

CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP



NEWS LETTER

August 2025

Contents

Meetings are now held in the **Royal Hotel** upstairs at 7 pm on the

3rd Monday of the month

15 Sep 2025 Jack Rigg

20 Oct Fiona Barrie

17 Nov Dane Love

19 Jan 2026 David McMeekin



The Royal, before renovations and after



Editor

Kay McMeekin

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Meetings

The speaker in April was June Wiggans on a Servant's Life and Rab McMillan was at the AGM with his large collection of Ayrshire Yeomanry memorabilia. At the AGM Sadie McNair stood down as Vice Chair and Kevan Aitken kindly stepped into that role. Maureen Paterson is the new Minutes Secretary, a very welcome addition to the team. Flowers were sent to Sadie to thank her for many years' service on the committee.

Dr Kenny Brophy told us about the rock carvings near the Ballochmyle Viaduct. This is a unique site in that most carvings are on standing stones or on flat rocks whereas these are on vast vertical rock faces. They are well hidden away and deserve to be better known. There is some interest in working with Kenny to do more research and develop the site. Watch this space.

Meetings will henceforth be held in the Royal Hotel upstairs. There is a lift. You can come for a light meal beforehand downstairs. Emails will be sent out nearer the time to remind you!

Jack Rigg, former art teacher at Cumnock Academy will tell us about this series of landscape paintings which capture the historic journey of Robert Burns between Mossgiel near Mauchline and Ellisland near Dumfries on Monday 15 September.

Local lass Fiona Barrie is on Monday 20 October. She'll explain how witch prosecutions worked in Scotland as whole and how this worked in Ayrshire and will cover the different types of magic/execution methods and gender of the accused and how this reflected the national scene.



June Wiggans



Rab McMillan



Sadie McNair



Kenny Brophy

CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP

Management Committee

Chair: Kay McMeekin
info@cumnockhistorygroup.org

Vice Chair: Kevan Aitken

Treasurer: Elaine Corbett

Membership Secretary: Ailsa McInnes

Minutes Secretary: Maureen Paterson

Committee:

Scott Daily

Anne Lawrence

Alex Lennox

Robert M Stevenson

Committee meetings in Rothesay house 6.45pm on second Monday of the month except July and August. Any member may attend.

Newsletter

Edited by Kay McMeekin

Contact us

Email

info@cumnockhistorygroup.org

Please address any snail mail to

Kay McMeekin

8 Richmond Gardens

Darvel

Ayrshire

Other Events

Walks

Following on Ailsa's talk on the Landscape of Auchinleck Estate she took a small group of us around the estate on 24 May. This was not entirely a success, partly because of the miserable weather but also because it was quite overgrown. We will rearrange another walk later in the year. The lunch afterwards at Boswells' Coachhouse was very enjoyable.



A planned walk to the Ballochmyle cup and ring rock carvings was also postponed for the same reasons.

Outing to Devil's Porridge Museum & Caerlaverock Castle

On this occasion on 8th July, the weather was perfect when 14 of us headed south to Annan to visit the Devil's Porridge Museum and on to Caerlaverock Castle at Annan. Both are well worth a visit.



CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP

Old Cumnock Kirk Session Records transcribed

All the work of volunteer Yvonne Saunderson.

Find them on our main website [here](#)

Monumental Inscriptions

Click [here](#) to get Monumental Inscriptions emailed to you **free**. 10 local cemeteries. Huge thanks to member George McMillan for photographing and organising



them, a mammoth task.

Facebook

We have several very active [groups](#) including 

[Cumnock History Group page](#)

[Many A lang Scots Mile migration project](#)

[Cumnock Family History](#)

[Cumnock Today photos](#)

[Ploughing Up Our Past farm project](#)

Visit to the Before and After Coal Exhibition

Explore the history and lasting impact of coal through photographs and voices from Scottish mining communities. In 1982, American photographer Milton Rogovin came to Scotland to photograph Scottish miners at their pits, in their homes, and during their leisure time. Forty years on from the Miners' Strike in 1984, the artist Nicky Bird has updated Rogovin's documentation by meeting with individuals and families connected with the original photographs. The exhibition closes on 23rd August so we're planning a group visit on 14 August 2025 at the Baird Institute at 5 pm followed by a bite to eat at the Royal Hotel 1906 restaurant. Let me know if you are attending the meal.



Artist Nicky Bird at the opening in May.

Supporting our work

You can become a member for £10 a year. Join or renew in the online shop <https://cumnockhistorygroup.org/shop-products/>.

We currently have 94 paid up members worldwide.

If you don't want to join, you can buy us scotlandspeople vouchers for birth, marriage and death certificate online. We use them to build the Cumnock Connections family tree. You can pay by credit card or Paypal, different amounts from £7.50 to £40 They are valid for 2 years.
scotlandspeople.gov.uk/vouchers

Otherwise, you can send a PayPal donation to pay@cumnockhistorygroup.org

Many A Lang Scots Mile

- our Cumnock ancestors on the move

Our current project looks at the movement of people into and from Cumnock.

Two years on, we have 120 stories and we are currently editing them into a book which we hope will be ready by November. It's a big task. Big thanks to Roberta McGee, Alexandra Watson and Joanne Ferguson for their help with this.

The Chapters are

1. Introduction
2. Early History
3. Wars
4. Land
5. The Industrial Age
6. Housing, miners rows, lodging houses
7. Particular jobs: drapers, footballers, travellers, ministers
8. In search of gold and other success stories
9. Religion including religious, ethnic, political persecution
10. Crime
11. Family Sagas
12. Children parted from their parents
13. The 20th century
14. Conclusion

Index of Surnames
Timeline



The blog with the stories can be seen [here](#), with the Surnames in the labels on the right.



The Scythia that took Jenny Jack to her Canadian husband Bill Langman post WW2. Laurie Ann March



A plate that travelled to Pennsylvania. Jeanne Campbell Suehr