

Cruck Cottage Heritage Association

Chairmans Report 2014/15

Once again, I have the pleasure of presenting my report as Chairman of the Cruck Cottage Heritage Association for 2014/15.

I think that the past year must have been the quietest we have seen at the cottage since the Association was formed. Visitors numbers are down, both on a 'casual' basis, and to most of our organised open days.

It is difficult to pinpoint any single reason for this, and we can only hope that things improve during this coming year.

We held two Easter events during the past year. We arranged the usual entertainment and music, and, though visitors were thin on the ground, all who came gave generously to our funds, and we also managed to donate a fair amount to Tommy Jardine's Cash for Kids charity from the Easter egg raffle.

The Easter 2015 open day was held a week earlier this year, in order to avoid clashing with all the other events, and was a joint effort with the Roucan Loch. Whilst a good number of visitors turned up at Roucan, unfortunately not many made it up to the Cottage.

We took part in the Torthorwald Scarecrow day again, and whilst our entry did not gain a prize, it was an enjoyable day in the village.

The Cruck Christmas evening went well again, with a capacity crowd. The mulled wine and mince pies went down well, we all enjoyed the carol singing, and the raffle raised a good amount.

We held a quiz night in Torthorwald Hall to raise some funds for the cottage, conducted by our excellent quiz-master, Bill Meadows. Whilst the turn-out was disappointing, the evening was very much enjoyed by those present. However, given the amount of work, and generous donations of food, raffle prizes etc. given to this event, the modest return does not justify the effort.

Sadly, problems have arisen with our original website, which has been closed down. I am not sure exactly why, but it seems that our web designer has taken offence at our enquiries about possibly taking over the site ourselves, and simply pulled the plug. At the time of writing, Marcus Howsam's computer guru is looking into things, to see if there is any way of bringing it back.

Our Facebook page, however, is doing very well, with regular visitors. The link to our 'Flickr' pages is well visited, and Bill Meadows has added many interesting photos and video clips.

We carried out the usual maintenance, lime-washing and minor repairs to the cottage and shed during the year. We also purchased a new gazebo for our open days.

During the coming year, we plan to lime-wash the cottage again, carry out further repairs to the shed, and possibly replace the rustic gate, which is in a poor state. The cottage thatch is suffering badly from moss growth, and we need to keep on top of that. Hopefully the roof will survive for another few years before a total re-thatch is required.

I never cease to be amazed by the generosity of the visitors who come to the cottage, and also our various friends in the village. We received generous donations from the Torthorwald Cricket Match Committee, the Scarecrow Committee, and also our dear friend, Isobel Cowan.

Once again, we enjoyed the continued support of our crafts and musical friends throughout the year, who did us proud. I feel sorry that more people did not turn up to enjoy their entertainment, but I know that they all enjoy coming to the Cruck Cottage, and we look forward to them returning in the future. My grateful thanks to them all.

This is not a particularly happy report, I'm afraid. It is difficult to think of new ways to attract visitors to the cottage, both individually and to our open days. The challenge this coming year will be to try to 'think outside the box' and come up with new ideas! However, because of all the generous donations, our finances are in good shape, and we have no immediate worries in that respect.

My thanks again for the continued confidence and support from Solway Heritage for our Association over the past year, and to our Secretary, Sheila, for maintaining the close links that we enjoy.

My sincere thanks to all our visitors and friends who have supported the cottage in so many ways over the past year. To all my committee members, and their families, who have worked so hard, given so generously and supported me, my grateful thanks.

Bill Lawson
Chairman
May 2015