

Jeannie MacColl 7th February, 2014

We looked through quite a few photographs and other artefacts and as Jeannie described them to me, I wrote notes interspersed with an occasional memory.

The first item we looked at was a copy of *National Geographic* magazine from November 1974. It was the edition which was published with an article called 'Scotland's Inner Hebrides: Isles of the Western Sea' by Kenneth MacLeish with photographs by R. Stephen Uzzell III (pp 690-717). The section on Mull begins on page 704 with a description of the geology of the island, but page 706 is given over to a full page photograph: The caption says 'Two-oared school bus fetches home a giggling foursome after a day at Mull's Ulva Public School'. The image shows Mrs Burgess taking her four children back to Ulva where the Burgesses were the ferrymen. On page 707 is a picture of Meg Douglass (teacher at the school) helping a young Dondie MacColl (about 12 years) with his schoolwork. The article continues on page 708 with some comments from Colonel Miller of Torosay, Angus MacIntyre, the island bank manager and also Ian MacDonald who had a fishing boat based in Tobermory.

At this point Jeannie told me that when she was at school work was sent up to Mull from Dunoon on a fortnightly basis. All subjects were covered and were overseen by the teachers in the schools. A small journal called *Outpost* was published annually, with a foreword by Mr Henderson, Director of Education, and distributed to all the schools in the islands. This journal reported on the progress made by the children and in 1953 the pupils of Ulva Primary school were particularly prolific. On page 8 is one of Jeannie's contributions:

My home is a farm in the Island of Mull which is one of the most beautiful of the Western islands and famous in song and story.

Here is scenery to delight the eye of the artist, high mountains, tumbling waterfalls from which the spray is flung out like a silver curtain, gentle wooded slopes where the trees are dressed in every shade of green with here and there great outcrops of grey rock, standing guard. Nearer sea level there are green fields from which the farmers take their various crops. Then comes the sea shore with its numberless varieties of shellfish and seabirds.

On the shore just beside my home, two Sheldrakes appear every spring. They are lovely birds and I watch eagerly for the appearance of the chicks. They look like little balls of fluff as they swim so smartly in the line with one parent bird in front and the other bringing up the rear.

Mull is indeed 'of the isles the fairest' as Dugald MacPhail, the Mull bard, sang so sweetly many years ago.

Jean E. Cameron. Year III

Ulva Ferry.

Ulva Primary School pupils contributed several other items including twin sisters Jeannie and Jessie Cameron's (later to become MacColl and Macquarie) 'Riddles' on page 25, their poems about pets on page 26, Jessie's story 'A Journey to the Moon' on page 27 and some funny jokes from Margaret Mackinnon (Year II) on the inside back cover. The magazine is

printed on blue and pink sugar paper with cream covers. The cover page has a globe-like drawing of the west coast of Argyll showing the islands covered in the contents. The globe has a banner across the middle with 'Outpost' across it and several images of forms of transport circle the globe with a flashing lighthouse at the very top.

At the end of three years of study the pupils were given a certificate to show that they had completed the 'Three-Years' Course under the Correspondence Tuition Scheme'. The subjects covered were: English (including History and Geography), Mathematics (Algebra and Arithmetic), Biology and Housekeeping. (*Image*)

In 1940 'Empire Day 1940' certificates were also given to certify that children had 'helped to provide comfort and contentment to the soldiers, sailors and airmen of the British Commonwealth, who have rallied to the cause of safeguarding freedom, justice and security.' Jeannie recalled various of the forces (who were passing through) sleeping in the barn at Laggan and her mother would feed them. (*Image*)

The Cameron family lived first at Kellan. Duncan was born on 4th December 1929. Margaret (now 81) was born in 1933 but soon after Margaret arrived the family moved to Laggan. Rosemary was born at Laggan in 1935 and the twins Jean and Jessie on the 7th December 1937.

Jeannie worked on Killiechronan Estate from 1953 to 1958. She was employed as a tractor driver. She left Killiechronan when she married at age 21. The family worked the land with Clydesdale horses which were also much loved family pets as can be seen in some of the photographs.

We talked about the some of the residents who had lived along the road from Killiechronan to Lagganulva during the time that Jeannie would often drive home in her tractor:

Killiemor Cottage: Angus Black (because he was dark) lived here. He was married to some society person and he had been her gardener.

Killiemor (where the Claytons now live) Andy Bell (a shepherd?) and his wife. Possibly Betsy and Ivarr Ingram at a later date.

Creich (the old school house): The lady known as Granny Sutcliffe – who was Sarah's grandmother.

Acharonich: The farmhouse was empty after the Macleans left and there was a gap before the house was bought by John and Peggy Heap.

Acharonich Cottages (now Geadan Dubh, belonging to the Cleaves). Cottage No 1: Bill Hughes a policeman from Glasgow and his daughter, Betty.

Cottage No 2: Lachie MacNeill who was the postman for Ulva Ferry, Ulva and Gometra. At that time the postman for Ulva Ferry to Reudle was Lachie Maclean (Chrissie's Grandfather) this run was later taken over by Johnny Simpson (Chrissie's Father).

Lachie's Cottage (burned down before 1972) No 1: Mary, Lachie and Flora MacNeill (Flora became MacCormick). Lachie was out fishing when the fire occurred. No 2: Jessie MacNeill (aunt of the MacFadyen boys who were Lachie, Neil & Donald (whose nickname was Doodie) who went to school at Ulva).

Oskamull –belonged to Killiechronan Estate (like Acharonich Cottages) at the time. Jimmy Sims, a shepherd, and his wife Margaret. Before Killiechronan took it over, Angus John MacColl's family including Katie Mary (Macrae) were working the farm. Angus John was the postal contractor for Ulva Ferry for many years.

Corkamull Cottage – built to the same plan as Acharonich Cottages and Lachie's Cottage and all three belonging to Killiechronan Estate. Bruce and Ruth MacDowell bought No 1 and the MacPhails (from Acharonich Cottages) moved in to No 2. Before the MacPhails and long before 1953 No 2 was lived in by Sandy Black. Sandy Black had the mail-run from Salen and he drove a wee square van. There is a chassis still lying on the shore at Laggan from one of his taxis.

School House: Rena Simpson (teacher) and her husband Bobby (painter) were followed by Mr and Mrs Trail (she was the teacher) who were followed by Betsy Macvicar who was the last Ulva School teacher who lived in the School House. Various other teachers lived at the School House at different times including: Scott Murray, John Archibald (art teacher in Tobermory), a teacher of French and his wife and three little children and Alison Lambie who was a primary school teacher at Salen school.

Lagganulva: The Cameron Family.