

# DORNOCH HERITAGE SOCIETY

August 2009

There are seven five-star attractions graded as 'Museum' in Scotland.



Historylinks is the only one in the Highlands. Congratulations to Peter and the Trust !

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 1 October at 7.30 pm  
Royal Dornoch Golf Club

Ullabritt Ashby and George Munro will resign at the AGM. Ullabritt is not seeking re-election, while George is. So we will have five vacancies on the Committee and new members are welcome: in fact, the Committee is running the risk of no longer functioning efficiently.

The Committee will nominate the following officers: George Munro (Chair), Rick Bramley (Vice Ch.), Robin Ashby (Sec) and Gerard Fitzpatrick (Treasurer and Members Sec.). Jean Birkett and Steve Dallman continue as ordinary members.

Members will be asked to state their views on a new logo and an alternative venue for meetings.

The meeting will finish with a vintage film.

## FUND-RAISING

We held a very successful Spring Coffee Morning and had a stall at the Sutherland County Show. The funds we raised have been used *inter alia* to sponsor the refurbishment of the video room at Historylinks and to finance the publication of the book on the Evelix Valley settlement now available at the museum. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

## MEMBERSHIP

Paid-up members of the Society may attend lectures free of charge. Free admission to Historylinks is also included in membership. Non-members are required to pay for both activities. Please have your membership-card with you when attending lectures.

NB Those members who have already signed a Standing Order for membership fees will receive their membership card for 2009/2010 with this newsletter. All other members will find a renewal reminder enclosed if they have not already paid by other means.

## SKELBO CASTLE

In last August's newsletter (right) we rejoiced that the owner of Skelbo Castle had emerged and wanted to do something about his property. However since then he seems to have lost interest again. We have been in regular contact with his lawyer in Germany, but even she has not spoken to the Baron for more than half a year.

Historic Scotland has also attempted but failed to open a dialogue with the owner. And DHS has just been in contact with a UK resident who has tried unsuccessfully to buy the land, through an intermediary who has now disappeared, and would like to renovate the Mansion House.

But there have been some tangible developments. The conservation survey, commissioned by Historic Scotland, has been carried out by Anta Architecture. It shows that eight features need emergency treatment and a further six urgent measures should be taken within the next three years at the most. The cost of the emergency work would be around £80,000 plus VAT and professional fees.

DHS has promised the owner to help find a suitable agent whom he could authorise to get the work going. Public funding would cover all or most of it. The Baron has not responded yet. The possibility of a community buyout has been raised.

In order to provide details about the state of the castle, to bring together interested parties and discuss ways forward, DHS is planning a public meeting sometime during the winter.





# HISTORYLINKS

Latest news can always be found on our website: [www.historylinks.org.uk](http://www.historylinks.org.uk).

## OPENING TIMES

The museum is currently open 10am to 4pm daily until October 2nd, then Mondays to Fridays until 30 October. Thereafter it will be open until the end of March two days a week, usually Wednesdays and Thursdays, but it is best to check before visiting (01862 811275).

## HIGHLAND ARCHAEOLOGY FESTIVAL

(Oct 3 - Oct 18)

**Sat. 10 October in Rogart 1.15 pm**

*Letties Grave*

Meet at Blarich Bridge, west Rogart, for a walk to Letties Grave (Pictish). Expect to see other things of interest in this depopulated township. We will be joined by Anne Coombs and members of the Rogart Heritage Society. A reasonable level of fitness and stout shoes will be required. Free

## SPINNING AND FELTING

All day demonstration of spinning and dry felting on **Tue October 27**. Free.

## EXTENSION TO THE MUSEUM

With regret the Trust realised that it was not viable to build an extension for temporary exhibitions to the rear of Historylinks. Instead the video room has been refurbished for a moderate cost with panels hung from the ceiling for exhibitions and new audio-visual equipment.

## ONLINE IMAGE LIBRARY

There are currently 7412 pictures on the site and 157 comments.

The Dornoch Historylinks Museum Image Library provides access to the museum's object collection, with brief details extracted from the museum catalogue.

When viewing images you can leave your own comments using the form at the foot of each page. In this way we hope to verify information and add data to the museum catalogue. We are particularly interested in comments adding background information, any refinement of dates and corrections to our catalogue description.

If you have any images or documents (preferably in pdf - portable document format) relating to the Dornoch area, please send them to us at [enquiries@historylinks.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@historylinks.org.uk) using the subject heading 'Image Library'. Quality is the first priority with your image scan - the bigger



the better! Unless you specify otherwise, we will assume that you will be happy for us to incorporate your image or document into the image library and our museum digital archive, with possible future use in museum displays or research papers. Historylinks acknowledges that the copyright of many images in the museum collection rests with the originator or publisher. Our current acquisition forms for objects and digital images, signed by donors, address rights to display images. If you have any issue regarding copyright of any image please contact Historylinks Museum.

## LATEST IMAGES

Dornoch Festival Week 1980 (above)

Binder At Birichen 1910

Relocation Of War Memorial

Last Witch Hanging

The Square, Dornoch With Railings Around The Jail



# DORNOCH HERITAGE SOCIETY EVENTS 2009-10

October 1	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>AGM</b> - old film	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
October 10	Sat 1.15 pm	<b>Highland Archaeology Festival</b> (Oct 3 - Oct 18) Meet at Blarich Bridge, west of Rogart, for a walk to Letties Grave (Pictish) . Expect to see other things of interest in this depopulated township. We will be joined by Anne Coombs and members of the Rogart Heritage Society. A reasonable level of fitness and stout shoes will be required. Free	Rogart
October 22	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Talk:</b> <i>Iain Fraser</i> The influence of Scots in Australia	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
October 27	Tue From 10 am	<b>Demonstration:</b> spinning and dry felting. All day. Free	Historylinks
November 14	Sat 10.30 am	<b>Coffee Morning</b>	West Church Hall
November 19	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Talk:</b> <i>Dr Karly Kehoe UHI</i> "Surgery and Slavery on the High Seas: The Journal of Richard C. McClement, MD, RN."	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
December 17	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Talk:</b> <i>Nick Lindsay</i> Dornoch Jail records	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
<b>A public meeting about the state of Skelbo Castle will be held sometime during the winter including a discussion about the measures that could be taken.</b>			
<b>2010</b>			
January 21	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Burns Celebration DHS style</b> Our traditional entertainment with a full meal.	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
February 18	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Talk:</b> <i>Dave Goulder</i> Drystane walling	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
March 18	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Talk:</b> <i>Dr Annie Tindley, Glasgow Cal. Uni.</i> 'Let them understand that they must submit to rule:' the Crofters War on the Sutherland Estate	The UHI Centre for History, Burghfield
April 15	Thu 7.30 pm	<b>Talk:</b> <i>Rick Bramley and John Muir</i> Dornoch Parish Schools	Royal Dornoch Golf Club
May 8	Sat 10.30 am	<b>Coffee Morning</b>	West Church Hall
May		<b>A members' excursion to Balnagown Castle</b> Details to be decided later	
<b>With reservation for possible changes</b>			

## MEIKLE FERRY DISASTER

16<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1809

The 99 people who lost their lives on that day when the ferryboat taking them to Tain market capsized after leaving Meikle Ferry North were remembered at a ceremony 200 years later to the day. Peter Wild related what happened during the crossing and how the families of the victims, who included Sheriff McCulloch, were supported by a large public subscription.

Depute Lord-Lieutenant of Sutherland, Kim Tulloch, then led the short remembrance and officially unveiled Historylinks Trust. two banners (left) Dornoch Primary in and Jacque Aitken. display in the



act with a minute's silence the plaque erected by Also on display were the produced by class P6 of workshops run by Sally Wild They had previously been on Cathedral. Rev. Susan

Brown had highlighted the commemoration during the morning service and attended the ceremony as a spectator as did four of the P6 students.



Before working on the banners the pupils were taken to Meikle Ferry to hear the story. They went along the shore to look for finds, which included pieces of china, metal objects and bones.

The banners not only depict the actual disaster, but the buildings which would have been around at the time, the present-day wildlife, and some delightful drawings of the objects found on the shore.

The objects were catalogued meticulously e.g. 31 fragments of glass of which the 11 clear ones included - 1 half a marble probably from the neck of a fizzy drink bottle; 7 vessel incl 1 neck, 3 base (1 with UCKIE W & J probably W & J Cruickshanks, Buckie soft drinks manufacturer), 3 body sherds (1 with grooved line decoration); 3 flat window glass (1 ribbed). A detailed report was written up and the objects were then displayed professionally.

