

BROADSHEET

Magazine of the Scottish Council on Archives
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Welcome...

The Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) are delighted that this special edition of *Broadsheet* is dedicated to Community Archives and Heritage Groups (CAHG). The Scottish Government recognizes the importance of CAHG with their focus on “*the green recovery, contributing to the economic recovery of communities, seeking opportunities to widen participation and reduce inequalities, and enhancing digital engagement*”.

SCA tick all these boxes.

Community Engagement is a recent specialism within SCA. Drawing from the very well-attended conference on Community Archives in Stornoway in June 2017, we surveyed community archives and heritage groups in Scotland to explore how we can support them through advocacy, policy outcomes and provision of valuable training. The survey revealed an appetite for guidance and training on fundraising, preservation of physical archives and catalogues, particularly the preservation of digital archives. This initiative led to a successful Archive Tour of Scotland in 2019, a one-day training and network event called *First Steps: Caring for Community Archives*. Pandemic-pending, once this first Tour finishes, we will continue to deliver more events throughout Scotland.

Meantime, we have all adapted quickly to the restrictions placed upon us, with Zoom-mediated meetings and webinars facilitating and enabling us to engage and deliver on our survey-derived objectives. Please visit our community archive section on the SCA website for information and guidance on all resources. The Events section lists all our training and networking events.

Our exponential success and growing popularity is due largely to collaboration and partnership with a diverse range of organisations in the cultural and heritage sector. We continue to partner Scotland's Community Heritage Conference, joining Historic Environment Scotland, Archaeology Scotland, Northlight Heritage, Scottish Community Heritage Alliance, and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. We sit on the Board of Archives and Records Association of UK & Ireland's Community Archives and Heritage Groups, and have been influential and instrumental in the setting up of a CAHG Scotland network.

Follow us on Twitter [@CArchivesScot](https://twitter.com/CArchivesScot). We want to hear from you and if you would like to know more about the work we do or find out more about CAHG Scotland, please contact me (a.wilson@scottisharchives.org.uk).

Enjoy this special edition of *Broadsheet* with its contributions from Community Archives across Scotland. There's also an interview with Catherine Gillies from Scottish Community Heritage Alliance, podcast available soon! We also have an insight into the conservation of a document important to the Scottish-Australian community.

Join us in 2021 on our follow-up online Archive Tour with a webinar series on *Next Steps: Caring for your Community Archive*, and a series of short webinars on *Developing Your Digital Skills*.

2021 will be a good year for Communities.

Audrey Wilson, SCA Community Engagement Officer

Contributors

Ruth Brown, Rachael Cloughton, Andrew Davidson, Catherine Gillies, Maya Darrell Hewins, Simon Johnson, Wullie Robertson, Jackie Thorburn, Jaime Valentine, and Graham Webster.

We are always keen to highlight your latest projects and news, and welcome submissions for articles. Please email the SCA office if you would like to contribute an item for a future edition.

Cover Image

Our cover image comes courtesy of Dunkeld Community Archive, and captures *Curling on Polney Loch*, 1960s. You can find out more about Dunkeld's collection on the next page.

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DUNKELD COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

The Dunkeld Community Archive originates in The Chapter House Museum, within Dunkeld Cathedral. This was refurbished in 1994 by The Friends of Dunkeld Cathedral, as a permanent local exhibition telling the history of the town and the Cathedral. The Archive Room, which opened above the Chapter House Museum in 1995, was originally a cold and uncomfortable garret up a spiral staircase of 42 steps. It is now situated at 12 The Cross, Dunkeld at ground level and of easy access. Thanks to a massive fundraising effort, the present building was purchased and after refurbishment opened to the public in 2013. It houses a public room where visitors can browse the many photograph albums and a humidity-controlled room where our fast-growing collection of photographs, records and memorabilia relating to the Cathedral and Community of Dunkeld and Birnam are stored.

In 1999 The Scottish Horse Museum had to close, and its collection was dispersed. The Chapter House Museum rescued the Regimental documents and photographs and took them into the Community Archive as a separate section. This was against the possibility of the Scottish Horse ever wanting to reform its museum.

Due to the Covid pandemic we had to close the Chapter House Museum and Archive in March. As the museum is housed in the Chapter House of Dunkeld Cathedral this remains closed as the church is only opening for Sunday services, funerals etc. We re-opened the Archive in September and had some visitors but nowhere near the normal amount. We have now chosen to close the doors again due to being placed in a higher tier, to the increase in Covid in the area and the added risk to our volunteers.

In June 2020 we were lucky enough to join a project with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust to digitise and make available online our Scottish Horse collection. This project has also made funding available for the employment of one individual to allow the archive to open full-time when Covid conditions allow. Previously, we only opened three mornings per week from 10am to 12pm with volunteers.

We have used the time we were closed to think of ways to attract more visitors into the archive itself. We applied for funding from the SSE Griffin Community Fund who were pleased to help support us and we recently installed three Interactive Screens. One screen is situated in the archive window to advertise who and what we are, along with opening times, snippets of historical information, request for volunteers, advertisement of the books, local guides and maps we sell. We also offer this space to local businesses to advertise (for a small monthly donation), and to local events such as coffee mornings, charitable fundraisers etc. (free of charge). Another screen is in the public room of the archive and has many power point video presentations of local historical subjects telling their story along with our Chapter House Museum in a

“virtual” format. This allows us to offer the public something to look at safely during the Covid situation as we can sanitise the touch-screen after each use. We are not allowing visitors to browse photo albums or carry out research at present. The third screen is in the museum and we plan to concentrate on stories relating directly to the Cathedral here.

The Griffin fund also paid for us to have a web site built (www.historicdunkeld.org.uk) and we have also launched a Facebook page. We plan to add an online shop to this along with ‘donate to view’ virtual museums of the Scottish Horse artefacts (which are not held on our site) and the Chapter House Museum. We are also planning to extend our shop range by offering greetings cards, key rings, fridge magnets, mugs etc. using old photographs of Dunkeld.

We have also received funding from Museum Galleries Scotland to purchase PPE and contactless donation boxes, I.T. and digitisation equipment, the digitisation of our local census and OPR’s (currently on microfilm) and signage for the front of the building. The Basil D’eath Fund has provided £3000 to improve the storage of the Scottish Horse Collection.

Our manager is still working in the office and we continue to carry out research requests for local and family history and The Scottish Horse via email only. Local requests have reduced but the Scottish Horse requests remain much the same.

It has been a strange year for us. The Covid situation has created challenges and our income has declined dramatically, but it has also created opportunities for funding and new ideas, making us think about our future and the way we present our collections. We hope to come out at the other end stronger and more resilient, and with more to offer our visitors.

Ruth Brown, Dunkeld Community Archive
www.historicdunkeld.org.uk



The Chapter House Museum, Dunkeld

FRASERBURGH ON FILM

Stories from the North East corner.



Fraserburgh on Film is an archive of moving image shot by residents of Fraserburgh and its surrounding areas throughout the 20th century.

The town sits on the North East point of the Aberdeenshire coast with its history and culture inextricably linked with traditions associated with North Sea fishing and the Doric language. It's known locally as 'The Broch' and is also my place of birth.

I was born in the town in the 1980s and saw Fraserburgh change as I grew up. The fishing vessel decommissioning scheme resulted in the fleet being halved and left a harbour once teeming with trawlers sitting eerily quiet, the knock-on effect evidenced by shops in the town centre that for years had been home to local businesses, sitting empty with boarded windows.

Although I have a nostalgia for The Broch of my childhood, I also feel strangely that I have a nostalgia for the town as it was earlier in the 20th century. I grew up with stories from my father (a Brocher born in the 1950s) of how Fraserburgh once was; a busy fishing port and holiday destination with a strong sense of community and identity.

When researching project ideas for my MSc in Information and Library studies at Robert Gordon University in 2019, I revisited some films recorded by local historian, Jim Taylor. Jim, who is related to me on my father's side, had a lifelong interest in stories and began recording these from a young age.

When I met with him to talk about my planned project he told me that with his first pay packet from his job as a mechanic in Fraserburgh, he went to Aberdeen on the train with his father and bought himself a reel to reel tape recorder. At first he would use it to record the fiddle music and song performed by family friends who would visit their but and ben in the village of Rosehearty, later recording

stories of local folklore and reminiscences of ways of life and traditions now gone from whoever would sit and speak with him.

In the 1980s, Jim bought a video camera and began to film interviews with folk from the area. These are now valuable first-hand accounts of lives of people who lived through changes in the fishing over the years, the great wars of the 20th century and who spoke The Doric as it was over 100 years ago.

Jim's work was the original inspiration behind putting the Fraserburgh on Film project together. I wanted to create an online platform that could serve as place for digital storytelling and participatory heritage, using film to tell stories from the area using the words spoken and images created by the people who lived and worked in the North East over the years.

As well as including Jim's films, I was lucky enough to have films donated by members of the community and, where necessary, digitised these from analogue formats, unlocking content that had sat in private collections for years, bringing members of the community together to share, learn and reminisce over their shared heritage.

It's very exciting to be given an 8mm film reel with no idea of what it contains to discover images of the town shot 60 or 70 years ago brought to life through the medium of moving image. These glimpses in to the past capture the essence of the town as it was and events that shaped its social history. Moments in time once locked in personal collections brought to the fore.

The clips could be considered short vignettes that when combined tell stories from a shared past. The town centre as it was filmed on an average day in the 1960s; a train pulling in to a long since demolished Fraserburgh station; Santa Clause arriving at Benzie and Miller department store

in the late 1930s, the site of which a carpark can now be found; The silhouette of the RNLi John and Charles Kennedy lifeboat as it sat washed ashore near the mouth of Fraserburgh Harbour following the tragedy that claimed the life of six crewmen; one of the last boats to be built in the town entering the harbour from the shipbuilder's slipway.

As well as these wider shared connections, many of the films have personal association for people living in the community today. On October 6 1956 Captain Alexander Ramsay wed the Hon. Flora Fraser at a ceremony attended by the Queen Mother and Queen Ingrid of Denmark, conducted by my grandfather, Rev. J. Wilson. Towards the end of the clip, a brief shot can be seen that shows my grandfather and grandmother as well as my mother and aunt as children. In seeing this clip, I experienced first-hand the ability of digital artefacts to connect on a very personal level. Subsequent similar experiences have emerged from members of the online community which have further expanded narratives; personal connections and reflections which foster a sense of ownership over a shared heritage.

Since launch, the project has received several further donations of films, all of which add to the story of the social history of the town and the people who once lived there. My hope is that films will continue to be discovered and that the archive will grow, providing a place to reminisce and share reflections for years to come.

I also hope that people from other areas in Scotland can take inspiration from the project and feel motivated to seek out films that have sat in lofts and cupboards for years that tell the stories of their communities, celebrating the worth of amateur film as valuable artefacts of, as they say in The Broch, "the wye oor ane fowk aince lived".

Fraserburgh on Film is available to view at www.fraserburghonfilm.com. If you have any information to share Andrew would love to hear from you! You can contact him through Fraserburgh on Film on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) or [email](#) him.

Andrew Davidson, [Fraserburgh on Film](#)



Above left: Santa Claus arrives at Benzie and Miller in Fraserburgh in the late 1930s. The building caught fire one evening in 1941 which resulted in the town centre being bombed by enemy planes. The film was donated by Gavin Holman, grandson of Alexander Benzie. Alongside this clip were several others shot in the town during the 1930s; Above right: My grandfather and grandmother, Jack and Nora Wilson, with my mother Lorna and Aunt Muriel, taken from the film of the marriage of Captain Alexander Ramsay and the Hon. Flora Fraser on October 6 1956. Below: Selection of Screenshots from the films.



TRANSCENDING DISTANCE: RECORDING DIVERSITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Staying Connected

'Stay at home' was a message extensively underlined and reinforced from the March 2020 lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a message that had widely reported repercussions, for example for domestic violence. For some LGBTQ+ people, for example those who are not 'out' in the households where they reside, staying at home might also mean a confinement within an alien space, an arena that fails to recognise and support the person you are.

From the beginning of the pandemic, it was clear that social distance was the opposite of what was needed: physical distance was required, and we would need more social contact to transcend that distance and maintain the connections that support us. In those groups that are especially vulnerable to social distancing, social inclusion is imperative. During lockdown it has been especially vital to combat social isolation, stay socially connected and strengthen our communities. Amongst the conversations that support each of us and celebrate our diversity, shared stories play a crucial role.

OurStory Scotland, established in 2002, is a registered Scottish Charity run wholly by unpaid volunteers dedicated to collecting, archiving and presenting the life stories of the LGBTQ+ community in Scotland. The great majority of the stories we archive have been collected in person, face-to-face. The archiving process has involved physically taking the materials to the location of the archives¹, and we have presented our stories through storytelling performance, drama and exhibitions. March 2020 saw a sudden change in all that. We could no longer safely meet face-to-face to collect stories, the archives themselves were closed with staff working from home, and planned exhibitions had to be cancelled.

We were, of course, determined that this would not mean putting a stop to our work. To ensure that the stories and voices of our community continue to be heard, we have sustained our drive to collect, archive and present, though the story of OurStory this year is most readily told in reverse order: the continuity and development of presentation, archiving and collecting.

Opportune Presentations

Online opportunities were not something new to our work. We have had long experience in presenting the stories of our community online, through the [OurStory Scotland website](#), through our [YouTube channel](#) and through social media

¹ Our oral history recordings, including video recordings of interviews and performances, along with digitally submitted stories (such as online questionnaires) are archived in the OurStory Scotland Collection at the National Library of Scotland. Handwritten episodes (currently more than 170 with more to be archived) along with a selection of artworks are archived at National Museums Scotland. The archives of the Charity itself, its origins, organisation and events, are in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, which is also our official address.

including [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). We had already begun a new collaboration with Pink Saltire, through Dom Miller-Graham, one of the most active volunteers with OurStory Scotland. The project entitled '50 Years of Rainbow Activism' aimed to record stories, make them ready for archive at the National Library of Scotland, and present them as podcasts. When the collecting had suddenly to stop, the editing and preparation for podcasting came to the fore. In situations where people were more physically isolated, the validation and support provided by being able to listen to people's life stories became even more important. The podcasts were timed to go live in a planned sequence, a serial narrative related by diverse speakers, and have been available through [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#) ever since as a resource.

Publicity was given to the podcasts through radio interviews, where Dom added the observation that Pride is of continuing importance, albeit in virtual form, in a year where marches and gatherings could have endangered lives. We were also approached by Radio Scotland for material for their Our Story series – by chance the series name coinciding with our own. As we had full-length oral history interviews with several of the key players in the creation and development of the brilliant Glasgay! Festival (1993-2014), we suggested that topic and we were able to indicate prominent participants to record for the programme. As more groups began to meet virtually, we received an increasing number of invitations to share our stories at live events, with participants at diverse locations. Kairos Women's Space in Johnstone invited us to provide stories related to the area. We had already been asked to search our archives for stories relevant to Renfrewshire heritage, and we had also provided this selection to Paisley Museum who are keen to ensure that the museum is diverse, inclusive and representative of all visitors. Stories from this selection were shared at an online storytelling event with Kairos Women's Space, presented by Donald Gray, our Treasurer, who has been with OurStory Scotland from the outset and is originally from Paisley, and Nicky Imrie, who has worked on mapping diverse communities with Scottish Civic Trust, another organisation with whom we regularly collaborate.

We were invited to present accounts of LGBTQ+ experience of education, social services and the workplace at the 'Pathways to Wellbeing' event for Human Resources managers and professionals across Scotland hosted by Sharon McKenzie Head of HR at Fife Council. The selection of stories to ensure relevance, and to fit into a tight time slot, took many days of preparation, but the result was an illuminating mix of live narratives (handwritten episodes read out by Dom and Nicky) and recorded extracts. Virtual meetings in one sense make it easier to incorporate the latter, through screen sharing, or more specifically sharing of audio.

In August there was a special event organised by the LGBTQ Special Interest Group of the Oral History Society.

The event was entitled 'LGBTQ Voices from the Four Nations' and we were honoured to represent Scotland. The other nations did not appear to have equivalent national archives, and there was particular interest in the National Library of Scotland's Guide to LGBT Research Resources, which others saw as a model for what could be developed elsewhere. This reveals the importance of pointing to where long-term archived materials can be accessed for contemporary purposes.

Supporting Archives

As the lockdown came in to force, more people were confined to their homes, which for some meant time to explore their own storage and consider a clear-out. Perhaps for this reason we received more requests than usual to accept physical materials. We are not usually able to do this ourselves, but can direct people to suitable archives, for purposes such as plugging gaps in journals that are successfully employed in LGBT History Month – an example from the Mitchell Library – and augmenting archived materials on LGBT Rights campaigns. One such campaign was Repeal the Clause (2000), and the joy of this example was that our very first remote recording (see below) was with Jim Mearns, a key actor in that campaign, who donated relevant material to the National Library of Scotland, which will enable cross-referencing of the material and the recording. Although the archives might not be accessible during the pandemic, valuable materials have been able to be saved through using courier services.

Although we have had to postpone our full-length oral history recordings, undertaken in face-to-face interviews, we quickly switched our efforts to ensuring the archiving of our recordings, and to clearing a backlog awaiting summaries. From the outset we have followed the advice of the Oral History Society, and the British Library Sound Archive, in preparing summaries rather than transcriptions of oral histories, so that the voice remains paramount. We were very fortunate to have a superb intern Lindsay Horsham working with us from February to April. Her work changed dramatically from the middle of March, as she could no longer take part in group events and do face-to-face recordings. She switched her efforts to completing summaries, and managed to go through a large number of recordings to provide the summaries that will enable archiving at the National Library of Scotland to proceed.

More recently we have had four wonderful new volunteers join us, Amanda, Eve, Jay and Maria. In some cases it was through the Scottish Council on Archives that they had heard of our work, and we are most grateful for this publicity and encouragement. The new volunteers have already been involved in summarising, in exploring untold LGBTQ+ stories, and in remote recordings.

Remote Recordings

While face-to-face collecting of stories, such as handwritten episodes, visual storytelling and oral history recording, has been unable to proceed, we knew it was vital not to put on hold completely the collection of LGBTQ+ stories, especially at a time of rapid social change, developing identities and terminologies, and the very pressing reality of the pandemic itself.



Denise and Dom: Dom Miller-Graham's recorded interviews for '50 Years of Rainbow Activism' (Pink Saltire in association with OurStory Scotland) had to be cut short through the pandemic lockdown. His interview with Denise was completed and is included in [Episode 5 of the podcasts](#).

Already in March 2020, the Oral History Society advised that all face-to-face oral history interviewing be postponed until further notice. We immediately postponed a long-awaited oral history interview with one of Scotland's foremost novelists. Remote means of interviewing people are not a substitute for face-to-face interviews, which remain best practice, but we decided to explore what might be possible through remote recordings. Again the advice of the Oral History Society was practical and proportionate: remote recordings might best be used for shorter themed interviews rather than full-length oral histories.

We investigated the various means of undertaking remote recordings, and in particular the possibility of double-ended recordings, where each participant is separately recorded at their location and the uncompressed file uploaded to the cloud in wav format. The separate tracks can then be mixed manually or the software may have this as an option. Of the possibilities reviewed by the Oral History Society in their [Advice on oral history interviewing during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), we decided to subscribe to [Squadcast](#), as it not only enables remote recording but allows the interviewer and up to three interviewees to see each other and use the usual visual cues that are so important in oral history interviews: video is not recorded, but the audio recording is aided by the visual dimension.

We have already undertaken several remote recordings on particular themes, discussed with participants in advance, and these also provide a useful way of introducing potential interviewees to the skills and limitations involved in such recording. The principal limitation is the equipment available



Repeal the Clause: Jim Mearns on a march of the Repeal the Clause campaign (2000) in which he was a key player. He has donated this and other materials to the National Library of Scotland, who will be able to cross-reference the campaign materials with the remote recording we made with him.

to the interviewee. To take advantage of the double-ended recording, both interviewer and interviewee should use circumaural headphones, to avoid feedback and echo. The quality of the recording then depends on the mic available. As the tracks of interviewer and interviewee are distinct, and do not involve the other's sounds, intrusive interviewer sounds, if not muted at the time, can be muted afterwards, in a way that is impossible in a face-to-face interview – a rare example of an advantage of the remote recording.

Other organisations involved in exploring LGBTQ+ oral history contacted us during the pandemic to draw on the experience we have built up over the years. We were able to provide oral history training to the Dundee based dance company Shaper/Caper for their own oral history project 'Here. Me. Out.' aimed at expressing LGBTQ+ stories through dance. To mark Bi Visibility Day, Lindsay represented OurStory Scotland in a collaboration with Edinburgh University's Staff Pride Network to share stories and promote online storytelling through our own new project Queer Distance.

Queer Distance

Queer Distance is the latest in a series of projects developed to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging vulnerabilities. 'Coming In' was a project we developed to focus on those who had come from overseas to Scotland to make their home here, and felt threatened by the xenophobia associated with the EU referendum and its aftermath.² Queer Distance aims to tackle physical distance

² See 'Coming In and Out of the Archives' in [Broad-sheet: Magazine of the Scottish Council on Archives, Spring 2018](#).

through social interaction and the sharing of stories. We provide a variety of opportunities for relating stories online. We may have to be physically distant, but we can make the distance queer, creative and supportive. We have always provided the facility for people to submit their stories to us electronically or using online story forms, but the need for this became more pressing during the pandemic. We therefore wanted a way to flag up these possibilities, to expand them and to refer to our new explorations in remote recording. We launched Queer Distance on 1st May 2020.

Queer Distance encourages LGBTQ+ people to share aspects of their life story, recall a key episode in their life or a place that is special, perhaps as a location for the unfettered expression of identity, or write a diary of day-to-day life under lockdown – a Corona Chronicle. Diaries have revealed some of the constraints felt specifically by LGBTQ+ people, while the open-ended questionnaire remains the most popular means of contributing online, as its very general questions prompt people to think of stages in their life and differences that can be shared with diverse others.

In all these ways, the pandemic has perversely taught us skills that will remain with us post-Covid, and has re-emphasised the importance of social connection at a time of physical distance. The distance may feel alien, but we can strive to counteract it in our continuing work of collecting diverse stories, sharing them through contemporary presentations and preserving them for future generations.

CRAIGMILLAR NOW - AND THEN

Craigmillar Now is a new arts and heritage organisation dedicated to supporting extraordinary artistic talent in the greater Craigmillar area – both past and present. This month we moved into the former St Andrew's church on the corner of Fort Kinnaird Retail Park in East Edinburgh, opening the building as an arts and heritage centre for the Greater Craigmillar community.

Creating a publicly accessible home for the local archives was part of Craigmillar Now's founding mission. Despite the area's rich history, until now there has not been a dedicated place to house this fascinating resource. When we got the keys to the Craigmillar Now building one of the first things we did was move a key collection – the records of the Craigmillar Festival Society (CFS) – out of temporary storage and into the space.

The CFS is one of the most important community arts projects of the 20th century, not just in Scotland but internationally. It was founded in the 1960s by a group of pioneering local women who wanted to start a festival that celebrated the creativity of Craigmillar. The impetus for this – a mother with a child who was denied violin lessons – is the stuff of local legend. The Society quickly became a ground-breaking, community-led organisation that used the arts to tackle a range of social problems. It created new and meaningful opportunities for people within the area. The impact of the CFS was huge: people came to Craigmillar from all over the world to learn from this grassroots approach. It even inspired the founders of the Notting Hill Carnival.

In 1976 the CFS secured a £750k 'Anti Poverty' grant from the European Union (then the EEC). This enormous sum of money helped the organisation to further realise their ambitions. The CFS could now afford to take on more staff, becoming the largest employer in the area. It also allowed them to secure more premises for community use, including St Andrews which they leased from the Scottish Episcopal Church and converted into an arts centre. Here, the CFS team created a darkroom where local photographers could develop images – which they would later publish in the community-owned newspaper *The Craigmillar Chronicle*. It is this same building that Craigmillar Now calls home. Returning these items to the place where they were created feels very special.

We are also very excited to be working with a team of Craigmillar residents who have volunteered to help develop the archive, ensuring this resource is truly community-owned. The group has started training sessions led by professional photographers and archivists to gain the skills needed to categorise, digitise and share materials. This work has been funded through the generous support of a community grant from The University of Edinburgh. Due to social distancing guidelines the group is currently small. However, the members – Billy McKirdy, Johnni Stanton and Heather and Kevin Henderson – have been able to identify every person in the photos we have come across, including their younger selves! When it is possible, we hope more local archive enthusiasts will be able to join us.

Rachael Cloughton, [Craigmillar Now](#)

To mark the opening, Craigmillar Now are also running tours in December, book [here](#).



Above: Examples of *Craigmillar Festival News* and *The Craigmillar Chronicle* courtesy Billy McKirdy, Craigmillar Now; Right: Craigmillar Now's return home, the former recently renovated church, courtesy Murdo McDermid/Groves-Raines Architects Studios Ltd

WINDOWS WITHIN WINDOWS: CREATING AN ARCHIVE FILM TRAIL IN LERWICK, SHETLAND

This December, as Shetland basks in less than six hours of daylight, and indoor activities are curtailed by Coronavirus restrictions, we have devised a project – Winderfil - to exhibit archival moving image material from shop windows to audiences along a Lerwick street.

The aim of the project is twofold - to bring audiences into contact with archive film in unexpected ways and to support activity along the main shopping area in Lerwick - Commercial Street (known simply as 'Da Street'). The moving image material comes from the collections of the Shetland Film Archive – a community-led volunteer-run charitable group. Although audiences can view some of the collection on Youtube, we wanted to create a tangible experience where people look up from their phones or watch these films with other people, if even just for a minute.

Not only are we working with a community-led archive group but we are bringing archival moving image material into the community – having it bump up alongside businesses and everyday essentials. We hope somebody who may never consider attending a screening of archival films might come across, and enjoy this material when simply going out for their messages.

This project could only happen with the support of business on Da Street and Living Lerwick, who organise and promote events in the area, and encourage people to shop locally. We are so lucky to have a street full of amazing independent retailers and makers, and our ten sites, which range from wool shops to a branch of Specsavers, have been really supportive throughout. More practically, TV's, monitors and other equipment were borrowed, or sourced cheaply from local online swap and sell websites, and the Archive generously waived licensing costs associated with use of film clips, making this a real low/no budget endeavour.

In selecting films to exhibit, we wanted to showcase the diverse material available in the collections of Shetland Film Archive, and provide material that businesses would be able to incorporate into their festive window displays. Seasonal clips – snow, Christmas trees and parties, were of course, included, but films featuring knitwear and knitting are to be presented in the wool and knitwear shops, and a selection of clips featuring the stunning wild landscape of Shetland are to be present in the outdoor clothing and supplies shop window.

Although the films generally range from the 1950s-late 1970s, the aim of the project is not to descend





Above: Still from SFA20170025. St Clair leaving Lerwick. Donated by the Miller family; previous page: still from SFA20170027. Outside the house. Donated by the Kemp and Malcolmson families (Shetland), both courtesy of Shetland Film Archive.

into nostalgia, but to highlight the changes that have occurred since these times, and steer thoughts towards the future. We also believe that it is important to celebrate these films as independent records of the past in their own right. Archive film is too often used to anchor artefacts in exhibitions, or to contextualise moments in time, and moving image material – particularly that termed “amateur” or “home-movie” – is sometimes not appreciated or valued in the same way as written records.

Of course, the short films can simply be enjoyed as entertainment to brighten the short days and long nights of a Shetland winter. We’ve also designed a trail sheet for bairns to complete – asking them to spot things and suggesting activities related to the films. Providing these tactile and ‘blended’ experiences helps to democratise archive film, championing the idea of archives as collections of everyday folk life and culture.

It is a responsibility – as well as an honour and a joy – to be able to use films that hold memories for the families who donated them, and we hope the project can bring some light to people and generate discussions about our island home. These films add value to a rich heritage of filmmaking in Shetland, which extends

from artist’s moving image and documentaries through to wildlife recordings, commercial surveying work and productions such as the BBC adaptation of Ann Cleeves’ *Shetland*.

Thank you to Living Lerwick, Shetland Film Archive, the business owners and their staff, and all the donors of moving image material, for supporting this project.

Follow the Winderfil activity on Instagram, [here](#), and follow Shetland Film Archive on Twitter, [here](#).

Maya Darrell Hewins & Graham Webster

Maya Darrell Hewins is a PhD student at Shetland College, University of the Highlands and Islands, researching moving image material within community-led archive projects. She is also a freelance creative practitioner and teacher.

Graham Webster works for Shetland Arts, and is a freelance arts marketing practitioner and projects facilitator. He holds a postgraduate degree in Museum Studies and is a graduate of The School of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

INTERVIEW: CATHERINE GILLIES

A familiar face to many working and volunteering in community archives and heritage, Catherine Gillies, secretary of the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance, works freelance for community heritage groups throughout Scotland. She has extensive experience of working with community groups and a thoughtful understanding of what local heritage means to them. She also has strong links with Dunollie Castle in Oban. Audrey Wilson, SCA Community Engagement Officer, joined Catherine for a full and frank discussion on all things community heritage.

Audrey Wilson (AW): **What is community to heritage and why is it so important?**

Catherine Gillies (CG): Community heritage has everything that it is in the name. It is both community and it is heritage, and that marks it out enormously from an awful lot of other heritage that happens in Scotland: it is heritage managed by the community in that community. It's got all its local stories, but the fact that it is managed by the community also means that in many cases there is no funding for it; a very significant difference. It's not core funded by the government but has some great assets of national significance. It is all the impetus, all the energy, everything comes from the community to manage their own stories and to make their own choices about what those stories are.

It's a service to communities while also delivering across all the core purposes that everyone who works in heritage is expected to meet these days: education, care of collections to national, even international standards, looking after difficult historic buildings, as well as thinking about social impact, sustainability and, and health and wellbeing. And that actually is why community heritage is so important because I may be completely and utterly biased, but from where I stand and from everything that I've seen of community heritage, they show a clean pair of heels to every other part of the heritage sector in terms of what they give to communities, how they work with them and how everything is integrated and what comes out at the end of it in terms of social impacts.

One instance that gives you a real insight into the difficulties, but also the pleasures and the purpose of community heritage is when you're filling in one of these big lottery application forms: they often say we must increase volunteers, you must tell us how you're engaging with the community and how you're going to engage with the community. But if you are the historical society on somewhere like Lismore, which has a population of around 75 people, roughly 40% of the island is already volunteering with you! And the whole of the Island is always your audience. So, you're left thinking, well, how do I increase that?

Community heritage is communities, heritage within a community. It comes from it, it is it, it embodies it. National organisations, national museums, and big heritage organisations have much to learn from community heritage, which dare I say it is all too often regarded as little and local. Whereas in actual fact, can there be anything more important than heritage, which is still in the place where it's from, to me, it tops everything!



AW: **You mentioned Lismore there, are there any other community groups that would be a good example of this?**

CG: Where could I possibly start? There're hundreds! I'd like to mention the Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust, an iconic lighthouse sitting on the most westerly point in the country. There are still people who've been lighthouse keepers there. It's a really fragile and remote community with very limited infrastructure, difficult roads, with huge challenges for tourism. Ardnamurchan has in the last year taken over ownership of this lighthouse and is now moving forward to upgrade it as a tourist attraction. They've been well supported by Highland Council and the Northern Lighthouse Board, but now it's theirs and they're really going to take it forward.

That is another thing which community heritage does to an enormous degree: it is integral to the local economy and what it can offer local economies in terms of jobs, tourism, and cultural engagement is absolutely massive.

Another example, is in Carlisle, at the other end of the country, where an eighteenth century mill in a very dangerous state of preservation, is being preserved by the community. While they are securing it, they are also creating a community garden. This is an interesting example of a community, which is very complex in that it's become a big commuter town with an older established community and now they are mixing and building new narratives as a community.

You'll notice we're not really talking about an object, some fantastic archive, or a marvellous painting here. We are talking about the community and how they come together around something that's precious to them. And this is the massive distinction! With the National Museum of Scotland, a fantastic place, you go to look at objects, but when you go into a community heritage site, you by and large, go there to be with your community to celebrate your heritage. It's a back to front, totally different type of story coming from a different place. It

is not in any way as focussed on the objects themselves, but instead very much focussed on what a communicant community can do around them.

AW: You're secretary of the [Scottish Community Heritage Alliance](#), what does the organisation hope to achieve?

CG: The Alliance grew out of a couple of things. Firstly, there was a growing sense amongst community heritage organisations that they simply weren't heard, that they were as I've already suggested too little and local, small and unimportant second-rate heritage, sometimes not worth looking after. This is very prevalent, and remains so. There are still people in the museum sector who say that if you don't actually have a professional curator on the premises, then you can't be called a museum. Which of course is absolute nonsense because it's not a curator who makes a museum!

I also had a difficult experience of having to be in the position of closing an independently run heritage site, simply because the greater political will to maintain it wasn't there. There is a lack of power within the community heritage sector specifically. It's not always lacking within communities generally, and there has been a huge empowerment of communities in recent years, with the establishment of development trusts and land buyouts. What the Community Heritage Alliance is trying to do is bring community heritage into the same room as community arts, community power, community sport, and all these other outputs of communities. Heritage is not sacred. It's not special, but it's simply one of the things that communities do together. So, the Alliance is an umbrella that's brought together by like-minded people, all of us working or volunteering, mostly volunteering in the community heritage sector, all of us doing this of our own time.

We started simply to bring these discussions into the same room with an extensive survey and a few sessions. These were really amazing, with over a hundred people turning up just to talk about how we take community heritage forward. I mean, this isn't the interesting stuff. This is not talking about archives and lists of Plinishings. This is talking about how do we organise ourselves? We asked the participants what do you want us to do? And they said, well, we want you to take this conversation everywhere in Scotland, as far as you can, and let people, let everybody tell you how they want this Alliance to be in the future.

So we did! We had 12 workshops in 12 places, from Shetland to Eyemouth, and points west. We got some funding, and our absolutely pivotal supporter for some time has been the University of St Andrews and the Museums Galleries Institute there. They believed in this, they understand community heritage, and work as leaders in the fields of independent community, heritage, worldwide. They are involved in projects and partners in Central America, Latin America, Portugal, Italy, all over, and all of these countries, I should say, understand what community heritage is. The UK is appalling! It simply doesn't understand, it has no structure in place, has no funding in place that recognises the difference, though that is starting to change. And part

of the reason that it's starting to change is because of the Alliance.

Everybody told us they wanted us to do three things. First, they wanted us to create a network which would easily feed information in a digestible form about everything that's going on, because it's a blizzard, just endless amounts of information to select, interpret, inform about all the nuts and bolts of money, managing our own heritage from funding to conservation, to everything. Secondly, to advocate at national level, and make their voice heard. We have been doing that during lockdown. Finally, we are to continue to research. We have done some serious research with St Andrews University, Northlight Heritage and [Ergadia Museums and Heritage](#), which is my company with a group of other people. This was the first time anybody has gone specifically to the independent sector and said "tell us your views". The main reason I say specifically, and why that's so important is that the starting point of all of this was just three years ago at the Community Heritage conference.

I chucked away my original script because I was completely reading the room and had to adjust my message, and realised that we've got to mobilise. We wanted to do something different. We had to get on with this instead of some mealy-mouthed talk.

So, we've had a big job to support the sector, getting that voice up to national level, and keeping the research going, finding out about it, finding out about its impact.

AW: What are your biggest concerns for community heritage groups in this difficult time?

CG: The primary thing has to be sustainability. There is no core funding for community managed heritage, everything is based on visitors across the threshold. If you are in a co-funded organisation, supported by the local authority, museums, or the national museums, of course it's still been extremely challenging, but nonetheless, there has been a lifeline there. But with lockdown coming in at Easter and the restrictions throughout the summer, meant that for many community groups there was the prospect of absolutely nothing coming in.

There were also barriers to applying for funding, either that you are not an accredited museum, or a registered charity. So, many community groups are not on radars and there was a stage right at the beginning where they were falling through every single crack, almost 40% of the sector was unable to access funding, which was massive.

Come March next year, I think at the moment, pretty much everybody's going to just about squeak through by the skin of their teeth, thanks to crowdfunding and some very welcome really good funding from the national agencies, which has now come in. We went straight to them and said you can't eliminate all these things. I have to say, that Museums Galleries Scotland have been absolutely amazing. They said, okay, come one, come all, all the museums can apply, whether you're accredited or not. And they also removed the charitable bar. So, you know,

that's an example of when a national organization takes it on the chin and says, right, okay, we've got to change. So, oddly it's kind of the silver lining to this awful time, that actually the national heritage organizations have listened to the needs of community heritage and have put huge amounts of money into the pathway. And there are a lot of places that are going to survive what would have been absolutely finished without that coming in.

AW: On funding, what do you feel about volunteering? Because many of the groups rely very much on volunteers and that's a bit of a concern as well. Isn't it?

CG: I would say more than half of the community heritage organizations in Scotland have no staff at all. They are a hundred percent volunteer driven and, yes, it's a massive problem. It's a very vulnerable group. They are typically older and we all talk about wanting to get young people involved (a conversation that's been going on for as long as I've been in heritage, which is a long time!), but the reality is that the people who have the time tend to be retired, we don't want to change that. So currently you've got people who are unwilling to gather for the best of reasons at the moment, many who were shielding, and perhaps unwilling to come back into a public facing situation.

The other issue is where are volunteers going to come from in the future? There's tons of volunteers around now, but I do think there is an opportunity to get younger people involved, because sadly, a lot of people are not going to have jobs. It's horrendous for the young just now and I think that all heritage organisations have an opportunity to create opportunities for young people. I do not mean simply putting them on a volunteer rota, but giving them a chance to build their CV with some really meaningful volunteering, which will then stand them in good stead for the increasingly difficult jobs market.

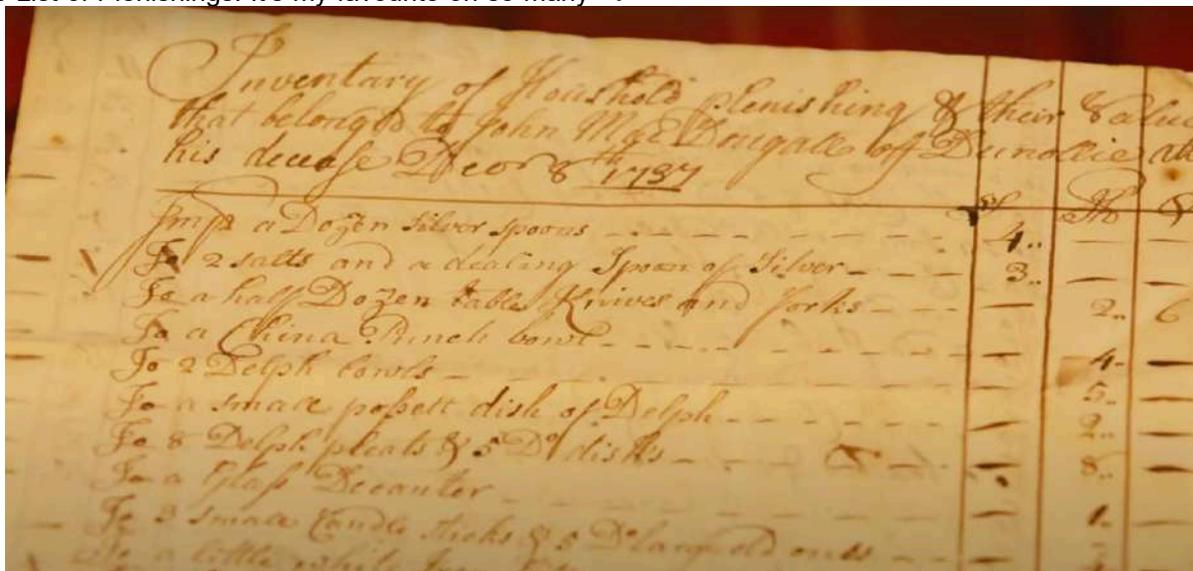
AW: You have been involved with [Dunollie Castle](#) in Oban for a number of years. It is an impressive and fascinating collection. Do you have a particular favourite item from the archive?

CG: The List of Plenishings! It's my favourite on so many

levels. The object itself is basically a list of stuff that you own in the building. If you think of the term replenish, it's to add things in, so this is the plenishings that exist: it's the furniture, the fixtures and the fittings. It happens that it is a list belonging to a famous Jacobite, Iain Keir, who was at Sheriffmuir, and was an exile. He was very much in the thick of the Jacobite cause and was the chief of MacDougall at Dunollie. I'm not interested in it because it belonged to a Jacobite, I'm interested in it because it gives us an absolutely astonishing picture of the contents and life in a castle in 1737.

This was just before there was a move to more comfortable living, in houses, rather than a castle with a siege engine; indeed, just eight years later the castle roof was removed and a new house was built. This list is very much an insight into living in a leaky old castle, a last gasp of pre-early modern life in a castle. There're all sorts of things on it. There're pillows, all kinds of cushions, the only way you're going to make living in a castle comfortable; lots and lots of bedding; but also limited other things, like pewter plates, the barrel for salting the herring and garden tools. The other thing it contains is his targe and plaid, his madder red plaid. What I love about Dunollie is that we can go down that inventory and then we can go into the museum when we can go, "Oh, tick, tick, we've got them. We've got them" We still have some of those objects – we even found that madder red plaid hanging as a pair of curtains in 2010 in the house. It is the oldest complete plaid in the world.

And that is what is so important about community archives. I mean, I've said already that you go into a national museum, and you see beautiful stuff, but it's stuff that's assembled there in lovely glass cases in this big national story, but how precious is it when you have a collection of paper, of letters, of inventories, of invoices, of bills, of whatever, which is still in the place that it relates to, whether it's in a community or whether it's in a historic house. I mean if you want to look for national importance, why do people talk about this being a local importance, having that layer of place and location for me just elevates it to the most extraordinary national importance. Why does local have to mean small? It has the DNA of that place running through the most fantastic and exciting things. It's just fabulous.



Catherine's favourite object from the Dunollie archive: the 1737 List of Plenishings. This inventory of the castle's contents captures what life would have been like for its inhabitants, the MacDougalls.

THE 'RADICAL RISING' OF 1820

PART ONE – CONSERVING THE EVIDENCE OF A REVOLUTION

2020 marked the 200th anniversary of the Scottish 'Radical Rising' of 1820. National Records of Scotland (NRS) archivist Simon Johnson and conservator Jackie Thorburn recently collaborated on a six-month project to improve public access to the trial papers of the Rising, primarily to help facilitate access to the collection during its anniversary year.

This first of two articles introduces the project and specifically describes the process of conserving an often overlooked collection of great national significance.

This article was originally published on 29 May on the NRS 'Open Book' blog, containing numerous images which illustrate the conservation process. This can be accessed [here](#).

'Oyer and terminer' – 'to hear and determine'

On 29 May 1820 a special commission of 'oyer and terminer' was granted under the Great Seal of England. This conferred royal authority to hear and determine treason trials in several counties of Scotland for those individuals charged with involvement in the so-called 'Radical Rising' of April 1820.

The Rising was a revolutionary insurrection which largely appears to have fallen by the wayside in terms of Scottish political and social history. Based in central Scotland, artisan workers—weavers, shoemakers, blacksmiths—initiated a series of strikes and social unrest during the first week of April 1820. This pushed for governmental reform in response to the economic depression. The Rising was quickly and violently quashed.

NRS holds the highly significant trial papers under catalogue reference JC21. Eighty-eight men were charged with treason. Of those tried and found guilty, 19 were transported to Australia, where they largely found sympathy and were considered respectable settlers. The three alleged ring-leaders were executed, at Glasgow and Stirling. The executed ring-leaders, James Wilson, John Baird and Andrew Hardie, came to be seen as martyrs to the cause.

In September 2020, NRS marked the 200th anniversary of the end of the trials and executions (see [here](#)). To facilitate this, a collaborative project was initiated between NRS Digital Services and Conservation Services. This was a four-part process:

1. Identifying relevant material from the catalogue.
2. Conserving the original material.
3. Provision of new, detailed catalogue descriptions.
4. Digitisation of the original material for public access



Commission of oyer and terminer, 29 May 1820, JC21/1/1, National Records of Scotland, Crown Copyright ©

via the NRS 'Virtual Volumes' image viewer.

The trial records of the Radicals were held among the records of the High Court of Justiciary which, for many years, were stored in squalid conditions in the Laigh Hall of Parliament House, Edinburgh. The records were subject to damage from the environmental fall out of coal fires and industry. They were transmitted to the Scottish Record Office (NRS's predecessor) in this sorry state in 1972.

In September 2019, four battered document boxes arrived in the NRS Conservation Studio. They contained the entire collection of trial papers for the Rising: a total of 26 individually-referenced items (302 individual folios), mainly parchment, all of which had been tied in bundles. The material was very dirty, obscuring text and adding to the acid degradation of the material.

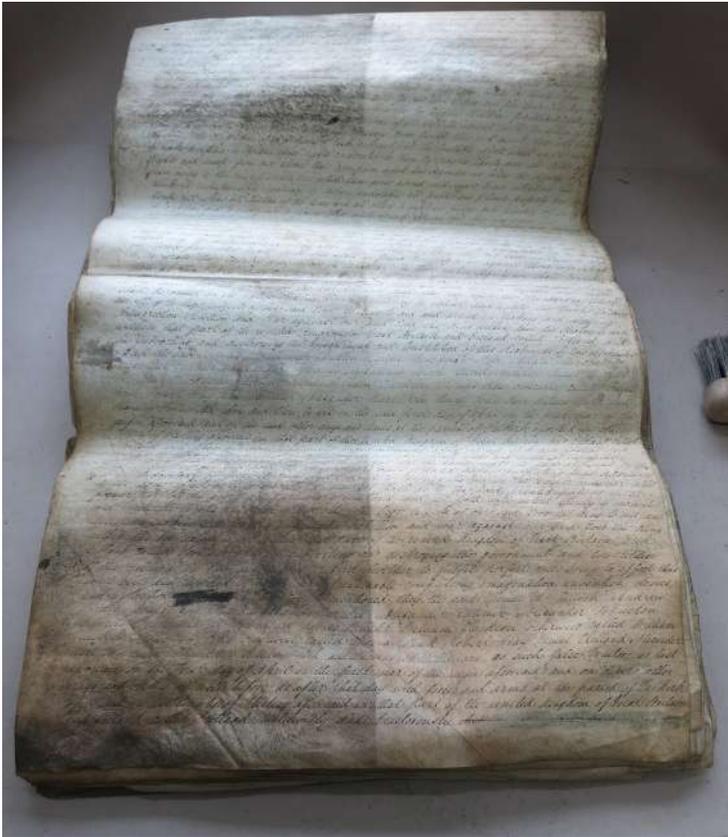
Cleaning the material

Initially, the items were surface-cleaned with brushes to remove loose dirt, then cleaned more thoroughly with erasers. Caution was required, particularly so for the parchment items. Ink or pigment never sinks into the fibres of a skin in the same way that it does when applied to paper, so care is required to ensure that nothing is dislodged.

Humidifying and relaxing parchment material

Sitting in awkward positions for too long is a common complaint of conservators. It all too often results in stiff necks and sore shoulders.

The same can be said of the JC21 material, which had been



held in one position for years, folded and tied in bundles, resulting in stiffness and inflexibility. This made the bundles difficult to open and read. Parchment absorbs moisture from the air, leading it to contract and expand in relation to its environment. When it was folded, tied up and put in a box, it was constrained and thus it became 'stuck'.

To resolve this problem for the smaller parchments, a 50:50 solution of water and alcohol was applied along the creases and folds with a small brush and the skin was held 'open' by hand or with small weights, applying minimal tension to the fold. The solution penetrated the fibres prior to evaporation and allowed them to be manoeuvred, whilst maintaining the integrity of the items.

For the large single-sheet parchment manuscripts, a 'humidification chamber' was created: essentially a 'document sandwich' with layers of thin-spun polyester, Gortex (which would permit water vapour penetration), and spray-wetted capillary matting.

This parcel was then enclosed under a blanket of polythene and weighted around the edges to create the chamber. The water vapour slowly did its trick, allowing the conservator to carefully control the levels of moisture and to gently manipulate the skin, easing out the folds and creases. The sheet was then allowed to dry into its new state.

Repair of parchment material

For those few parchment items which required repairs, unbuffered parchment and goldbeater's skin (a translucent parchment made from bovine intestine) was utilised to repair the holes and losses. A 3% gelatine solution was used as an adhesive, which was applied warm with a small brush. A very fiddly process!

Consolidating ink damage to parchment material

Parchment is much more resistant than paper to corrosive inks such as iron gall ink (the ink used for the handwritten annotations on the JC21 documents). This is why parchment was, and still is, used for many legal documents.

The printing ink used on both the paper and parchment documents is a carbon-based ink. These inks are affected by the reactivity of the skin to its environment—the skin expands and contracts—stressing the layer of ink, which cracks and eventually flakes off. Over-handling can also cause stress and lead to loss of ink.

A 1% gelatine solution was used in the worst areas to consolidate fragile areas of ink and thereby reduce the likelihood of any further loss from these areas.

Re-packaging the collection

Finally, the items were repackaged into new, custom-made archival boxes. The items are now all flat, but they are not held under any form of tension. The conservation work took in excess of 200 hours. Now that the entire collection is available digitally, access to the original material will be restricted.

Presentation to interested parties

Having completed the conservation work on the collection, on 3 March 2020 the NRS hosted visitors from two organisations with a particular interest in the Rising.

Firstly, the '1820 Society', which was founded to publicise and commemorate the Rising. Secondly, the 'Scottish Australian Heritage Council' (SAHC). One of the visitors, Nea MacCulloch of the SAHC, is also a direct descendant of one of the transported Radicals, Thomas McCulloch. The photograph below was taken during their visit to Thomas Thomson House to view the collection and to discuss potential outreach plans, and was an enjoyable and informative visit for all involved.

The entirety of the JC21 collection has been digitised and added to the Virtual Volumes image viewer in the NRS search rooms at General Register House, Edinburgh. The updated JC21 catalogue can be explored online at the NRS website.

Part 2 of the overview of this project, exploring the work to digitise and re-catalogue the collection, will be published in the next issue of Broadsheet.

Simon Johnson, Archivist, National Records of Scotland
Jackie Thorburn, Conservator, National Records of Scotland



The conserved Radical Rising trial papers: Left to right: Jocelyn Grant (Outreach & Learning Manager, NRS), Catherine McKernan (Secretary, 1820 Society), Simon Johnson (Digital Services Archivist, NRS), Jenny Bruce (Artist and Historian), Nea MacCulloch (Deputy President, Scottish Australian Heritage Council), Tessa Spencer (Head of Learning, NRS), Jackie Thorburn (Conservator, NRS) courtesy Gloria Conti

KILWINNING HERITAGE

Kilwinning Heritage (KH) is the name of the local history group based in Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. The archives that its volunteer members oversee include the historical buildings in the town and information, documents and objects that relate to its history.

Many people think of Kilwinning as being a typical West of Scotland town that was born in the Industrial Revolution and now, like other such towns, suffers in post-industrial decline. However, while the latter is true, Kilwinning's history goes back about 1,300 years to the time when a monk, probably from Ireland and probably called Finnan or Vinnan, established a monk's cell or kil near the River Garnock. It then doesn't take a leap of imagination to go from kil and Finnan to Kilwinning.

The remains of a 9th or 10th century Celtic Cross, presently on display in Saltcoats Heritage Centre, suggests the presence of a monastery at this time. In the 12th century, when Norman noblemen came to central Scotland at the invitation of King David, the DeMorville family built an Abbey on the site of the monastery. The DeMorvilles had earlier built Dryburgh Abbey but, despite this, they used masons from Kelso Abbey to begin work at Kilwinning. When it was completed in the late 1100's, they returned to Kelso to invite some of their monks to establish the monastic order at what was called the Abbey Church of St. Winnin. These monks were members of the Tironensian Order of Benedictine monks.

The Abbey thrived until the Reformation in 1560 when it was abandoned and fell into ruin. In 1774 the Parish Church was built over what was the Abbey quire using

recycled Abbey stone with most of the remaining site used as a graveyard. The Abbey had two towers at its west end: the south west one collapsed some time during the life of the Abbey but the north west one remained standing until 1814. A clock tower was built on the foundations of this tower which was completed in 1816. Today, all that remains of the Abbey are parts of the west and south walls, parts of the east and west sides of the cloisters and the south transept wall.

The Abbey is not the only part of Kilwinning's history because, to this, you can add:

- The Ancient Society of Kilwinning Archers, who can trace their history back to 1483. They are the only archery club to hold an annual Papingo Shoot (I'll let you look it up).
- The Masonic Order, which claims to have been started by mason monks at the abbey. The Kilwinning Lodge was the first to be established in Scotland so is known as the Mother Lodge, Lodge 0.
- The Earls of Eglinton whose last mansion house, known as Eglinton Castle, was built in 1802 and abandoned in 1925. Today, little of it remains.
- The jousting tournament, known as the Eglinton Tournament, held in the Castle grounds in 1839 and organised by the 13th Earl. Most of the leading members of the British nobility were invited to attend and wear mediaeval costumes.
- The Eglinton Iron Works.
- The local coal mining industry.
- The poet, Robert Service, who was raised in Kilwinning by his grandparents.



Above: Kilwinning Abbey; Below: the original 1816 clock mechanism.



KH runs a Heritage Centre in the Clock Tower which is usually open on Easter weekend and on weekends between mid-May and mid-September, attracting around 1,200 visitors a year. It is staffed by its volunteer members who provide information on Kilwinning's history and exhibits and offer free guided tours. On the ground and first floors are displays and information about the Abbey and the monks, Eglinton Castle and Tournament, the Papingo Shoot, The Masons, WW1 letters, old photos of Kilwinning and much more. On the 2nd floor is the original 1816 clock mechanism made by Kilwinning clockmaker, James Blair, on the third floor are the two bells from the original tower and, from the top, panoramic views from Arran to Ailsa Craig (weather permitting!!). Organised groups are welcome at any time and should contact KH to arrange their visit in advance.

Over the years and up to the present day, KH members have written a number of books and leaflets on topics such as:

- Kilwinning Abbey.
- The excavations carried out by members at the Abbey site, Benslie, Dalry and Lady Jane's Cottage.
- The history of Christian Churches in Kilwinning from the late 18th century.
- The 2010/11 Abbey excavations. (Written by project co-ordinator, Rathmell Archaeology).
- The Abbey Green, its tenements and residents.
- Kilwinning Clockmakers (including James Blair).

Awaiting publication are a booklet about the Kilwinning women executed for practising witchcraft in the 17th century and a book recounting the murder, in 1769, of the 10th Earl of Eglinton by Mungo Campbell, an exciseman from Ardrossan.

In recent months, KH has recorded, and uploaded onto [YouTube tours of the Tower and the Abbey Grounds](#), with more digital presentations to follow. This will allow people from outside Kilwinning to see the exhibits and will also provide access to all floors in the Tower to people with limited mobility. More information can be found, and books bought, from our website with up-to-date news on the [Facebook page](#).

The work of KH is done to preserve all the elements that make up the archive of the history of Kilwinning and disseminate knowledge of that history to as many people as possible, at home and abroad.

Wullie Robertson, [Kilwinning Heritage](#)



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