

## Pictures of Old Castletown

Following his visit in the summer, we have received from Donald Weir of Pickering, Canada, photographs of Greenland House, Main Street taken in the early 1900's. These pictures show the house as it was then, little has changed on the outside in the last 100 years. Donald's pictures also include some of his late father also Donald standing outside the house. These are a great record of old Castletown and its inhabitants and we thank Donald very much for his kindness in sending them to us.

## Sinclair's of Coulag

From the other side of the world in New Zealand we have recently received information on the Sinclair family, who used to farm at the Coulag, Castletown in the 1800's. Some of the sons emigrated to New Zealand in the mid 1800's and started farming at Cheviot, South Island. The family later paid for the erection of a headstone on their mother and fathers grave in Olig cemetery. Earlier this year Doug Archbold, the great- great- great- grandson of John Sinclair, farmer of the Coulag, visited the grave of his ancestor, who died on 29th July 1870 aged 87. Having spoken to a committee member he later sent on a copy of the history of the Sinclairs of New Zealand which mentions their roots in Caithness. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Doug and his family for this information

## KEEP FIT CLASSES START

As our part of the Highland 2007 Year of Culture, we will be running a series of workshops on local traditional skills. To do this we need to complete the fitting out of the building at Castlehill to provide the workshop space. We are making progress but still have some way to go to complete the task. In January we will be starting a weekly working night at Castlehill where we will meet and get on with the work. What a great way to get fit after Christmas, learn a new skill and help others at the same time. Do not worry you do not have any previous knowledge of building works as there will always be something you can do and people on hand to give training and advice as you go along. So whether you are a master craftsman or a willing beginner, please let us know if you are willing to help in anyway. Tea and coffee will be provided on the workdays and your help will be most appreciated whether it be for 1 hour or 1 week. Please contact Muriel on 01847 821 204 or email [castletown.heritage@talk21.com](mailto:castletown.heritage@talk21.com) if you can help.

## River Of Stone Project

Earlier this year we became involved with a project to carry out research into the archaeology of Caithness and make it more accessible to ordinary people. The project encompasses several themes including wetland archaeology, Vikings on the North coast and the history of the Forss valley. The Castletown Heritage Society involvement is centred around the settlements on the Dunnet links. The project aims to train people to survey, record and sample sites like this, to allow a better understanding of what is below the ground, without carrying out full scale digs. The training and equipment will be provided by Edinburgh based AOC Archaeology who with the help of locally based experts, will guide the trainees in the recording and exploration of the site. The Dunnet links area is known to have remains of iron age and Viking settlements but much more lies undiscovered below the sand and grass. A small laboratory will be set up to examine samples from the sites, with a view to finding artefacts which will help date the site and provide information about how our ancestors lived. This laboratory will be based in the buildings at Castlehill and will allow the public to see how this type of work is done. The funding applications have been submitted and we await the outcome of this exciting project.

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