

ARRAN HERITAGE MUSEUM



TUESDAY TALKS

Each second Tuesday from the start of April, the Museum hosts a catalogue of speakers who talk on a variety of subjects, all connected to Arran.

In April, the themes of the talks were: Ali Hume MBE - Tales of the Arran Mountain Rescue Team, and Kenny Morrison - The History of Arran Car Ferries.

Kenny showed us how things used to be in the past in the world of the car ferries serving Arran. Perhaps the Alfred will feature in his future presentations! Both speakers are hugely experienced in their specialities and provided us with an insight into their subjects, sometimes humorous, and sometimes, as in the Mountain Rescue topic, tragic. Ali arrived complete with full complement of equipment to show us what has to be carried on every call-out. After so many years on the mountains, Ali knows almost every nook and cranny and had great stories about training and rescues.

At the first event in May we welcomed Sgt Kevin Blackley who spoke on the History of Policing on Arran. Kevin was at first curious about the officers who came before him and he has since researched a huge amount of history about the police service on Arran and delivered an informed and humorous dialogue to the audience. Many stories were shared about incidents which had happened in the past and we also gained a clearer insight into the challenges facing today's serving officers.

We have been privileged to have been given an awareness of the trials faced by these emergency services.

On 23rd May we were delighted to welcome Franny Schlicke from the Lochranza Outdoor Centre. Franny spoke about Gaelic in the Landscape (of Arran) and we heard of many familiar place names which we already use but don't actually know about the origins of the Gaelic meaning. This was a very interesting hour and Franny was an engaging and entertaining speaker.

On 6th June which, co-incidentally, was the 79th anniversary of DDay, Colin Turbett, who has just published a book named What Happened on Arran During World War 2. It's a fascinating book and it was wonderful to see it come alive during his Tuesday Talk. If anyone has Arran war stories to share, Colin would like to hear them.

20th June: Harry Ward, Golf Historian. Harry is very well-known in golf circles and frequently lectures to visitors to the most famous golf courses in Scotland. Harry arrived armed with a stock of artifacts to examine. This talk was specifically about the lost golf courses of Arran. He searches out old, abandoned courses, and if he has old photographs, then he recreates those by standing in the same viewing position to snap the up-to-date photo. He spoke about the upsurge in tourism being the catalyst for the creation of the bowling greens, tennis courts and golf courses on Victorian Arran. This aspect was very interesting and people were amazed to hear of the amount and location of these courses, including an 18 hole one at the Cleats shore.

4th July: Jim Cassels, Birds on Arran. Well known on Arran, Jim began his talk with a reference the American Bald Eagle (since it was 4th July) but don't expect to spot one any time soon! He astounded us with the statistics of the decimation of the seabird population on the island. There are several reasons for this, but shocking none the less. On the www.arranbirding.co.uk website there is an opportunity to report sightings and to explore more of what you may expect to see.

He finished his talk by encouraging us to LOOK OUT FOR THE BIRDS.

18th July: Gregor Adamson, Arran Water. Local man, Gregor published a fascinating book of the same name, tracking the history of illegal whisky production on the island. Mostly concentrated in locations in the south and west of the island, the production buoyed up the island economy to a great extent, so much so that when it was finally (almost) eradicated, the effect on island society was catastrophic. An extremely interesting subject, and a very knowledgeable speaker, made for an exceptional talk. Gregor has published a book named Arran Water, available through the distilleries on the island.

1st August: Adrian Fallows and Sarah Pelling, VIKINGS! Adrian and Sarah explained the great significance of Arran to the Norse people. They had lots of artifacts including clothing and some children and adults were excited to be able to wield the swords, try on the helmets and even the chain mail.

8th August: Maggie Wright, Genealogy. Maggie works in the genealogy department at the museum. She has people from all over the world who contact her to help in the search for their Arran relatives. She also has specialist knowledge of the practicalities and intricacies of searching for information, which she was delighted to share.

15th August: Kenny Brophy, The Archaeological dig at Drumadoon. It has been widely reported in the national press of the significance of the finds there. Kenny is part of the faculty at Glasgow University came to the Museum to give us a detailed explanation of how, when and what they had found, and hope to find. He also expanded on the huge wealth of sites on Arran and what they might expect to discover in their exploration.

29th August: David Napier, the History of Ailsa Craig. Born and brought in Girvan, David introduced a video of the history of the Craig and the families who spent so much of their lives there.

16th September: John Sillars, The Clearances. It can be said that John's knowledge and insight into the impact of the Arran Clearances is unsurpassed.

All talks are free, with normal admission or membership, and entry is on a "first come first served" basis for tickets.

Watch out in the Arran Banner and on social media for reminders of the 2024 timetable of upcoming Special Events and Tuesday Talks at the Museum.

All a wealth of fun and information.

DON'T FORGET THE SPECIAL EVENT DAYS AT THE MUSEUM!