



CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP

Winter 2021/2

Newsletter edited by
Kay McMeekin

Monthly Meetings

at **Barrhill Community Centre, Bank Avenue, Cumnock** on 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:15 p.m.

Thursday 17th February: Myko Clelland of Find my past

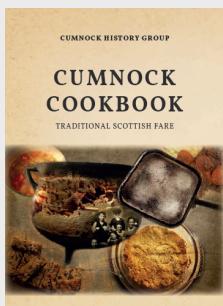
Thursday 17th March: Professor Thomas Clancy of University of Glasgow on place names

Thursday 21st April:
Commonwealth War Graves Commission - Sehar Sarwar on their Archives, by Zoom

Thursday 19th May: the AGM

Thursday 16th June: to be confirmed

Members will be notified of meetings by email.



Our meetings have restarted in our new venue, the recently renovated Barrhill Community Centre, the former St John's School. In September Kay McMeekin gave a talk on the Cumnock Kirk Sessions records from 1816-60 which she transcribed with help from Alan Craig and Yvonne Saunderson. You can download for free a list of people mentioned from our [Online Shop](#). If you think one may be your ancestor you can purchase the full document.

In October we had our AGM. Christine Barrie and Louise Quinn stood down as committee members and we thank them for their service. Robert Stevenson was elected on to the committee. Otherwise no change. The next AGM will be in May in line with what we did pre-Covid.

In November, member James Kleboe spoke about the history of the mill town of Catrine and showed an excellent film that was made about Catrine a few years ago.

We reluctantly cancelled the Christmas Social in December due to the Covid Omicron Variant. Last week Rab Wilson, the author and poet from New Cumnock, spoke about the life of John Johnston who lived to the age of 99 in Cumnock. He was a veteran of Trafalgar and wrote a poem "Lord Nelson" about the battle. He latterly was schoolmaster at Benston School and Adam B. Todd campaigned to get him a pension to ease his circumstances in his latter years. You can read about him on the Cumnock Connections tree [here](#). And the story of Rab's research and the poem itself [here](#).

We are grateful to all our speakers for giving their time and sharing their knowledge with us. Forthcoming meetings on the sidebar.

Merchandise

Our new [Online Shop](#) went live in time to sell our Cumnock Calendars and Cookbooks as well as other items and downloads of documents.

Thanks to all who made a purchase. We have sent items all over the world!



Many thanks too to local shops Mary's Fabrics, Presents and Correct and Timberrills and the Cumnock Heritage Centre for selling on our behalf. Our print run of 200 calendars sold out quickly and we ordered another 100 to avoid disappointing our customers. There are some left now reduced to £3 to clear.

The Cumnock Cookbooks are sold out. We printed 400, so this is amazing! Apologies to the Brown family for printing the wrong photo of Mrs Jean Brown. When we do a reprint we will rectify this. Here is Jean Brown (née Gibson).



CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP

Management Committee

Chair & Secretary:

Kay McMeekin

Vice Chair: Sadie McNair

Treasurer: Shaun Lowrie

Membership Secretary: Ailsa McInnes

Committee Members

Billy Anderson

Neil Given

Anne Lawrence

Alex Lennox

Robert Stevenson

Contact Email

info@cumnochhistorygroup.org

Memberships of £10 renew in April.

Send any cheques, payable to Cumnock History Group to

Shaun Lowrie (Treasurer)

20 Skerrington Place

Cumnock

KA18 3AD

or ask for bank details for a transfer or pay by PayPal

Donate

You can send a PayPal donation to pay@cumnochhistorygroup.org

Website - help needed



The reworking of the original Cumnock History Group website is progressing, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Some of us will be getting some training in how to edit the site with a Zoom training session this Wednesday 26 January at 10:30 am. If you have some computer skills and would like to help, let me know and I'll send you the link. Some of it is simply a case of copying from the old site and pasting into the new site; not rocket science, but it all takes time.

If you can't find something on the new site, try the archive site for which there is a link on the home page, on the far right (arrowed above)

If you spot an issue with the site eg a link that doesn't work or missing items, please let us know using email address:

info@cumnochhistorygroup.org

Ploughing Up Our Past

We are working on the write up of the project in which we have investigated 422 farms in the four parishes of Old and New Cumnock, Ochiltree and Auchinleck and conducted 14 interviews. We will be working with East Ayrshire Leisure Trust to showcase our findings in an exhibition in the Baird Institute in May - August this year. We will be looking for local farming objects, eg shepherd's crooks, milking stools, medals, trophies, tacks, and photographs to put on display, safely in cases.



Jean McHarg with her father John Todd's crooks

CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP

Monumental Inscriptions

We are sold out of the memory sticks with photos of gravestones and inscriptions. But we can send you the files digitally at £2 per cemetery. I've still to update the online shop, but drop me an email with your requirements

info@cumnockhistorygroup.org

Family history tourism

We are looking forward to welcoming again visitors from far and wide who want to visit the haunts of their ancestors. In April, cousins of member Mary Dalgliesh will be flying in from Florida, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and France to meet up, in most cases, for the first time. Mary wrote about her ancestor [Mary Jane Hadden](#) in a previous issue and they are all descendants of Mary Jane. Since finding each other, they have been meeting regularly on Zoom.

Some of them will be staying in the house of our late chairman Bobby Grierson, Cherrytree House which is now available to rent on [Air BnB!](#) Discount for friends of CHG!

We like to do tailor-made tours of the area for visitors. A bit of local knowledge can make a big difference to the experience.

Facebook links

We have several very active FB groups

[Cumnock History Group page](#)

[Ploughing Up Our Past farm project](#)

[Cumnock Family History](#)

[Pennylands POW Project](#)

[Cumnock Today photos](#)

[Armistice Project](#)

[Old Cumnock](#)

[Old Cumnock Chitchat](#)

[Cumnock School Photos](#)

Help need

Do you know your way around Excel spreadsheets? Our Treasurer Shaun Lowrie has a system in place to record all our transactions. He will be standing down at the end of the financial year and we need someone to take over. He can help get you started and it would be good if you could start working with him before the AGM in May. Get in touch for a chat if you think you can help. We cannot operate without a Treasurer, so please consider this if you have the skills needed.

Cumnock Connections - our big family tree

Our big family tree has over 55,000 names and photos and obituaries <https://cumnockconnections.tribalpages.com>

We heard recently from Terry McGee in West Virginia who was friends with the [Zelensky](#) family from Lithuania via Cumnock. He sent information and photos. There are still Zelensky descendants in Ayrshire. Levonas born in 1908 in Cumnock went out to West Virginia to join his sister Steffina and her husband John Prutsok. Levonas was known as Scotty in America



Scotty is in centre of front row. First aid team competition, 1950s.



Steffina's wedding to John Prutsok 1921