

# People in Logie The Reading Room Crowsteps



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Reading Room & Crowsteps 1996

The ownership of the building(s) now forming the main part of the **Blairlogie Reading and Recreation Room** was held by the proprietors of the **Blairlogie Estates** for many generations, but the date at which the building was committed to become a social and educational centre for the community has yet to be established with certainty.

There is, however, a record in the **New Statistical Account for 1842** which refers to “a parochial library, containing a few good books at Blairlogie”. Again, in 1854, **The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland** states, in regard to **Blairlogie**, “Here are an United Presbyterian Church and a small Parochial Library”. It seems possible that this could have been in the same building as the current **Reading Room**, but, equally, it could have been housed in the building that is now **Logie Villa**, as it was the home for the Parish School until 1872. Certainly the **Reading Room** contained a Library Section in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, because there is a record in 1946 that “the County Librarian was willing to overlook the fact that a number of books were lost and unaccountable for” and promised to refurbish the Library on the condition that a Lady Librarian be found to accept sole responsibility, and open the Hall one day on each week for the re-issuing of books. **Mrs. Lilian Heeps of Huntly** became that Librarian. The Library Section was eventually situated at the East end of the Hall in two recessed cupboards until 1962, when it was finally closed down and the books sold.

The owners of these future **Reading Room** buildings in 1842 were the members of the **Dundas Family** – proprietors of the **Blairlogie Estates** (1835 – 1845). Ownership passed from the **Dundas Family** to **Robert Bruce of Kennet** in 1845; to **Lord Balfour of Burleigh** (Bruce's son) in 1864; and then to **Lt. Col. James Hare** in 1891.

The configuration of the present **Reading Room** – particularly as it was, prior to the discovery of two old window spaces and their enhancement by two new frames, in the 1970's - suggests that it was originally two adjoining cottages; later (and perhaps at the time of their transition to a community centre) united into a single unit.

There is speculation, on the basis of a passing reference in a newspaper article, that **Lt. Col. Hare** dedicated the building to community use, and became effective patron of the **Blairlogie Recreation and Reading Room** at the time of the Boer War (1899 -1902) and that this might therefore be the date of the start of its official existence. Although this fact has yet to be substantiated, the Valuation Rolls of Stirling confirm that, as early as 1914, and the outbreak of the First World War, **Lt. Col. Hare** of **The Old Castle** owned the building recorded as **Reading Room**. This ownership and patronage of the **Reading Room** continued until **Lt. Col. Hare's** death in 1930, when it passed to his son **Major General Steuart Welwood Hare**. It continued in this form until 1947, when **Major General (now) Sir Steuart Welwood Hare**, and his wife **Lady Mary Nina Rutledge or Hare**, jointly disposed, but still in feu, the **Reading Room** to the **Trustees of the Reading Room**. These Trustees are named as **David Fleming** of **The Blair**, President of the Mens' Section; **James Loudon**, of **Ivydene**, Secretary of the Mens' Section; **Mrs. Lilian Maud Heeps** of **Huntly**, President of the Ladies' Section; **Miss Marjorie Edyth Jameson** of **Blairlogie Cottage**, Secretary of the Ladies' Section; and **The Rev. John MacDonald M.A.** Minister at Blairlogie.

It would appear that the initiative on this transfer of ownership might well have come from the **Reading Room Committee** of that time rather than the **Hare Family**. Minutes of the meetings of the **Reading Room Committee** in late 1946 and early 1947 record initiatives by **James Loudon** and **John Sharpe**, together with **Major David Fleming** on this subject of transferring ownership with a **Mr. Hogg**, solicitor for **Major General Hare**.

The property being disposed at this time is carefully described as being bounded “on the North by other parts of the Estate of Blairlogie belonging to me” (the lands then attached to **Montana Cottage**) “on the East by property belonging to **Hugh Roydon Neilson**, on the South by the old road leading along the foot of the Ochils, and, on the West, by the property belonging to **James Norman Ferguson**” The properties were disposed under many conditions – the chief of which were: 1. They were to be in trust for the community of the Village of Blairlogie and surrounding district; 2. That the premises should be maintained in good order; 3. That they should be used for social, educational and recreational purposes; 4. No businesses should be carried out on the premises, nor should there be sale of intoxicating or exciseable liquor; 5. The buildings and grounds must remain fully insured, and 6. The buildings should not be let or sold without the prior agreement of the Hare family.

The feu duty payable was One Penny per year.

Records of a thriving **Reading Room** exist prior to this formal gift to the Community by the **Hare Family**. At the Hall's Annual General Meeting in October 1946, **Major Fleming of The Blair** stood down as Chairman, and **James Loudon** of **Ivydene** took over. The Committee Members included **Mr. Alexander R. Heeps**, **Mr. McNee**, **Mr. Irving** and **Mr.**

**Kennedy of Nethercraig** and the **Post Office**. **George Wardrope** was confirmed as Hallkeeper, and was paid £10 for his season's work. Provision for the Winter's programme confirmed that the Hall would open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and activities would include Billiards, Dominoes and Darts. Membership was set at a fee of 5/-. It was at this meeting also that the formation of a Ladies Section was proposed and this successfully came into existence in time for the lady officers to become co-signatories as Trustees at the time of handover of ownership to the Community in 1947

In both the Committee meetings of 1946 and 1947, the creation of a Building Fund was proposed and put into effect. This was primarily in order to provide much needed toilet and cloakroom facilities, and this fund was boosted by a number of the 1947 Season's functions being devoted to this fund. In parallel with this, the Ladies Section wasted no time in getting into action, and, by November 1946 they were proposing a "Dance in the form of a Carnival" in conjunction with the Men's Section. The men swiftly approved this project. The Ladies annual subscription was also fixed at 2/6d. This may well have been the start of many such joint social functions, because **Jimmy Learmonth**, who later lived in **Hillside** recalls coming to the Village Dances in his youth when it had "many attractive young ladies, a thatched roof, no toilets and a very springy wooden floor"

In the year after this, in late 1948, the **Reading Room Committee** (Men's and Ladies Sections acting jointly) agreed to explore the possibility of improving the childrens' playing fields and to ascertain whether **Major General Hare** would consider handing the field over to the **District Council** who would then take charge and provide the necessary new equipment and this initiative was eventually successful.

Shortly after the major change in legal ownership, the **Reading Room** expanded in size by acquisition of the adjoining "**Crowsteps**". This two storey cottage had, at one stage in its existence been known as **Dawson House**, probably due to its ownership in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by **John Dawson** of **The Bog of Blairlogie** (now **Telford House**) as one part of the many properties he owned in the district of **Logie**. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, **Crowsteps** was in the ownership of the **Paterson Family**. There is a record of **Nellie Paterson** growing up in the top half of the cottage in the care of her Grandmother in the 1890's, and the **Paterson** ownership lasted until 1921, when **John Robb Paterson** sold the cottage to the sisters **Isabella and Ella Stevenson**. They lived in the cottage on both floors until 1932, when **Isabella** died. **Ella** continued to live in the cottage, but took in a tenant – **Annie Houston** – to occupy the ground floor. However, by 1937, the ground floor of the cottage was officially recorded as "uninhabitable", and ownership of **Crowsteps** passed to the **Stevenson Sisters'** nephew **James Norman Ferguson**. He is recorded as being a Wheelwright and lived in Glasgow. Acting as landlord for the remaining top habitable floor of the cottage, he let this to **Catherine ( Kate) Houston**, one of the family of **Dawsons** and **Houstons** of **Telford House** and **Nethercraig**. The cottage continued to fall into disrepair, and, in a somewhat dilapidated state, **Kate Houston's** tenancy ended, and **James Norman Ferguson** sold the premises to the **Reading Room Trustees** for the sum of £55 in March 1948.

The acquisition of this new space did not immediately impact on the deliberations and activities of the **Reading Room Committee**, however. By the Annual General Meeting of 1948, activities were proposed on Tuesdays and Fridays for the men; on Wednesdays for the Ladies, and, on the first Monday in each month, for the Men and Ladies Sections together. More importantly, new facilities such as a new stove in place of the open fire and a heating system based on a new geyser were approved.

But by the AGM of 1949, the influence of those joint evenings on the first Monday of each month was apparently beginning to tell and it was agreed to amalgamate the Men's and Ladies Sections into one body and to merge the bank balances. The Men's balance was £47 and the Ladies' £140. The men and ladies on the first joint committee were **James Loudon** – President; **Mrs. Millar** – Vice President; **Mr. W. L. Miln** – Treasurer; and the Committee Members were **Mrs. McLeish, Mrs. Stiden, Mr. McDonald, Mr. Oliver** and **Mr. Reynolds**. Delays by the contractor hired to carry out the work agreed in 1948 were commented on; having been commenced in March but not yet completed by September. However, the work was completed by the end of the year.

By the early 1950's, however, the **Reading Room** was to some extent struggling to maintain membership, and President **James Loudon** had to reprove the community for its lack of involvement in the activities of the **Reading Room** when he addressed the AGM in 1952. Perhaps as a result of this wake up call, a larger committee was elected; consisting of **James Loudon** – President; **Mrs. G Mackintosh** – Secretary  
Committee Members – **Mrs. McLeish, Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Bampton, Mrs. Brownlee, Mrs. Lauder, Mrs. Hansen, Mrs. Eadie, Miss Logan** and **Messrs. Oliver, Brownlee, Lauder** and **Ramsey**.

A Bible Class for children on Friday evenings was proposed. This may have seemed an inspired piece of forward thinking when, in February 1953, the Village Hall became, briefly, the home of some 50 **Blairlogie Church** members, locked out of the church itself after protesting against the ruling by **Stirling and Dunblane Presbytery** that the 160 members of the **Blairlogie Congregation** must amalgamate with the neighbouring **Church of Scotland** congregation in **Menstrie**, following the retirement in 1950 of the Minister at **Blairlogie United Free Church**. For the only time in its history, therefore, the **Reading Room** played host to a secession church congregation.

Despite this injection of local support, **James Loudon** had to again express his disappointment at lack of use of the facilities and attendance at functions when he addressed the AGM in November 1954. He reported that he had taken on the role of President in 1946 to establish a sound financial position for the **Reading Room** and to provide for and then to clear the debts incurred by the improvement works completed in 1949. This was now done, and a bank balance of £80 could be reported. He was therefore standing down as President, and asked the meeting, in view of recent low support for activities, if there was a general wish to elect a new committee and to carry on. However, continuation was generally agreed to and **Mr William Robert Howrie** of **Blairlogie Park** was elected as the new President.

The first function organised by the new committee was a concert by the **Alva Harmonica Players** on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

During all of this period since 1948, the amalgamation of the **Crowsteps** premises into the body of the **Reading Room** had not been attempted. Indeed, it appears to have remained effectively derelict on the ground floor. At one stage around 1956/1957, the upper floor was rented out to a promising young art student called **Lys Hansen**, then dividing her time between art school in **Edinburgh** and her parents' home at **Manor Croft, Blairlogie**. One day, on climbing the outside steps and opening the door, she found that the floor had collapsed completely into the bottom room, taking the cast iron stove with it. This stove was later rescued by **Lys** and her husband **George Sutherland**, who repaired it and, later

in the 1970's, set in place at the eastern end of the main **Reading Room**, where it still stands today.

It may well have been this singular occurrence that focussed the Committee's attention on renovating **Crowsteps**, but the minutes of Committee meetings at that time already contain reports of exploration of the possibility of funding from the **Carnegie Trust Fund**. The basis of grants from this organisation was a matching of sums raised by the **Reading Room** itself – thereby doubling the amount available. With £90 already saved in the renovation fund and £87 in the normal bank account, obtaining a **Carnegie Fund** grant would provide a substantial sum towards the required renovation work, and the committee decided to proceed. However, there were organisational requirements set by the **Carnegie Trust Fund** that would have to be met. As a pre-requisite to providing a grant, the **Carnegie Trust Fund** needed the organisation in question to be managed by a committee that represented all the bodies that were involved in or that used the premises. After obtaining the agreement of the Feu Superior **Major General Hare**, a new constitution was created and approved at a Special General Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1958. In parallel with this, another agreement handed over the Trusteeship of the **Reading and Recreation Room** from the original Trustees set in place at the time of the gift of ownership by the **Hare Family** in 1947 to three new Trustees:

District Councillor **William Thomson** of **Stirling Council**

District Councillor **James Taylor Robertson** of **Stirling Council**

**Joseph Cailey McPhee**, Pastor Blairlogie United Free Church

The new constitution provided for the **Reading and Recreation Room** to be dedicated in all time “ for the purpose of physical and mental training and recreation, and social, moral and intellectual development through the medium of reading and recreation rooms, library, lectures, classes, recreation or otherwise as may be found expedient of the inhabitants of the Parish of Logie in the County of Stirling and its immediate vicinity, without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions”.

The new Committee, elected at that time, consisted of

**Mr. Howrie**, Chairman; **Mr. Ramsay**, Vice-Chairman; **Mrs. Phillips**, Hon. Treasurer;

**Mrs Bampton** and **Miss Sheila McGuigan**, Joint Hon. Secretaries

Committee Members: **Mrs. Askam**, **Mrs. Ferguson**, **Mrs. Hunter**, **Mrs. Kelsall** and **Messrs. Gray, Oliver** and **Stirling**

Plus

**Mrs. McKillop** and **Mrs. John Highham** representing the **Blairlogie District W.R.I.**

**Mr. Drysdale** and **Mr. Phillips** representing the **Logie and District Ratepayers Association**

**Miss Ann Stirling** and **Miss Sheila McGuigan** representing the **Logie District Youth Club**.

With the now assured support of the **Carnegie Trust Fund**, this Committee committed the work of renovation, including the re-establishment of two old windows on the frontage to the **East Loan**, and it was at this time that the passageway between the main building and **Crowsteps** was forged. The work was completed by the end of 1959, and the total cost of the work, as reported at the **Reading Room** AGM in March 1960, was £191.

By the time of the 1961 AGM, the affairs of the **Reading Room** appear to have recovered somewhat from the relative doldrums of the 1950's, and **Mrs. Winifred Phillips**, the Treasurer, was able to report a balance of £140 in the bank. The Committee had retained the involvement of **Mrs. Bampton** of **Croft House** as Hon. President, but had a new Chairman in **Mr. Sinclair** of **Rowanbank**. The rest of the Committee at this time were:

Vice-Chairman **Mr. Phillips** of **Dumyat Cottage**; Hon. Secretary **Mrs. Morrison** of **Witches Craig**; Hon Treasurer **Mrs. Phillips** of **Dumyat Cottage**; plus Committee Members **Mrs. Ferguson** of **Ivy Cottage**, **Miss McGillivray** of **Powis House**, **Mrs. Irvine** of **21 Menstrie Place, Menstrie**, **Mrs. Kelsall** of **Kirklea Cottage**, **Mrs. Leary** of **Boghead Caravan Site, Blairlogie**, **Mrs. McAdam** of **23 Abercrombie Place, Menstrie**, **Mrs. McMillan** of **Rowanbank**, **Miss Soper** of **Powis House**, **Mr Barrie** of **Ivydean** and **Mr Higham** of **7, Windsor Street, Menstrie**.

The “Ladies of Powis House” were much involved in the social functions of the organisation during this time, and it is clear that the Committee took its responsibility for social activities seriously under their guidance; for the Minutes of both the 1963 and 1964 AGM’s conclude with the words “The evening was now open for social activities, and games and dances were arranged by **Miss Soper**, and enjoyed by all” In 1966, the Minutes conclude “**Miss Soper** then organised and helped in the entertainment, and a splendid social evening followed”

In 1964, two legal aspects of the operation of the **Reading Room** were dealt with concerning the position of Trustees and the acquisition of **Crowsteps** in relation to these Trustees.

When the **Reading Room** acquired **Crowsteps** in 1948, it was placed in the care of the Trustees appointed only a year before when the **Reading Room** itself came under the ownership of the Community rather than the **Hare Family**. But, in 1958, a new set of Trustees were appointed and a new constitution was adopted in order to conform to the rules of the **Carnegie Trust Fund** So, in a document dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 1964, the original Trustees formally handed over stewardship of **Crowsteps** to the new Trustees. It is interesting to note that although **Major David Fleming** was now living in **Acomb, Yorkshire**, **Mrs. Lilian Maud Heeps**, **James Loudon** and **Mrs. Isabella Millar** or **Hunter**, were all still living respectively in **Huntly**, **Ivydean** and **Cotkerse Cottages**. However, the new Trustees to whom they handed over the reins, had changed, and were now:

District Councillor **William Thomson**

District Councillor **David Macfarlane**

**Rev. John Wilson Currie** of **Blairlogie Manse**.

On 30<sup>th</sup> September 1964, these latter Trustees completed the legalities by formally registering a Trust Deed for **Crowsteps** that conformed to all the provisions of the revised Trust Deed for the main **Reading Room** completed at the handover in 1958.

1965 saw the beginning of the **Crowsteps Art Exhibitions**, when the “promising art student” who had once seen her rented studio collapse into the basement at **Crowsteps**, returned to live at **Blairlogie Cottage** with her husband **George Sutherland**. These exhibitions became an annual and central event for the **Reading Room**, gaining a national reputation and securing valuable income every year for the **Reading Room Committee**. **Lys Hansen** was the central figure in the exhibitions – organising and encouraging exhibitors, personally arranging the hanging, and mobilising the publicity. Her own paintings were included. In this organisational work, she was strongly supported by **Jim Phillips** of **Dumyat Cottage**. The success of this event grew rapidly, and, by 1968, the **Reading Room** benefited by a sum of £75 after all expenses were paid. By 1970, this sum had doubled. **Lys** was strongly supported in all of these activities by the consistent efforts of her husband **George Sutherland**. Each exhibition extended over a period of two or three weeks in the Summer of each year, and the event was held without break until the last exhibition in 1982. From tentative beginnings, it blossomed quickly so that, by 1973, it

included over 100 artists from all over the country. A remarkable distinction for a small village half in the shadow of the Ochils.

A reprise exhibition called "Crowsteps 2004" was held in the **Reading Room** – again organised by **Lys** and **George Sutherland** in the year of its title.

More mundane matters also occupied the Committee during this time. In 1968, concerns were raised about necessary roof repairs and inadequate ventilation. The home of the Crowsteps Art Exhibitions needed upgrading, and a growth in the volume of educational events had to be demonstrated to attract a Council cost subsidy. By 1970, this menu of work required for new floor boards, roofing repairs and ventilation had grown to a cost estimate of £9500. It was reported that a Council grant towards most of this cost could be obtained if the roof were replaced and not merely repaired. This 1970 AGM was also the occasion when **James Phillips** of **Dumyat Cottage** stepped down as Chairman and his wife **Winifred** gave up the post of Treasurer. Both had been overtaken by increasing ill health, but left detailed plans for the major renovation of the **Reading Room** behind them. These plans came to fruition in 1971, when the corrugated iron roof was replaced by old pantiles and the rear of the building was excavated to improve drainage and eliminate the rising damp.

In the background to these matters of maintenance, the Committee (via its Trustees – who by now were County Councillor **Robert Howie**, County Councillor **David McFarlane** and the **Rev. Duncan Sinclair Mitchell** ) made two purchases of land to extend the area behind the **Reading Room** buildings.

The first was a small parcel of land extending only to about 3.55 sq. yards ( a tidying up measure) behind the Eastern end of **Crowsteps**; and this was purchased from **James Learmonth**, who had purchased the building and lands of **Hillside** from **James Norman Ferguson** in 1966. The price paid was £1, and ownership passed to the Trustees in October 1969.

The second was a more extensive piece of land lying behind the main **Reading Room** building. It covered close to 70 sq. yards, and was purchased from **David James Coutts**, with the consent of the **Paisley Building Society**, for the sum of £50. Entry was taken in October 1969. **Mr. Coutts** lived at **The Chalet** (later **Underhill**) which he had purchased from the Trustees of **Mrs. Marie Tanswell Bates** or **Featherstone** in 1967. The **Reading Room** signatories to the purchase documents in 1969 were **Robert Ferguson**, gardener, of **Ivy Cottage**, and **George Henderson McIntosh** of **Montana Cottage**. With these purchases, a sizeable buffer of land was put in place along the back of both the **Reading Room** and **Crowsteps**. Although the Committee discussed and drew up plans for extending the **Reading Room** with storage rooms on these new grounds at the back of the building, no actual work materialised.

In 1971, at the time of the renovation of the roof and drainage, the **County Council of Stirling** wrote on 16<sup>th</sup> September to inform the Committee that the **Reading and Recreation Room** had been designated a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. No offer of immediate funding in support of the upkeep of this "Architectural Gem" was included in the letter.

During the 1970's, the activities organised by the **Reading Room Committee** expanded to fill nearly every week of the Winter months, and catered for a variety of hobbies and interests. The programme for the Winter of 1971/1972 included lectures on Mountain

Safety, Portuguese Pottery, Greek Landscapes, Bird Watching as a Hobby, a play by the Little Theatre of Mull, Paris, Morocco and Recent Discoveries in Astronomy, among some 31 advertised events. Unsurprisingly, the Treasurers' Reports at the AGM's of this decade showed consistent and modest profits. However, in 1974, 1978, and again in 1982 and 1984 aspects of the need for repairs and upgrading to the Hall were debated, and continuing small projects agreed. During these works of improvement; often dictated by the need for better facilities for the annual **Crowsteps Art** Exhibition, clues as to the origins of the buildings emerged. As the walls were stripped back for replacement by new coverings, the skeletons of two cottages emerged. One of the old stone fireplaces was discovered in a recess in the wall, plus an unexpected window space and a doorway. The long hidden old stonework of the walls needed major work as the original mortar had deteriorated almost to the sand content only. The expanding use of the Hall dictated more upkeep costs and thereby to demand continuing profits from events. Nevertheless, in parallel with the educational lectures and events, the social life of the Community was not ignored. In 1978, there is a record of a Village Jubilee Sports Day for the children, a Halloween Party, a Cheese and Wine Party, a Hogmanay Party and a presentation by Tom Weir on "Weir's Way".

In 1980, the first Blairlogie Village Fete was held, and, being deemed highly successful, was held again in 1981 – occupying the Village Square and surrounding streets. 50% of the proceeds (£150) was donated to a Cancer Research Charity. An Apple Fair was held in September and a Jumble Sale in October – the proceeds of which paid for 40 pensioners to attend the pantomime "Cinderella" at the **McRobert Centre**. In addition to – but quite separately from the Crowsteps Art Exhibition (now being run quite separately by a sub-committee of the **Reading Room**) – the first **Blairlogie Craft Fair** was held, with exhibitor invitations extended to craftsmen or women from the **Stirling** and **Perthshire** regions generally. Its success led to a repeat Fair in 1981. A Nativity Play, featuring the children of **Blairlogie** was organised by **Mrs. Caitriona McMillan**; the proceeds from which were donated to the **Kildean School for Handicapped Children**. A Hogmanay Party was regaled with the music of the **Tartan Trio**, and a Pie and Plonk Party rounded off the events for that year. Financially, the Treasurer reported on the hope of receiving an annual maintenance grant from **Stirling Council** now that they had been able to inspect the annual accounts for 1978/79 and 1979/80, and this resulted in the first such grant of £871 in 1981.

It was also noted at this AGM (April 6<sup>th</sup> 1981) that the **Reading Room** was still operating under the Trust Deed and Constitution drawn up in 1958, and the current Trustees had volunteered to revise both these documents to reflect the position and activities of the **Reading Room** in the 1980's. However, at the AGM in the following year, it was reported that this had not yet been achieved.

The Committee elected at this 1980/1981 AGM was: Chairman, **Mr. Sutherland** (who took over from **Mrs. Heath**); Treasurer, **Mr. Beechey** (who took over from **Mr. Stewart**); Secretary, **Dr. Heath**; with Committee Members **Miss Hunter**, **Mrs Makower**, **Mr. Ogilvy** and **Mrs. Ogilvy**, and one of its more pleasant duties at its first Special General Meeting in January 1982, was to report that over the three previous years, taken together, the organisation has accumulated a net surplus of £1217.37. But it was also this Committee that decided that the annual outing for The Pensioners should be discontinued. The Trustees at this time were **Dr. Butler**, **Mr. Harvie** and **Mr. Mitchell** (the Minister at **Blairlogie United Free Church** )

Landmarks in the lives of local people were celebrated by the community as a whole during this decade. **Mr. and Mrs Alf Hansen's** 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary was the star event at the December 1981 Christmas Party, and a farewell party to **Mr. and Mrs. John Scott** was given in October 1982. "Outsiders" also were remembered; and the **Royal Wedding** in August 1982 was marked by a village barbecue.

On the administrative side, a decision was made in 1981 to separate the accounts of the **Crowsteps Art Exhibition** from those of the **Reading Room** as a whole; and distinct bank accounts were arranged, initiated for the **Crowsteps Exhibition**, by a £500 donation from the Committee. Throughout the 1980's, further running repairs to the Hall were recognised as being necessary, and the proceeds from a string of events were used to fund these works – often on a shared basis with sponsored charities. Most of the minutes of **Reading Room** AGM's of this time included details of repair and renovation works either needed or completed. Repairs to damp in the kitchen, a new set of crockery for events, a new electric water heater, etc.

The **Reading Room Committee** in July 1983 consisted of **Helen Ogilvy, Susan Allen, Angus Annan, Brian Jamieson, Cyril Harris, Pippa Gold, Sheila Hartley, Brenda Hunter** and **Marie Holt**, and their list of proposed events for the year ahead included a Harvest Fair, a Bonfire night fancy dress party, flower arranging tuition, Christmas and Burns Night parties, a Spring Dance and Blairlogie Sports. The Summer Fetes or Fairs that developed from this Harvest Fair became an annual event in June or July from 1984 to 1987, and featured the opening of village gardens, with tea gardens at **Croft House, Easter Cottage** and **Rowanbank**, and art exhibition, a flower festival in the Church, stalls for cakes, plants, bric-a-brac and needlework, and musical recitals in the evenings. These Festivals or Fayres lasted over the period of a week. The net income from these activities ( for example, £1037 in 1984 and £1163 in 1985 ) was often shared between hall maintenance and being earmarked for a particular local charity such as the **Crossroads Community Care** organisation.

In 1984, also, a **Blairlogie Summer Exhibition** , largely organised by **Angus Ogilvy of The Blair**, was held in June. It was a major event and it ran from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June. It included paintings, prints and photographs, and it appeared to be an attempt to keep alive the tradition of the **Crowsteps Art Exhibition** that ended its run in 1982. As the **Reading Room Committee** Chairman stated in the exhibition catalogue, "This is not Crowsteps" and he expressed the hope that "Crowsteps" would soon return.

It was in 1984 that the **Reading Room**, with **Angus Annan** as its nominee, officially registered under the **Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976**, at an annual fee of £10.

**Stirling Council** advised the **Reading Room Committee** in 1985, that it was reviewing its system for offering grant aid to village halls to assist them with their social work with their community. Applications for such grants would in future require detailed forward plans for expenditure on maintenance and upkeep, together with clear plans for expenditure and income. It is interesting to note that **Blairlogie Reading Room** received no grant from **Stirling Council** (despite submitting applications ) either in 1985 or 1986. Despite this setback, a first for garden openings in **Blairlogie** took place in 1985 when a widespread opening of village gardens was arranged in conjunction with **Scotland's Garden Scheme**, and this was repeated in 1986. There was a possibly over-exciting Christmas party that year, as a minute of a later Committee Meeting stated "games that involve bursting balloons should be avoided in the future". It was also recorded that the **Country Dance**

**Evenings** had attracted a very low turnout. The Committee therefore resolved not to change or cancel the event but to change the name of the event.

By 1986/87, this Committee had grown to some sixteen people, with new members **Mary Maxwell-Irving, Vincent Beechey** (a recall), **Rae McIntosh, Catherine Stewart, Frances Arthur** and **Selina Makower**. The events planned for the coming year included a Celidh with the **Alva Accordion and Fiddle Band**, Keep-Fit classes, parties at Christmas and Hogmanay, a Jumble Sale, Cheese and Wine parties, Table Tennis evenings, lectures and a Garden Opening. In December 1986, the Treasurer was able to report a donation of £150 for the coming year from Stirling Council "through the good offices of **Councillor Jack McConnell**". Lectures in the year 1986/1987 included "British Silver and its marks, with particular reference to Scottish Silver Spoons" by **Martin Gubbins**, "Doing up Old Houses" by **Duncan Stirling**, and "Diamond Gathering in Sierra Leone" by **Richard Teeuw**. **Alastair Maxwell-Irving** spoke on "Nigeria" and "Tuscany".

Whist Drives (entrance 50p at the door) were organised from the mid-1980's onwards, and the **Craft Fair**, which had been running strongly throughout the decade, opened its doors again in July 1987 for two days, with eleven different sections from knitwear to pottery, jewels and watercolours.

The Treasurer's report at the 1987 AGM showed a balance in the bank of £2117; and a Village Supper was held in December (perhaps to applaud this result?) at the **Sheriffmuir Inn** at £5 per head with coach transport supplied. In 1988, in addition to the more normal events in the **Reading Room**, a **Blairlogie Model Railway Exhibition** was held in March, under the sponsorship of the **Model Engineer**. It raised £140.

At the end of the 1980's, the **Reading Room Committee** included **Angus Annan**, Chairman, **Tim Beechey, Vincent Beechey, Sheila Hartley, Marie Holt, Selina Makower, Rae McIntosh, Angela Paterson, Jenny Todd, Maggie Piggot** and **Pippa Gold**.

The decade of the 1990's started with another celebration of the life of a member of the Community: **Mrs. Nancy Bampton's** 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday tea party in the **Reading Room**. It is encouraging to note that this was followed by her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday tea party, again in the **Reading Room** in 1995. There was, however, a sad background to this latter celebration of a long and dedicated life. Her husband **Capt. C. K. Bampton** had pre-deceased her, and is even now commemorated by the tree that stands on the village green across from **Kirklea**, which was planted in his memory in November of the year of his death.

By 1992, the need for urgent repairs again dominated the agenda of the Reading Room Committee, and this was to be the year that a new floor was laid after financial help was eventually obtained from **Stirling Council** by way of a £500 grant. The year also saw a spirited Ceilidh; a bonfire night party for which the Committee members supplied rolls and sausages, and a Christmas Party, as key elements of the Winter programme. The Wednesday Table Tennis evenings recommenced in 1993 after petition from the Community, and First Aid Classes were first mooted (and started in the following year). Yoga Classes started up, but were discontinued after poor support. However, it is recorded that **Gill Paget** volunteered to start them up again in 1994. Talks were given on "Uganda" by **Morven Stewart**, "Venice/Rome" by **Alastair Maxwell-Irving** and "Her Experiences in Foreign Parts" by **Sheila Hartley** (which turned out to be Vienna and Newfoundland). A concert by the **University of Stirling Brass Ensemble** was given in the Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> May with tickets selling at £2 per head.

By the AGM held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1994, the Treasurer was able to report only £625 in the bank, and the Committee Members who took on the job of steering the **Reading Room** through the coming year, were **Sheila Hartley**, Chairman – having taken over from **Robin Kelsall**, **T. Dobson**, (Secretary), **Tim Beechey**, (Treasurer), **Vincent Beechey**, (Hall Lets), **Robin Kelsall**, (Publicity), and **J. Carrington-Porter**, **Pippa Gold**, **Marie Holt**, **Sue Jamieson**, **Brenda Kelsall**, **Rae McIntosh**, **Selina Makower** and **Catherine Stewart**.. It was in 1994 that the water supply for the **Reading Room** was connected to the “Mains” rather than to the supply from the hills above at a cost of £875, but it was not until 1997 that the deteriorating state of the Hall generally was tackled head on by the Committee. In February 1997, a Special Meeting considered a major survey on work required and the cost implications. The main issues concerned roof replacement, new kitchen equipments, new furniture, a new central heating system and a new gas boiler. Grants were to be sought from government organisations and the various Lottery Funds, and this turned out to be a long and tedious process, eventually headed up by **Mary Maxwell-Irving**.

In the meantime, social events continued and the forward programme considered by the Committee in May 1997 included a Gardens Open Day, a Hogmanay Ceilidh, a Race Night, a Fifties Night, a Quiz Night and Christmas Show. Line Dancing Classes started in August, but this was presumably coincidental in its timing with **James Loudon’s** 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party held in the Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> August.

By September 1997, the Committee was able to consider a report of success for the efforts to obtain grant support for the new furniture requirements. A “Small Lotteries” grant of £4977 allowed the purchase of 12 tables from GOPAK for £1240 and 100 chairs from Samsonite for £3740.

The Race Night, held on 1<sup>st</sup> November of that year achieved a welcome success, with a net profit of £1563, and **George McIntosh** received the first of his many formal votes of thanks in the years to come for his outstanding supportive artwork in the Hall.

At the end of the year, an extraordinary Committee Meeting was held to digest the news that **Stirling Council** in association with the **Scottish Office** had money available to assist in the costs of the major repair project provided it was used before the end of the financial year i.e. March 1998. The scale of the renovation project was now better defined since professional surveys had been undertaken on the roofing and damp-proofing aspects, and the costs were assessed at close to £10,000.

However, by March 1998, the work on seeking grants from the Lottery Funds had achieved real success, and an award of £30,600 had been gained, and this was in addition to the grant already achieved for the furniture purchases and the grant promised by **Stirling Council**. This allowed a list of additional works in support of the priority roofing and damp-proofing to be added, and, in the Autumn of 1998, the **Reading Room** and **Crowsteps** were, once again fully refurbished. Work was undertaken to “tank” the damp rear walls – because the ground at the back of the Hall sits higher than the ground floor of the Hall – to re-tile the roof with re-used pantiles from a demolished brewery in Fife; to install gas central heating; to re-fit the kitchen; to refurbish the toilets and install a “disabled” toilet; to install a loop hearing system; to renew the lighting and sockets in the main hall and to redecorate throughout. In addition, the lane leading to the **Reading Room** was surfaced with tarmac (an additional portion was also surfaced at the expense of the adjoining owner of **Easter Cottage**, **Angus Annan**)

The total cost of the building work was approximately £42,000, made up of the Lottery Grant of £30,600 and the grants from the **Scottish Office** "Rural Village Halls Fund" of £5686 and from **Stirling Council** of £2843. The balance was paid from the **Reading Room** funds – a condition of receiving the **Scottish Office** and **Stirling Council** funding. The architect in charge of the project was **Duncan Stirling**, of **Bracewell, Tillicoultry**, who had already been involved in a number of village projects.

The original idea of obtaining Lottery Funding came from **Diane Carrington-Porter** of **Croft House** and was initially met with somewhat unexpected opposition from a number of residents, but it was at a time when Lottery Funding was at its most available and was giving priority to Village Hall projects.

After an Autumn of intense work by the two main contractors involved (**John Gow and Son** (Building work) and **P. J. Griffin and Sons Ltd.**(Road works)) the Committee was able to announce a Grand Opening Cheese and Wine Party on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November, and the official declaration of the opening was made by **James Loudon** now the Community's oldest inhabitant. The Committee who took responsibility for this momentous year consisted of **Isobel Mitchell** (Chairman), **Brenda Kelsall** (Vice-Chairman), **Mary Maxwell-Irving** (Secretary), **Marie Holt** (Treasurer), **Molly Beechey**, **Brian Jamieson**, **Selina Makower**, **Karen Hampson** and **Pippa Gold**. The Committee member who led the grant seeking, who briefed the architect and took day to day responsibility for over-seeing the project was **Mary Maxwell-Irving** of **Telford House**.

With the concerns about maintenance now resolved and its "new" **Reading Room** to operate from, the Committees organised full programmes of events for the early years of the new Century.

In 1999 **Marie Holt** proposed an indoor bowls club with a weekly meeting for Indoor Bowls. She then identified a source for the actual carpet, spent £177 on the equipment and this event ran for several years thereafter. No garden openings were planned for that year, but events with long and successful histories such as a Wine and Cheese Party and a Harvest Supper were held. A Chinese Evening, guided by students from **Stirling University**, was, however, poorly attended, but **Maira Hutchison** gave a talk on "Tanzania". One hangover from the renovation project dragged on throughout most of 1999, and this concerned the effectiveness of the new hot water boiler. **Duncan Stirling** and **Worcester Boilers** attended a series of meetings, but eventually the problem was resolved to only the partial satisfaction of all concerned in time for the annual **Halloween Ball**.

With the advent of the 2000 "Millennium Year", new initiatives and new ideas for events reflected a gradual change in the demography of the Community. Some of the old social events now gained only small attendance, and were dropped. A Wine Tasting evening, assisted by **Bottoms Up** of **Bridge of Allan** was attended by 40 people in September 2000, and annual Wine Tasting Evenings subsequently became an annual fixture for the first half of the decade. A Garden Opening event was held in June and a Village Barbecue took place in October. The income from the Garden Opening allowed a donation of £400 to the Strathclyde Hospice. A Bad Taste Evening was held in March and tested the ingenuity of around 60 people, and a Neighbour Night – to draw in new members of the Community - was held in February. Another Quiz Night was held in November. A Millennium project to replace the old sundial on the wall of **Crowsteps** was proposed and guided to completion by **George Sutherland**, and a dedication and blessing ceremony was led by the **Blairlogie Church** Minister **Patricia Johnstone** on 21<sup>st</sup> June. In response to the search for new and relevant initiatives from the **Reading Room**, three projects were started from among many ideas.

In September, **Brian Nicholls** of **Blairlogie Park** suggested that a Community Archive be formed to include histories of the social development of Logie, anecdotes, photographs and general information for the continuing information and amusement of both the current and future inhabitants of **Logie** and **Blairlogie**. An Archive Team of volunteers was formed during the next few months and this original Team consisted of **Marie Holt, Brenda Smith, Gordon Adam, Brian Nicholls** and **George Sutherland**. They started by undertaking a Millennium Photo Shoot – pictures of all the houses/buildings in the **Parish of Logie** and then photographs of all the inhabitants (with their pets)

Archive Exhibitions – to show the results from these early endeavours – were held in the **Reading Room** in November 2001 and April 2003, with over 200 people visiting over the two days of each exhibition. By the Autumn of 2003, however, new storage facilities were needed to hold the ever growing contents of this Archive and the best route to obtain funding was agreed to be from the Lottery “Awards for All” scheme

It was decided that this was best done by the Archive Team as a separate entity and not to continue to rely on the financial sponsorship of the **Reading Room Committee**. At this stage, therefore, the **Logie Community Archive Project** assumed a life of its own with its own separate bank account, but with a continuing relationship with the **Reading Room** and its Committee. A successful spin off organisation, that, later, created and now manages the **Blairlogie Web-Site** ([www,blairlogie-scotland.org](http://www.blairlogie-scotland.org))

Also in September 2000, **Gordon Adam** proposed the production of an attractive local newspaper, both to give regular news of the Community and to publicise **Reading Room** events. **Gordon Adam**, with support from **George Sutherland** produced the first edition (and many more thereafter) in “Winter 2000”. **The Blairlogie Bugle** is still appearing regularly (albeit with different editors as the years go by) in 2009; and now also appears as a section of the **Blairlogie Web-Site** on the Internet. The direct sponsor of the **Blairlogie Bugle** continues to be the **Reading Room Committee**.

At the end of 2000, **Kirk Ewing** proposed the third of these three new initiatives - a **Blairlogie Film Club** with regular showings of classic films, based on acquiring proper cinema equipment. He produced a budget for this which consisted of a “set up” cost of £2,100, and annual running costs for one film every month of £540. Although the Committee balked at this high cost for an untried venture, occasional film nights took place under the initial leadership of **Gordon Adam**, and two or three film nights a year took place on an irregular basis in subsequent years and still do so today under different sponsors.

In February 2001, a Burns Supper was held in the **Reading Room** to a capacity crowd, and marked the return of this event for the first time since 1994, and it was in May 2001 that the piano was retrieved from the garage of **Croft House**, repaired, re-tuned and reinstated in the **Reading Room**. 2001 also saw another Race Night, and Italian Evening, and a Quiz Night, with the Treasurer reporting a bank balance of £1860 at the April AGM.

The programme for 2002 included a Boules/Petanque evening at **Blairlogie Castle**, another wine tasting in May, a garden opening on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the start of a Bridge Club in the **Reading Room** every second Thursday and the ongoing Table Tennis Club on Wednesdays. This was the year when the **Reading Room Committee** granted financial

sponsorship to **Peter Allen** of **The Manse** in his quest for success in the Scottish Fencing Championships.

The year was overshadowed to some extent by a collapse in a section of the culvert carrying the burn under the square in the middle of the village. Investigation quickly established that the whole length of the culvert needed urgent repair, and the **Reading Room** faced the prospect of being cut off from most of the Community. It was also rapidly established that **Stirling Council** disowned responsibility as ownership of the Square and side lanes rested with Trustees of the then defunct Ratepayers' Association. In the absence of any other responsible local body, the **Reading Room Committee** formed a sub-committee in the Spring of 2002, led by **Brian Nicholls**, to establish what could be done, by whom and with what funds. Over the next two and a half years, this sub-committee created and managed the **Blairlogie Community and Heritage Trust**, earned it charitable status, took over ownership of the grounds in question in the centre of the village, sought and obtained grants of around £30,000, organised the engineering specifications for the necessary works, and oversaw the construction works. The Chairman of this new Trust, **Brian Nicholls**, handed over to a new Chairman, **Robin Kelsall** at the end of this project and went away to put his feet up and to concentrate on the **Archive Project**.

The Culvert project was inaugurated on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005 by the **Blairlogie/Ochils MSP George Reid** – the **First Minister** of the **Scottish Parliament** at **Holyrood**. Another highly successful spin off by the **Reading Room Committee**.

While this work was proceeding, the Reading Room events continued apace, and in 2003 and 2004, they included a Casino Night, a Call My Bluff Evening, a Quiz Night, talks on "Spitzbergen" by **Robin Kelsall**, "Uganda" by **Pippa Gold** and "Nepal" by **Brian Jamieson** and a triumphant return of a two week **Crowsteps Art Exhibition** in September. Unhappily not a precursor to a new annual event.

**Moultrie Kelsall's** 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was celebrated by a showing of the film "Captain Hornblower" in which he appeared, and **Vincent Beechey's** 90<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated by a party in the **Reading Room**. More sadly, a commemorative meeting was held in the Village Garden in June 2003 for the installation of a stone bird bath dedicated to **Marie Holt**, whose death earlier in the year had robbed the **Reading Room** of one of its most devoted members.

As the first decade of the new Millennium came to an end, the **Reading Room** continued to act as the social centre for the whole of the **Logie Community**. The frequency of the events diminished and also their character, in response to changing demand. The Bridge Club eventually ceased through lack of support, but the Table Tennis Wednesdays continue, Yoga Classes on Tuesday remain popular, film nights have featured "The African Queen", "How to Marry a Millionaire" and "The Last King of Scotland". Autumn Beer Festivals have won an annual appearance, the Archive Team has created a web-site for **Blairlogie** that has attracted contacts from around the World, and Burns Night continues to be celebrated as does St, Andrews Day. A fund raising 100 Club, with £100 prizes to lucky ticket holders four times each year, contributes to the cost of insurance premiums for both the **Reading Room** and the village properties now owned by the **Blairlogie Community and Heritage Trust**. A book exchange project has just been launched (perhaps an echo of that "Parochial Library containing some good books" of 1842)

The Committee that was elected at the AGM in April 2009 consisted of **Colin Kilgour** (Chair), **Roseanne Neil** (Treasurer), **Alice Kilgour** (Secretary) **Rae McIntosh**, **Angus Annan** and **Andrew Logan**.