trio, with ragwort adding a dash of yellow amongst the purples.

### Birds

It is the smaller birds which dominate the reports during the summer months including; sparrows, dunnocks, bluetits, yellowhammers, chaffinches, greenfinches goldfinches and thrushes.

During a typical June, with long days where it isn't fully dark until gone eleven o'clock at night the number of sightings of owls is at its highest. In 1974 a tawny owl was spotted on the Shore and in 1979 Gwen Hirst can remember seeing a dead long-eared owl outside Stalker.

In late summer the swallows begin to gather for their long flight to warmer lands. During the summer months the swans from the loch can often be seen swimming on the sea with their cygnets.

In 1977 redshank and black headed gulls were spotted nesting close to where Boreland Burn enters the sea. A nest in a small scrape in the pebbles with 3 eggs was also spotted. Three days later it was reported that the nest now had four eggs in it and there were some very agitated lapwings nearby.

Ringed plover were seen on 4 eggs in a scrape on the beach. The birds being close to the track were very nervous of all the people passing. If anyone came within 15 yards the female moved away from the nest. The male was also sighted, keeping his distance and observing the commotion. It was also noted in the diary that it would be unlikely for the eggs to hatch given all the disturbance.

In 1981 a homing pigeon with a ring around its foot was seen around the Shore. It hung around for a couple of days before moving on.

At 9:30 one evening a kestrel was seen hovering near Stalker before diving into the bushes, no doubt for some unsuspecting vole.

1981 a pair of herons were sighted in the corner field. Today herons are often seen fishing at the edge of the tide. Other sightings at this time of year include oyster catchers, curlew, shellduck, cormorant, partridges and pheasants. On one occasion a cuckoo was seen near Chacara.

## Wildlife

Although hardly wild, Donald, a retired white farm horse used to live in the field at the Sandgreen end of the track. He was a friendly horse and always came over to the wall to look at anyone who was passing. On one occasion Donald was seen lying in the middle of the field with the vet hurrying across to visit him. The vet must have cured him because he was back to his usual self before the end of the holiday.

Hedgehogs are regular visitors to the Shore. Gwen Hirst once left some milk out for a family of kittens which were living under her but and was disturbed in the early morning by a hedgehog enjoying the bread and milk.

On summer evenings, at dusk, bats can still be seen over the Shore. A good place to spot them is on the back track close to the entrance to Driftwood.

In 1982 a fox was seen near Knockbren carrying a rabbit. It is the only mention in the diaries. However the Mullens recall that during their first holiday in their new chalet they saw a fox in the fields from their window and so decided to call the chalet 'Fox Glen'. Glow-worms have also been seen on dark evenings during the summer months around the Shore.

A number of stoats have been spotted around the Shore. In 1983 the following entry appeared :-

*A stoat was seen twice during the holiday on the bottom track. It stopped to show its white chest and fearless pride.*

In 1974 a toad with its young on its back was spotted hiding under the cover of the sink drainage tank close to Stalker.

In 1977 lizards were found on Ardwall and a mouse was seen scurrying across the track.

In 1980, a pine marten was seen swimming with a baby rabbit in Boreland Burn. When disturbed it came up to the track for a better look before returning to the burn and the rabbit.

Rabbits are a regular feature around the Shore although their numbers vary from year to year and there have been a number of outbreaks of myxomatosis in recent years.

In 1982 it was recorded that there were rabbits everywhere 'mowing the grass both front and back of the hut'. One even jumped onto the bonnet of a car and left an unwanted present.

A number of late summer butterflies were identified including red admirals, common browns hovering over the knapweed, small whites, peacocks and tortoiseshells.

In the late 1980's 25ft basking sharks were seen in the bay. Boat owners inspected them (cautiously)! Jolinda Griffiths, aged 12, spotted a fin, dived to the bottom of the boat and shrieked "I can't handle this!".

Exciting rock pool life has been identified including beadlet anemones, shrimps and small unidentified fish. A number of jellyfish have been reported in the bay.

One August evening during a spell of rough weather a seal came in quite close when Kathryn Newell and Glyn Howarth were having a swim. 'Sammy' the seal, sometimes joined by a second, has been based between the Murray Isles for the past few years, and is regularly greeted by sailors.

## Autumn

### Flowers

By late August blackberries are usually just ripening, although it is still possible to see the plants still in flower in the more exposed areas. Usually late summer flowers can still be seen in bloom including ragwort, water mint, knapweed, meadowsweet, yarrow, sneezewort, red bartsia, rose-bay willow herb, and honeysuckle.

Early September usually sees the start of the autumn fruit including sloes, crab apples, rose-hips, hawthorn berries and conkers at Knockbren.

## **Birds**

In 1983 one visitor reported having identified 34 species of birds, 11 rare flowers in bloom and 14 fungi on the Shore.

A number of sightings of herons have been made at this time of year. One was spotted near High Tide along with lots of oyster catchers and 2 curlews. On another occasion a heron was seen on Carrick beach and usually one can be seen up in the back fields near to the loch.

The first of the skein of ducks and geese can usually be seen flying over. The small birds are still to be seen. In 1983 six wrens were spotted in a tree beside Stalker when the Simpsons arrived, but they only saw one of them again during the rest of the holiday.

## **Wildlife**

In 1973 Joan Simpson recorded following the tide out towards the Murray's Isles and finding amongst other things hermit crabs in four different types of shell.

## **Winter**

### **Birds**

At this time of year it is fairly common to see skeins of geese flying over the Shore. A typical sighting was reported in 1976 on a sunny yet cold day when the sea was frozen at the edges and there was ice in rock pools. A large flock of wild geese flew over and crows were busy collecting mussels.

A few small birds still ventured to investigate the Simpson's bird table and the hanging nuts including a robin, a blue tit and a chaffinch. Two partridges and a pheasant were also seen on the track.

### **Flowers**

Surprisingly for this time of year the gorse has been reported to be in bloom.

### **Wildlife**

During the quieter times on the Shore deer can be spotted. One such appearance was in 1975 when a deer was spotted early in the morning between Stalker and Curlew. As it was disturbed it leapt up in the bracken and disappeared over the horizon.

In 1979 only one rabbit was seen during the whole holiday. This was possibly due to sightings of a weasel in the area.

## Food for Free

Over the years the number of mackerel in the area has declined. At one time it was a regular sight to see 3-4 fishermen on the end of Carrick Point fishing for mackerel and at that time fish were being caught on a regular basis. Later still people going out in boats were returning with several dozen fish. Nowadays, however, if any are caught from boats people consider that they've done well.

Cockles have likewise declined. Gwen Hirst can remember collecting a bucketful of cockles on a regular basis in the late 1960's. During the 1970's the number declined and it was necessary to rake the surface to find them. Today there are too few to collect around Carrick.

Mushrooms - Some years seem to be better than others for mushrooms. 1979 was a particularly good year and Jack Hirst can remember collecting them from the fields at the back and having them on toast for breakfast. On occasions some enormous horse mushrooms have been found at the back of Ardwall.

## Autumn Fruit

Jack Hirst has produced a number of 'vintage' wines from the produce he has collected around the Shore. Here are some of the more successful :-

### **Blackberry Wine**

6lbs blackberries  
1 gallon of boiling water  
3 ½ lbs white sugar  
1 pkt yeast

*Wash fruit and put into a bucket. Pour on the boiling water and stand for 3 days. Strain and add the sugar and yeast. Put into a demijohn. Insert a fermentation lock and leave in a warm place until the bubbles have ceased. Siphon off into a clean demijohn and leave for 6 months then bottle. The longer you leave it the better it is.*

### **Sloe Wine**

1 gallon sloes  
1 gallon of boiling water  
4lbs sugar  
1 pkt yeast

*Pick the sloes when quite ripe. Pour boiling water on them in a bucket. Leave for a week with regular stirring. Continue as blackberry wine.*

Elderflower and elderberries also make an excellent wine. Include with the gallon of elderflowers the rind and juice of 3 lemons. With the elderberry wine put a lump of bruised root ginger into the fermentation jar.

# Round and About

## Carrick Farm

In 1982, as part of her 'A' level Geography course Kathryn Newell undertook a study of the loch up in the field behind the farm. Part of the study involved measuring the depth of the loch at various intervals and taking samples of both the water and the sediment.

The exercise involved taking a rowing boat up to the loch along with a variety of measuring equipment.



It became obvious at that time that the loch was manmade, and had been lined with clay. Further investigations revealed that the loch at one time was much larger than the present day size and that in the late 1960's it had been lowered as there was a risk of it flooding the surrounding countryside.



*Boreland  
March Loch*

Alec McLachlan remembered a stone building being found at the mouth of the loch which resembled a sluice. No timber remained at the time, as it had rotted away. Alec can remember digging the sluice out with his father to lower the water level.

From studying old maps of the area the loch has been shown to have been in existence as far back as 1854. It is believed that the overflow from the loch was used to drive a small mill close to the current farm. From the 1761 James Tait map of Galloway it is believed that the mill was originally built as a waulk mill to process the local wool but later it was converted into a meal mill. At the time of the study Mr. Jimmy McLachlan, recalling what his father had told him about the loch, said that it had been used to drive a small meal mill, probably a wooden structure of which no sign remained in the 1860's.

The oatmeal produced by the mill would have been used as animal feed and for human consumption at Carrick and at other tied cottages on the farm. Mrs. Jessie McLachlan also recalled that there were some mill stones near Carrick Farm although her son, Alec cannot remember them.

It is believed that the mill was somewhere behind the site of the current day byre. The stream from the loch still runs under a short tunnel by the farm to what was possibly the wheel pit for an undershot water wheel.

*Carrick Farm with its original wooden end*



The McLachlans had been at Carrick Farm for a number of generations. Alec and Isas' grandfather was brought up at Carrick - arriving at the farm when he was eighteen months old. The farmhouse originally had a wooden end and was reconditioned when Isa was very small. She recalls that her brother Alec was eighteen months old when they returned to the farm again.

Isa was born and brought up at Carrick Farm. She recalls many happy memories of her childhood there and remembers a number of the visitors to the Shore over the years.



Isa also recalled Sheila, the Griffiths' shetland pony, which used to live out at Carrick all year round.

Maurice remembers Sheila being kept in a field at Carrick Farm. During the days of petrol shortages, trips to Gatehouse were made with Sheila pulling a trap. Sheila had a mind of her own and didn't like to walk on the hard roads. She would choose the grass verge, often giving the

passengers in the trap a fright when it nearly tipped over on the uneven surface.

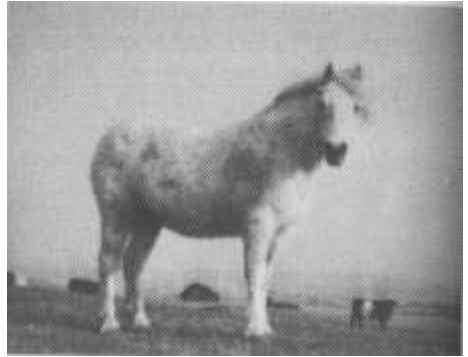
Barbara Wheeler told of buying milk and eggs from the McLachans at Carrick Farm. If the milking was not completed the customers queued sitting on a form outside the farmhouse whilst they waited. Jimmy McLachlan's daughter Isa was keen on horses and Jimmy bought her an ex-show horse called 'Firefly' which she used to ride around the farm and to assist with visits to sheep and cattle. One day the waiting milk queue had taken turns to ride Firefly across Carrick beach. The last to ride was Geoff, Barbara's husband, and the horse, probably tired of its many riders, set off at a gallop with him hanging on for



dear life. Marion Haining recalls that they stopped buying milk from the farm after pasteurisation was introduced.



*Caroline Park (nee Sproat) on Firefly*



*Dapple*

Isa remembers crowds of children helping on the farm during the summer holidays including the Besseys, the Watsons, the Flemings, the McGregors, the Griffiths, the Sharps and Christine Wheeler.

Maurice Griffiths recalls that helping on Carrick Farm was always part of the holiday and he was often up at 7 o'clock to help with the haymaking. Ricks of hay were winched onto a bogie and stacked in the hay barn on the Knockbrev road.

Maurice can remember the first tractor arriving at the farm. Alec recalled that it was in 1948 that a grey Ford-Ferguson arrived. Before that the work was done by a brown shire horse called Jock and a white one called Dapple.

Jack Hirst remembers that Mrs. McLachlan once said, "We often go for a drive round Laggan on summer weekends to get away from the 'hurly burly' of the Shore." The McLachlans retired from Carrick farm in 1975. He often wonders what she would think of the Shore today on a hot summer weekend.

The last farmer at Carrick Farm was Mr Goudie. It was whilst the Goudies were at Carrick in the late 1970's that the farmhouse chimney caught fire one Easter. The local fire brigade was sent for and you could hear the fire

engine's bell ringing across the fields as it went round Rainton via Knockbrev to the Shore. By the time the fire brigade reached the Shore Jim McMillan and Donald Tait had already climbed up onto the roof and put the fire out.



Mrs. Goudie took up knitting whilst at Carrick and it was possible to select from her book of patterns jumpers and cardigans which she made up for various customers on her machine.



## Ardwall

There are many tales surrounding Ardwall Island. In an attempt to uncover the origin of some of them a visit to Dumfries Library was made where a fascinating history was pieced together thanks to a number of archaeological digs which have taken place there. The first was in 1925/6 by W.G.Collingwood and

R.C.Reid and the latter two were in 1964 and 1965 by C.Thomas of Edinburgh University. Most of the evidence appears to come from the area just through the gate from the Sandy Bay facing Isle Mouth beach.

The earliest finds are that of an early Christian chapel and cemetery dating to the 5th Century. A number of inhumations were found about a foot deep. There is some evidence that the burials were inside wooden coffins with the possibility of a central shrine.

The second layer of evidence is more elaborate foundations implying a wooden chapel and further inhumations. With the exception of a single child skeleton, all the others are thought to be adult males indicating a possible communal hermitage. There is some evidence that there could possibly have been some living cells west of the chapel, within the enclosure. Parallels with the Irish Church in the 6th and 7th Centuries have been made.

Later in the 8th century a stone chapel built from local stone was constructed. The walls had been set in a yellow clay and obviously built by skilled craftsmen. A fairly complex alter was unearthed with a stone front. Into its base a large quantity of human remains had been crammed. A graveyard was also found outside the west wall and a number of stone crosses and carvings indicating Anglican origin.

Above the chapel's remains, evidence of a medieval hall house were uncovered. The floor space has been estimated at 22 foot x 60 foot with a courtyard on the north side. It is believed that the house was timber-built. Various finds of pottery and bronze dress-pins suggest a date of 1250-1350.

It is perhaps from this time that boundary dykes and foundations indicating that the island was divided into three holdings originate. It is still possible to see the ridges and

furrows running in a NW-SE direction if you look from the mainland and have the right lighting conditions.

In Georgian times it is believed that an unlicensed tavern existed. Evidence of a rectangular building has been found. The building was partitioned into three rooms by stone walls. Associated green bottle-glass, trailed Staffordshire mugs, animal bones and corroded ironwork have also been found. Rumour has it that the tavern may have been supplied by the Manx smuggling industry.

There is much speculation associating Ardwall with the smuggling trade. A series of chambers lying between the cottage and the spring on the SE shore have been found. Some of the entrances were concealed by the dyke which once surrounded the island. It is possible that the chambers were built for earlier burials and later reused by the smugglers.

Ardwall Island was thought to have been the headquarters for smuggling in the area. It is thought that pack-horses used to cross the sands at low water and quickly carry off the contraband goods. Laurie Higgins and his wife, who lived on the island for over half a century, were obviously very much in tow with the smugglers. Some even say that their house was at the centre of this illegal trade.



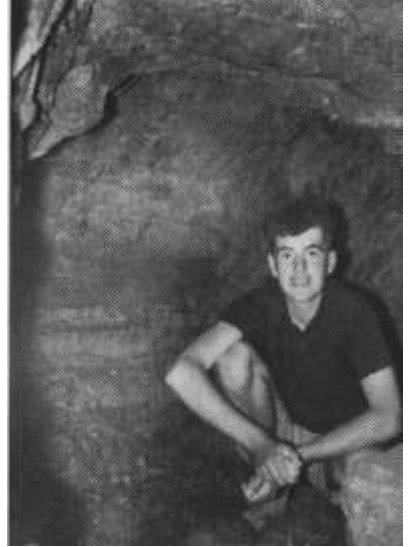
The cottage at the back of the island

Jim Grieve recalled that when the house on the island was being renovated all the builders and plumbers travelled from Gatehouse and stayed over on the island until the work was completed.

Ardwall Island is known to many as Laurie's Isle after Laurie Higgins and his wife. Laurie was certainly a character. The best surviving story has it that a century or so ago a Belfast ship was wrecked off the coast. The Captain's wife was on board, and is believed to have concealed on her person the ship's papers and all the available cash. The whole crew were drowned, and her body was left at low water on the sands to the west of the island. Laurie, an Irishman, who lived in poverty on the island, found the body. He reported it and the woman's son came from Belfast to identify the remains. He handed over the ships papers. The son enquired about her rings and money but Higgins had seen neither and suggested searching the sands. The rings were discovered by Higgins but apparently not the money. Higgins prospered afterwards and acquired the public-house on the island. He met his end returning late one night across the water. He was drowned in his boat. When it was recovered it was found to have had a plug removed.

Jim McMillan also spoke about the Islands of Fleet. He also referred to Ardwall as Laurie's Isle because of Laurie Higgins and his pub on the island. Also on the island was a fisherman's hut with its mandatory tar boiler.

Laurie's Isle is honeycombed with mysterious tunnels. Jim McMillan's uncle, Jimmy Copeland from Dumfries, has in the past crawled through quite a few of them. One known entrance is behind the house on the island and another is hidden in the undergrowth not far from the rock known as 'The Old Man of Fleet'. The tunnels are not big enough to have been used by smugglers as escape routes, but may have been suitable for storage of contraband. Jim suspects that the tunnels were used by the ancient islanders to hide from Vikings and Manxmen.



*George Wishart's brother, Andrew exploring one of the tunnels on Ardwall in 1965.*

Laurie's Isle is also a source of ticks in the long grass and bracken and it is advisable to examine closely any small child with bare legs or dog taken to the island. The small clump of fir trees on the island was planted about 70 years ago by the owner, Mr McCulloch, in an attempt to give some protection to the sheep which are led out in summer to graze.

In 1982 it is reported that James Murray-Usher found some papers about the Rutherford Church near to the bridge in Gatehouse. The stone used to build the church was quarried on Ardwall and taken to Port McAdam by boat. The bay on the far side of the island is still known as Free Church Bay today. The island is still owned by the McCullochs of Ardwall.

## **Murrays Isles**

*Murrays Isles from Ardwall*



The Dumfries and Galloway visitors guide lists the Murrays Isles as a visitor attraction. They are currently owned by the National Trust for Scotland and listed as two small uninhabited islands in Wigtown Bay. They are described as open all year. The Murrays Isles were part of the Solway salmon fishing industry. The gable ends of a house and part

of a fish store still remain on the larger isle whilst on the smaller isle a well can be found. The fisherman lived on the islands during the summer salmon fishing season and nets were staked out on the Carrick side of the islands.

Murrays Isles are reputed to be infested with rats which came ashore from a shipwreck. They are said to live on gulls' eggs, shellfish and dead birds.



Donald Tait can remember seeing a big brown rat on the Murrays Isles as well as mink swimming in an area between the islands and Carrick Point.

One story found in the archives tells us that the last occupant of the islands was the builder of the gable. He had put up some money and decided to build a good cottage for himself. He was a glutton, with a failing for fresh fish. When the walls of his house were up, but the roof not on, he caught a fine ten pound cod. He at once sat down to a solitary meal and consumed the whole fish. However he died of the effect and the ruined gable still stands testimony to his gluttony.

Other people on the Shore believe that Cally Estate removed the roof from the house so that they did not need to pay taxes. Despite searching through the archives we were unable to uncover anything to substantiate this claim. The islands used to be contracted out to local farmers on a yearly basis for grazing. Sheep were taken over in February and March and brought off again in September or October. Isa Halliday can remember sheep regularly grazing on the islands once, but there haven't been any for the last 35 years. As a boy Jim Grieve once helped a local farmer, Mr. McAnally, to drive 20-30 sheep from Gatehouse to summer graze on the Murrays Isles. The sheep were quiet as they went across the sands but began to bleat as they neared the islands. "They can smell land", said the farmer. Jim doesn't remember the sheep coming back - perhaps they are still there!

## Knockbrex

*Knockbrex House  
taken from Ardwall*

Records of Knockbrex have been traced back to 1504 when it was owned by the Gordon Family. An interesting tale



relating to the Gordons emerged in 1905 when human remains were unearthed at the foot of an ash tree near to the stables. The skull was examined by Mr. W. Ombler Meek and it was pronounced to belong to a young European male, under 25 years of age.

The skull can be traced back to a hanging which occurred in 1666 as a result of the covenanters rising in SW Scotland. The two sons of Alexander Gordon of Knockbrev, John and Robert, were included in the proceedings. They both took the covenant at Lanark where Robert was made Cornet (sub-lieutenant) of a troop horse and they marched to Edinburgh, where they were attacked by the King's troops at Rullion Green. 50 were killed and a further 100 taken prisoner including both John and Robert.

The council judgement which followed said that their lands, heritages, goods and gear should be forfeited to his majesty's use and the prisoners should be hanged. Their heads should be cut off and affixed at Kirkcudbright, their right arms should be cut off and affixed on the public ports of Lanark where the covenant was taken and their bodies were to be burned in Edinburgh. No skeleton was uncovered in 1905 and so the skull was thought to have belonged to one of the two Gordons who were hanged. It is believed that the skull was later stolen from the principal gates of Kirkcudbright and taken to Knockbrev.

This was not the only body found at Knockbrev. In 1910 the body of a 40 year old woman was found. It is believed that it was buried at Knockbrev after a shipwreck. Could this be the ship's captain's wife who Laurie Higgins allegedly relieved of her money?

In 1894 Knockbrev was bought by J. Brown of Longfield, Manchester. It is about the Browns of Knockbrev that various Carrick residents recall stories.

Barbara Wheeler recalled that Knockbrev House was built at the turn of the century by the Browns of Affleck and Brown, the department store owners. It was Mr. Brown who had the broch at Castle Haven renovated. He also built the church at Kirkandrews and the model dairy, Corseyard Farm, known to the locals as the 'Cow Palace'. Mary Wishart recalled that the milking parlour was tiled and each cow had her own decorated tile with her name on it in her space. Mary wonders if succeeding cows were given the same names to fit in with the tiles.

The imposing Knockbrev 'Castle' was built as a garage about 1911. The Browns of Knockbrev even built their own harbour to transport coal from Whitehaven. The pillars at the entrance and the wooden quay are still visible. However the harbour was never used because Customs and Excise refused permission. Bill Hastings, a friend of George Wheeler's, later renovated

Knockbrev. Mrs. Wheeler heard him speak of plaques up the stairs commemorating past residents including the Earl of Selkirk. In Mrs. Wheeler's time there was a market garden at Knockbrev where many Carrick residents went for produce. It was even possible to buy peaches.

Jim McMillan also recalls that his father used to talk of the building of Knockbrev and Corseyard farm. Stonemasons and other workmen would travel on foot from Kirkcudbright. None had watches and they would alternatively run and walk to arrive at Knockbrev ready for a 7am start. If on arrival it started to rain they were turned away. Brown built it, said Jim, but it was later sold to Firths, the stainless steel people of Sheffield.

## **The Broch - Castle Haven**

The Broch at Castle Haven is Galloway's only example of a galleried dun, a type of iron age fortified homestead. Brochs are more commonly found in Argyll and the Western Isles.

The Broch is still in remarkable condition but this is mainly due to the excavation and reconstruction made in 1905 by J. Brown.



The D-shaped structure has its main entrance in the north-eastern wall. There is a stepped gateway in its southern wall which gives access to boat landings from the shore below.

The upper level of the dun can be reached by climbing the stile-like stone slabs projecting from the inner wall. Within the walls three narrow galleries can be made out linked to the interior by six doors.



During the excavation and renovation in 1905 a number of artefacts were recovered including a bronze spiral finger-ring, a blue glass paste bead dated to the Iron Age and a later bronze penannular brooch indicating medieval occupation.

A name plate within the broch calls the structure The Borg and a flaking white line indicates the height of the walls prior to the reconstruction.

## Acknowledgements

The Carrick Residents Association is grateful to the following without whose help this booklet would not have been possible:-

Acknowledgement is made by kind permission of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland to reproduce the following :-

- RHP15 - Plan of the foot of the river Fleet exhibiting the several fords and roads leading thereto with adjacent shore and houses : 1761 (ex process)
- RHP8816 - Plan of roads through Cally Park 1856 (ex GD10).

Permission to reproduce RHP8816 is also provided by Mr. James Murray-Usher. He also allowed us to use the information obtained from the Scottish Records office about Carrick Shore.

Acknowledgement is given to the trustees of the National Library of Scotland to reproduce the following :-

- J.Ainslie. Stewartry of Kirkcudbright 1797.
- J.Thompson, Southern part of Kirkcudbrightshire 1821
- Ordnance Survey 1.10560 Kirkcudbrightshire, sheet 49 1850

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Thanks to the staff of Kirkcudbright Library for their help and the many people who gave their time to recall their memories of Carrick and allowed us to copy photographs from their family albums.

Thanks to Sheena Taylor and Ian Newell for proof reading and for advice on the preliminary layout.

Perhaps a special mention should be given to Jim Grieve of Gatehouse who not only passed on his memories of his grandfather, the original Carrick Fisherman, but also came out to the Shore to point out sites of byres, salmon nets, vegetable plots, gates on the track and many other fascinating snippets of information.

Special thanks to Paul Wilson of Arthouse, Edinburgh for design, conversion of material into professional format and management of printing and binding.



As can be seen by the references within the document the number of contributors was immense. However, whilst most of you will probably recognise the names you may have trouble identifying their connection with the shore. For people explicitly mentioned within the document the following guide should help you to link names with faces and chalets.

Alison Barnes	Whimbrels
Rona Bowers	Visitor to the Shore from Kirkcudbright
Noel Brown	Ex owner of Curlew
Graeme Duncan	High Tide
Niall Duncan	High Tide
Jim Grieve	grandson of William Davidson ex owner of 'The Hut'
Maurice Griffiths	Barnacle and current CRA Chairman
Marion Haining	Whins
Isa Halliday	Carrick Farm
Gwen Hirst	Cornerways
Jack Hirst	Cornerways
Jean Horn	The Hut
Glyn Howarth	Stalker
Jane Howarth	Stalker
Sheila Mackay	Rented a variety of huts/chalets on the shore
Nan McGregor	Fourways
Alec McLachlan	Lichen Cottage
Jim McMillan	Blackthorn
Ken Morton	Pidgeon Point
Dr. Heather Munro	Oyster Cabin
Kathryn Newell	Stalker
Jean Phillips	Visitor to the Shore, now lives in Australia
Joe and Betty Sassoon	Ex owner of 'The Hut'
Janice Spencer	Whimbrels
Donald Tit	Croft Cabin
Sheena Taylor	Croft Cabin
Thomas Welsh	Visitor to the Shore from Kirkcudbright
Barbara Wheeler	Truda
George Wishart	Carolside
Anne Wright	Seaspray
Fanny Yates	Ingleston, Borgue

Previous names for chalets (where known)

Stalker	Kathmar	Cornerways	Crab Tree
Whimbrels	Brugarth	Seaspray	Whares
The Hut	J&J, Linjoto	Driftwood	Sheiling
Oyster Cabin	The Point	Over Fleet	Moon Lodge
Chacara	Bracken Bush. La Lavendou		



THE BEST SACRIFICIAL TO DEPT

THOMAS (LATERAL) DEPT



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