

SOUTHEND MULL OF KINTYRE REUNITED

Avril Stone

Pointing like a finger into the sea on the far west of Scotland is the beautiful Kintyre Peninsula, and on its southernmost tip – the Mull – and nestled in its lee is the village of Southend. Few will fail to recognise the name of the area made famous all over the world by Paul McCartney's haunting song, 'Mull of Kintyre'.

Southend has a special claim to fame. Stand on a hilltop and you can look right across the Atlantic! This stretch of that mighty ocean tumbling onto the shore also washes the coast of Northern Ireland just 12 miles away.

Capturing the past on the printed page is a passion with author Avril Stone. And something of a personal mission.

"So many memories are lost from generation to generation because nobody records them", said Avril, who has produced this book of Southend on the Mull of Kintyre for Halsgrove's acclaimed 'Reunited' Series.

She compiled it at her home on the Mull of Kintyre with the help of local families. What she enjoyed most, she says, was meeting people and listening to their memories of days gone by.

Packed with more than 350 nostalgic photographs, featuring the people, places, events, groups and personalities of Southend, Mull of Kintyre over the last century, this book will reunite all those who love the area with their fondest memories of this most special place.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bind a fascination for history with a love of listening to people reminisce about times past, and you have a basis of Avril Stone's books.

She and her husband Eric retired to Southend from North Devon. There, as a child, one of her favourite pastimes was hearing stories her parents and grandparents told of days gone by as the family sat around the dining table after Sunday lunch.

Avril is mother of three and grandmother of six and her home on the Mull of Kintyre echoes with family chat and laughter when they all visit.

Came the millennium and Avril's passion for photography combined with her love of history in her first book for Halsgrove about the village of High Bickington just outside Barnstaple where she and Eric lived for many years.

The success of this was followed up with her book of Barnstaple. However, one volume became two because interest was so keen among local families. The response from Southend people she found equally warm during her researches for this book.

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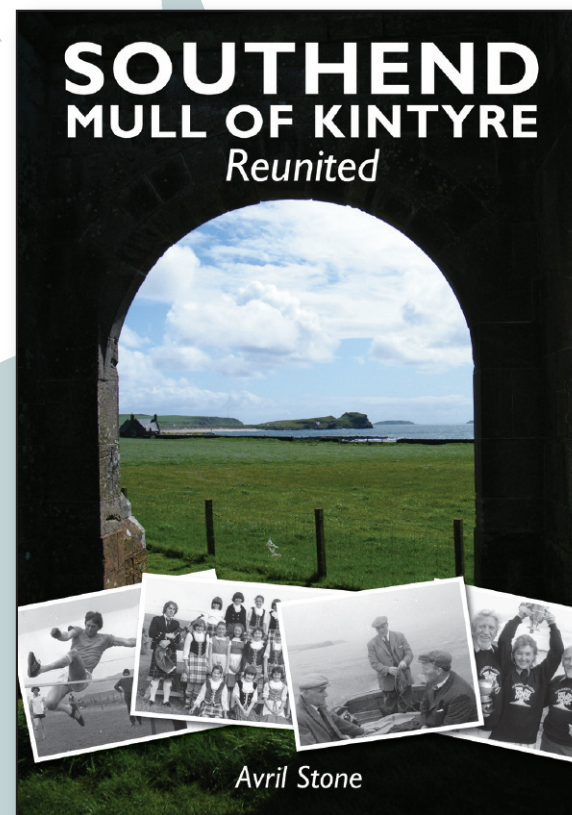
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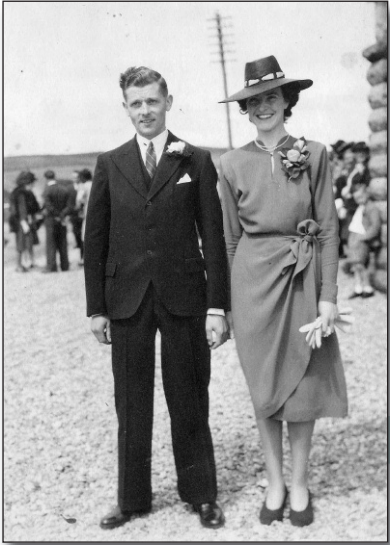
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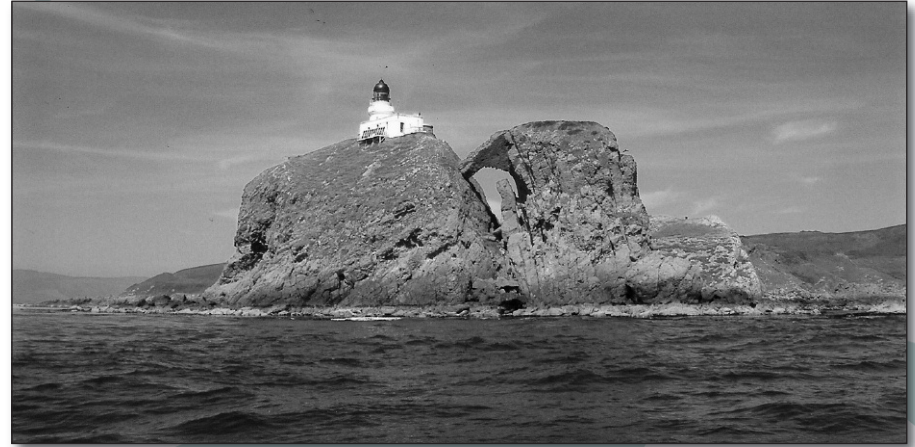
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Charles and Sybil Kelly after their wedding at St Blean's Parish Church on 1st June, 1946.



Archie Cameron pulling in one of his lobster pots.



Sanda Island's lighthouse and Elephant Rock.

The beautiful curved Dunaverty Bay with its white sandy beach looking towards Dunaverty Rock.

The government in Edinburgh sent an army under the command of General Leslie and the Marquis of Argyle to suppress them. After a fierce battle at Kintyre on the west coast of Kintyre the 300 or so MacDonalds who had not already managed to escape to Ulster landed near the fort at Dunaverty.

Although the River Carr runs out to sea just below Dunaverty Rock the government forces managed to isolate the garrison. Without food, water or hope of help, as the MacDonalds tried to flee they were massacred by the waiting troops. A memorial stands in a field above Dunaverty Beach to those who perished on that summer's day.

Between 1647 and 1648 a great plague swept through Kintyre and many people died or left the area and it is said that the land was desolated until eventually those who had survived, or who remained, took back their property and land.

The name of the parish of Southend is a correct geographical description as it is the southernmost point of the Kintyre peninsula. Until the mid-seventeenth century it consisted of two parishes - Kilmacalla (the church of Colonsay) where the ruins of St Columba's chapel remain, and Killean where a church dedicated to St Blean was built.

After the Reformation the two parishes were amalgamated and renamed Southend by Elizabeth, Duchess of Teulnoch who was the mother of David John of Argyle and although, as I said, who is an accurate compass parish which is the jewel in the crown of the Kintyre coastline.

Being surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean it is obvious that the Mull of Kintyre's maritime history is significant and there are many tales of shipwrecks and rescue along the craggy shores of our coastline. However, the sea has never been the mainstay of this area but the land has.

In the mid 1700s the Duke of Argyle decided to improve his farming stock and to this end amalgamated two or more farms or small holdings into large units. The smallest small farms left the country for either Ireland or the Colonies, such as Canada.

The Duke then encouraged successful farmers from Antrim to move into his enlarged farms here in Kintyre. This changed the local Highland population and caused a rift for many years between them and the Lowlanders. It was only when matters of the heart overcame the matters of geography that the two groups of people in Southend eventually came together.

In the 1790s the Duke of Argyle sold most of his Kintyre farms and other properties to his sitting tenants thereby ending the feudal system Southend had lived for centuries. A whole new era in both the political and social history of farming emerged.

Dunaverty Rock sometimes known as the Rock of Blead as it was here in 1647 a Spanish Desamoy army held 300 MacDonnell survivors in their fortress on top of this headland.

BEFORE LIVING MEMORY

St Blean's Church

Built at the southern edge of the village in 1774 it is the third church to stand here. The original church of St Blean was a few yards away on the eastern side of Coonaght Water. In 1768 when the population of the parish was 2000 and the ancient church of Kilmacalla was too small for use it was decided to build the present church at the centre of the parish and dedicate it to St Blean who was said to be the nephew of St Columba.

The new parish church was superior to the previous ones. The roof was Norwegian pine brought in by sea to the port of Dunaverty and for the first time there were seats for the congregation. Over a century later Mrs. the Duchess of Argyll, added the pews and choir stalls and in 1911 the stained glass windows.

The Duke of Argyle was the overlord of Kintyre and chose the minister. The first one recorded after the Reformation was the Rev. Duncan Clegg who was the incumbent from 1615-1641. This system was accepted until 1794 when the then Duke appointed the Rev. Donald Campbell to the parish. However, Donald, a Lowlander, was detested by the congregation to replace his ministerial duties and he too fled of dinner parties and social functions, and to behave in a way unbecoming to a man of the cloth. So the parishioners decided to build another church and choose their own minister.

St Columba's Church

The Relief Church of Southend was built in 1797 in the area of the village known as Minnery. However, a dispute took place between the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders who wanted a Gaelic-speaking minister and the Lowlanders who wanted one who was English speaking. Eventually the English speaking Rev. Alexander Lang was appointed in 1799. The Highlanders returned to St Blean's Parish Church where the Duke of Argyle continued to choose their ministers until the Disruption in 1843, after which the congregation chose their own. St Columba's Church was rebuilt in 1830 and later became part of the present Church of Scotland and joint services were held by the two churches. The remaining St Columba's Church closed in 1965.



View of the Keil Hotel from Dunaverty Beach. Note the coaches lined up at the end of the hotel's drive.



The MacKay family of Lephensrath Farm at the turn of the twentieth century.



Southend's young Highland dancers enter a competition at the Campbeltown Agricultural Show in 1971.



The new millennium celebrated by Southend children in Campbeltown in the summer of 2000.

Example of a double-page spread.