

JUST FOR THE RECORD....

ROMHC EVENTS 2018

Jan/Feb/March	Directors' meetings re Ardchiavaig, Website, becoming a SCIO
February 24	Lunch for Volunteers in Centre
March 21	Work party
March 26	Museum opens
March 27	Film show for Bunessan School,
April 1	Duck Race (Easter Sunday)
April 4	Film evening (Ardchiavaig) Bunessan Hall
April 13	Film evening (Ardchiavaig) Creich Hall
April 24	Directors' Meeting
May 8 & June 5	Directors' Meetings
July 11	Kilvickeon Gaelic Service 12 noon
July 22	Poetry evening , Celebrating Keats(Gala)
July 25	Biodiversity Day at Centre
July 24	Keats talk - Stewart Cameron, Creich Hall
July 26	Ranger-led walk in footsteps of Keats
August 3	Bunessan Show (stand booked)
August 8	Talk about Keats, Iona Community Shop
September 4	Local history storytelling at Camas
September 5 & 27	Directors' Meetings
October 13	Maintenance Day – tree cutting!
October 26	Centre closes for the season
October 31	Remembering the Ross at the Library in Creich Hall
Oct 27	AGM 2 pm

IONAD EACHDRAIDH an Rois Mhuilich



Ross of Mull HISTORICAL CENTRE

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2018

We are 21 years old!

And now we have a new website:

<https://romhc.org.uk>

Much of the information stored in the Centre will be available to a global audience...

A laboratory of history

Poetry of the Clearances was the theme of a compelling talk in Bunessan Hall on 17 October 2017. Tom Devine (Professor Sir Thomas Devine) drew an audience of more than 50 people, as he spoke about several poems, giving the context in which they were written and commenting on the way that they revealed the suffering of a people, their passionate anger and down-to-earth humour too. The poems were beautifully read in the Gaelic by Eleanor MacDougall, and in English by several of the Ross of Mull Poets, and Maimie Brunton.

Tom Devine spoke with enthusiasm about the history of this part of Mull and with affection of the founders of the Ross of Mull Historical Centre: James McKeand who began the building up of its unique archive, and Attie McKechnie, who contributed so much to its oral history. He called the Ross 'a laboratory' because there is so much to be learned here about the process of the Clearances, their impact on landscape and the community. Pointing out that groups of geologists stay at Scoor frequently, he asked why not undergraduates studying this major aspect of Scottish History? Indeed, why not?

The evening ended with a contemporary poem about the deserted village of Ardchiavaig, and a Gaelic song about the pain of leaving home and country, movingly rendered by Nigel Burgess. Then there was warm and lively conversation over plentiful refreshments. One of those present said, 'There was such a good feeling, I didn't want to leave.'

JSP



A well-kept secret?

But it's now possible to see the Historical Centre from the road again. A doughty team of lumberjacks and undergrowth clearers equipped with chainsaws, loppers and bare hands; sustained by corned beef sandwiches and draughts of tea worked one Saturday to take down the goat willow, sycamore and brambles which had hidden us from view. This was the right time of year, as no birds were nesting and Bunessan School bonfire was being built.... It poured with rain all day, but Nigel Burgess posed in the next day's sunshine to demonstrate the cheerful determination of the team who got the job done.



Sùil Air Àird Chiabhaig Focus on Ardchiavaig

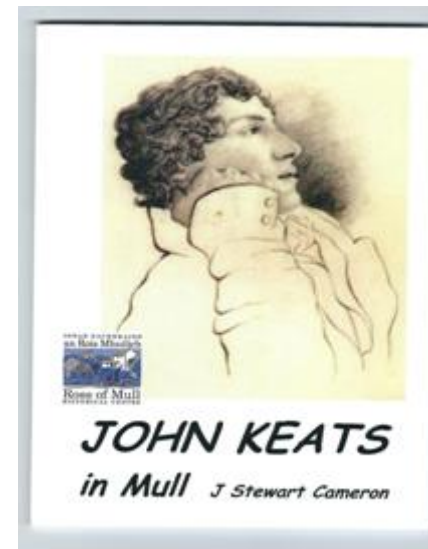
The 2017 project funded by the National Lottery has formally ended, as The Historical Centre received a detailed report from Claire Ellis, the Archaeologist, and gave several public presentations of the film made during the project, together with several well-thought-out and entertaining short films by young people. We have acquired useful equipment for the Centre, and even more useful skills. The site invites further exploration – when the bracken is down. For the Centre and the community, there's still a lot to learn about Ardchiavaig.

Find out more on the website

John Keats: Tourist in turbulent times

In July 1818 Keats and a friend walked across Mull because they couldn't afford to take a boat from Oban round the island to Staffa. It took them four days and it rained heavily all the way. Overcast skies were the result of an erupting volcano on the other side of the world.

But different clouds were gathering over Mull, as the Clearances changed the landscape. What did Keats observe as he tramped past townships like Ardchiavaig and Shiaba?



CELEBRATING HIS VISIT

This year we remembered John Keats' journey exactly 200 years later; with a talk by Stewart Cameron, author of the book **John Keats in Mull** (available from the Centre at £5.50), focusing on the poet's letters home. There was a guided walk to Derrynacullen, and an evening where Ross of Mull Poets and others met over a bottle of wine and read each other poems by Keats.

WHY NOT BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT THE HISTORICAL CENTRE, LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS SPECIAL PLACE AND ITS STORY AND WELCOME VISITORS TO THE ROSS.

Flint found twice at Camas...



In 2000 Peter Cinquini a volunteer at Camas, also an archaeologist by training was working in the raised beds of the garden there. He found a flint scraper, which created great interest among his colleagues. It would probably have been used in prehistoric times for preparing deer-hide or seal-skin, for a variety of uses. For instance skins were stretched over woven hazel to make *currags* for inshore use. Camas has always been a sheltered base for fishing.

The flint, having been found and shared around, was put in a (very) safe place at Camas.

Rediscovered by Rhyddian Knight on the staff this year, it is at the moment on loan to the Historical Centre.

Dates and Names to Remember

1914 - 1918 are usually given as the dates for 'The Great War'. If any war can be seen as great! Names on the War Memorials at Bunessan and Creich record poignantly those who died, on land and at sea, in the last months of the war:

Lachlan Cameron ~ Seaman HMS Floristan ~ 28 April 1918

Duncan MacColl ~ Pte A and S Highlanders ~ 21 May 1918

Hugh Cheape (Lt.Col H.A.Gray-Cheape, DSO) ~ 27 May 1918

Malcolm MacFarlan ~ Seaman HMS Africa ~ 15 Sept 1918

Archibald Beaton ~ Pte A and S Highlanders ~ 9 Oct 1918

Neil MacPhee ~ Seaman HMS Tanager ~ 15 Dec 1918

William MacKechnie ~ Seaman HMS Lavatera ~ 27 April 1919

Why those dates after Armistice Day? Germany had surrendered on 11 November 1918. Then there were long negotiations for what it was hoped would be a lasting peace. The Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June 1919, formally ended a war in Europe in which 20 million people died; half of these being soldiers and sailors and half civilians. But there was another enemy, the 'Spanish Flu' Pandemic which killed between 20 million and 50 million people worldwide. This comes home to us when we see on the War Memorial at Creich the name of Malcolm, son of Hector MacFarlane, shepherd at Tiraghoil, and his wife Ann. His ship HMS Africa was on convoy escort duties and based in Sierra Leone. In September 1918, influenza struck in two short weeks, and 52 of the crew died including Malcolm, who was buried in Africa.