

STATION SQUARE DORNOCH & Crafts at the Jail

Dornoch - a centre for craft businesses in the 1970s - 1990s

A timeline on the Highlands and Islands Enterprise website has the following entry for 1970:

“Supporting Small Businesses.

“Craft is a traditional part of life in the Highlands and Islands and the HIDB [Highlands and Islands Development Board] sees it as a way to grow local economies in some of the most remote and rural parts of the region. In places where attracting larger industries is more challenging, the Board focuses on developing craft enterprises.

“There are plans to build a new factory for a silversmith in Shetland, and 20 jobs are created at a pottery in Aviemore. Other craft enterprises supported by the Board are Ortak in Orkney, a tapestry business in Conon Bridge, and a postcard printing family business in Coll, part owned by Mairi Hedderwick, who would later write the celebrated children’s book Katie Morag.”

This support for craft businesses was part of the wider craft revival taking place in Scotland at the time. The aim was to develop Scottish crafts as products and as an industry.

For a long time “crafts” in Scotland had been seen as synonymous with “souvenirs”, and while craftsmen and women were keen to see an end to the perception of their work as cheap tourist goods, it remained the case that support for craft work in Scotland remained firmly connected to the tourism industry. In 1972 the first edition of a new publication, *Craftwork – Scotland’s Magazine of the Crafts*, was launched. This was a joint initiative by the HIDB and the Small Industries Council for Rural Areas of Scotland, and it was later supported by the Scottish Development Agency established in 1975. Heated discussions took place between the pages of the magazine as to the role of the crafts. While there was much criticism of the huge amount of Scottish kitsch products, which were almost always produced outside the country, it was difficult to make a living producing high quality items. Often craftspeople were forced to make batches of small knick-knacks, in the usual “Scottish” flavours, in an attempt to compete with the mass-produced imports.

By the 1970s there were numerous craft shops in towns and villages throughout Scotland, as well as galleries looking for unique and high quality work. In general craft workers needed help with marketing and premises, while some looked for support in developing their skills and designs.

In 1971 the first Highland Trade Fair was held in Aviemore. This and other similar craft fairs, as well as trade missions abroad, were a valuable way for craft makers to meet retailers. For over twenty years, Dornoch craft businesses were well represented at these events. The following year saw the first annual Scottish Crafts Fair at Ingliston. In 1980 Highland Craftpoint was opened at Beaulay as a centre for training, marketing and information services to craftspeople and craft firms in Scotland.

One of the first places to benefit from HIDB support was the Craft Village at Balnakeil. Original established in 1964 as an outlet for the sale of local arts and crafts, the premises in old military buildings had become very tired and the support from the HIDB was intended to give it a fresh start.

In Dornoch, a similar centre for craft businesses was envisaged on the site of the old railway station. To that end, the HIDB constructed a group of prefabricated workshops and factories at the old Railway Station, between Gordon’s bus garage and the Embo Road. They also built ten three-bedroom wooden chalet, along Beach Road, as temporary accommodation for the workers they hoped to attract. Sutherland County Council was responsible for allocating the units until 1975 when Highland Regional Council was formed.

In 1972 the first businesses were being allocated places on the “small industrial estate at the old railway station”

Hugh Ferguson was the first tenant. With his wife Ann, he had moved from Paisley to Dornoch to continue his business **Highland Armoury**, making authentic Highland weapons, such as swords, claymores, dirks and sgian dubhs, and targes, the Highland studded leather shields. His workshop was also a retail outlet, with some space given over to antiques and curios during the summer months.

Fountain of Dornoch, was the second business to move into Station Square. James Stuart Fountain, a dentist who had turned his hand to jewellery making, moved his business from Ballater. Mr Fountain sadly died a year later, and the business was continued by his son Charles and widow Peterina Fountain. Fountain of Dornoch specialised in making jewellery and tableware, such as goblets and napkin rings, from copper, silver and pewter.

In 1974 craft production in Dornoch was given another boost when the old town jail was taken over by Terence and Beryl Hart, who transformed it into the **Town Jail Craft Centre**. In addition to acting as a retail outlet for other local craftspeople, the Harts made their own range of soft toys and wooden items. Mr Hart also published a booklet on the history of the jail.

Over the next couple of years, several other craft businesses took up residence at Station Square

Dornoch Pottery was set up by Alan and Jan Walker. They made a variety of functional items in a distinctive glazed stoneware. At the 1975 Aviemore trade show, their breakfast sets, a bowl, plate and mug in a brown and green glaze, caught the attention of the press. In 1977 the couple decided to move to Norfolk where they set up another pottery. Dornoch Pottery was taken over by three young graduates of Glasgow School of Art, Guy Bowden, Liz Hoey and Irene Harris.

Menzies Craft, established by Rob Bowie, combined enamel craft work with precision engineering.

Balnakeil Sheepskins was owned by Peter and Sheila Lawry. They had been at the Balnakeil Craft Centre on the north-west coast before moving down to Dornoch. Their products included rugs, jackets, hats, slippers and mitts along with a range of knitwear. In 1976 the Lawrys had a showroom in Santa Claus Land at Aviemore, and in 1979 opened a shop in Inverness.

Dornoch Woodcraft was run by toy maker Chris Harris. Chris and his wife Sheila moved to Dornoch from Birmingham. Chris made fine quality train, tractors and trucks from varnished pine wood.

There was also a bakery in one of the units, **Eion Mackay Limited**, bakers, confectioners and caterers, an electrical business, **J. M. Campbell**, managed by Jimmy Campbell, a **Press Photographer** Andy Smith, and Neil Dalton's **Dornoch Dental Laboratory**.

The craft businesses were nearly all run by people who had come from other parts of Scotland or from England. The idea was that by encouraging small businesses to relocate here, opportunities for work and apprenticeships would be created for local young people.

In 1976 the Harts were unable to continue running the Craft Centre at the old jail. It was taken over by **Lochcarron Weavers**, one of Scotland's major manufacturers of tartan. The drill hall was turned into a weaving shed with four semi-automatic Narrow Fast Hattersley 6 & 1 Box Looms. This was to be one of the firm's small satellite workshops, from their main operation in Galashiels. They were able to weave kilt cloth to order from a choice of 1200 different setts. They also produced some hand-knitted products and continued to run the front of the jail as a craft centre with a café.

As part of the attraction, visitors could visit the old cells and see life size figures of mid-19th century prisoners and their jailors. In one cell a black-bearded warder in a dark uniform

watched as a male prisoner repaired a fishing net, while in another a female warder in uniform stood while a woman prisoner scrubbed the floor. These were remodelled from earlier figures by Sheena Macleod who had a factory in Perth making Highland character dolls. She used "chicken wire, papier-mâché, and even bricks and old newspapers."

In October 1977 the National Mòd was held at Golspie for the first time. This was an excellent chance for local craft makers to display their wares and the Dornoch businesses were well represented.

In 1978 a candle maker, **Wax Factor**, joined the businesses at Station Square. The candle-makers were Bernard and Jan Hendy from London. They made colourful candles decorated with pressed flowers.

By then there were around eight occupied units with more than a dozen crafts and employing more than 50 people.

Not all the small businesses at Station Square were successful in the long-term, despite the hard work of their owners. Both **Dornoch Woodcraft** and **Wax Factor Candles** were forced to shut down in 1980. However, some were a great success; Fountain of Dornoch were active in Dornoch for twenty-four years. Part of their success was due to a consistent presence at international trade fairs, from Earls Court to Scandinavia, Hamburg, Amsterdam and New York.

And new businesses moved into the square.

In 1983 **Treecraft Woodwork** moved to Dornoch. Adrian Green was already well-known as a maker of boomerangs named "flightmasters" and "skyriders". He had recently appeared on the children's programme "Blue Peter" demonstrating his throwing skills. He also made camans, the sticks used in the game of shinty, from laminated hickory and ash. The business was a great success. In 1985 Treecraft boomerangs and bobsleighs were shown at a Scottish Development Agency trade show of children's clothes and toys, and in 1988 he had an order of 1000 boomerangs for Finland. In a way, these boomerangs were indeed "going back", as the birch plywood used in their making had been imported from Finland.

Around the same time, **Dornoch Glass** was set up by Richard Bridges who made delicate glass reproductions of wild and garden flowers.

Creels for the fishing industry were produced at Station Square in the 1980s. **Pots Fishing** made lobster creels there from about the end of 1979 until they moved to Skye in April 1981, and **Inglefield Dales** had a short-term lease to manufacture creels from the middle of 1985.

Clan Sweaters was set up in 1988 by Hugh and Margaret Sutherland. The couple had run a clothes shop in Dornoch for around ten years, when they began this new venture. They used computerised sewing machines to embroider authentic clan badges on a range of sweaters bought in from the Borders.

By 1989, the buildings at Station Square were showing their age. The original workshops were demolished, and new ones were built with the help of the EEC Regional Development Fund.

Printing businesses also found a home at Station Square.

Ron Cameron brought **Sutherland Printers** to Dornoch from Inverness. He also set up a new venture, **Presentation Plastics**, making all sorts of gift items from PVC for industry, trade and commerce, the sort of thing that companies might give away to staff or customers.

In 1986 a new printing company arrived when brothers-in-law David Smith & John Deacon set up a lithographic printshop, **Smith & Deacon**, at unit 5a.

In 1988 the **Dornoch Press** was taken over by Barry Turner, author of a booklet about the Dornoch Branch Line, and editor of Railway Digest Scotland. He initially took over the press in order to carry out his own printing. Station Square was a very appropriate home for the railway enthusiasts' publication. He had soon built the business up, producing publications for the oil industry, short runs of books and magazines, stationery, forms, cards, brochures, leaflets and posters. By 1992 the press was at its fourth premises having enlarged over the years.

Sadly, by the end of the 1980s there was no longer the political will to develop the crafts. Government bodies no longer had means or motivation to provide support and many small businesses across the country were forced to close.

In Dornoch there was a gradual change away from traditional handcrafted products to more hi-tech and industrial concerns.

Boomerangs continued to be made during the 1990s, but the high quality joinery skills at **Treecraft** were mainly used in the manufacturing of the bespoke doors and windows the business continues to produce today.

Menzies Craft developed into **Menzies Engineering Design** producing productivity tools for computer-aided design.

Other non-craft businesses at Station Square included a hairdresser, food processors, fire appliances, Graham Ross electrical repairs and a chartered surveyor.

The last craft business to set up in Station Square, seems to have been **Highland Leathercraft**, which was operating around 1993 from Unit 5B, making handmade saddlery and harnesses.

Fountain of Dornoch moved to smaller premises near Loch Lomond in 1997. Charles Fountain said at the time, "I've seen over 30 businesses come and go at Station Square since we first set up."

Lochcarron were at the old jail until 1999. The following year it became **Jail Dornoch**, selling a range of high quality goods, from a select group of mainly Scottish companies, aimed mainly at the tourist trade.

The following are transcriptions of Newspaper Clippings of articles and advertisements related to Businesses in Station Square and at the Jail. (Some which only give a short mention of a Dornoch business are included in full for context)

1972

New jobs for Dornoch

A new small industry is on the cards for Dornoch.
And it could mean half a dozen new jobs in the next two years for the small Sutherland burgh.

News of the development emerged at this week's meeting of Sutherland Planning Committee when it was agreed that the man behind the project - his name was not revealed - should be given a site on the county council's small industrial estate at the old railway station.

A county council spokesman said later that the proposed industry was a craft metal project. It is understood that the project will get underway in August, and it is expected to provide six to seven jobs within 18 months to two years.

Although the developer's name has not been revealed, it is known that he is not a local man.

The county council have already provided accommodation for a silversmith at Dornoch.

Development officer Mr J. Green said later that it was hoped this would provide jobs for three or four people.

Press and Journal, Wednesday, May 24, 1972

1973

Claymore and dirk make a comeback.

Rural Roundabout by Ruth Morrison

The clash of steel has replaced the hiss of steam at the picturesque site of the former railway station at Dornoch, Sutherland.

The first tenant of what is now the burgh's industrial estate is garnering an international reputation with his output of old Highland weapons – swords, claymores, dirks, and targes.

As well as dealing with retail outlets in Britain, craftsman Mr Hugh Ferguson (43) has sent orders to the USA, Canada and Germany. "I am starting to get known now," he explained yesterday, "and I'm hopeful of getting a much wider market in time."

Barrhead-born Mr Ferguson moved north to Dornoch last June and leased a prefabricated workshop on the railway site, from Sutherland County Council. A silversmith to trade, he had worked in various shops before opening a business of his own in Paisley about three years ago.

"I felt a Highland address would be good for my business which is called **Highland Armoury.**"

Mr Ferguson also produces jewellery and plans to put more accent on the silversmith side of his business in the future.

Meantime he is on his own, although his wife, Ann, assists him with the leatherwork etc. "Business is very good at present, and I would like to engage two apprentices if the volume of orders demands it."

Mr Ferguson models his Highland weapons on those he sees in various places around Scotland. He is not long back from a research trip which took in Inveraray Castle, Argyll, and museums and armouries in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

He was pleased with the response attracted at a trade exhibition in Aviemore last year and will exhibit there again this year. He will also probably have a stand at the Royal Highland Show at Ingliston.

Mr Ferguson is delighted with Dornoch. "I am very glad I moved up here. It's a marvellous place to work and live in."

The workshop is also used as a retail outlet and the Fergusons are fully geared for the tourist trade. During the summer an antique/curio shop run by a local woman also caters for the tourist trade.

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, April 4, 1973

1974**Crafts maker had shop in Ballater.**

Crafts maker Mr James Stuart Fountain, who moved to Dornoch after running a Ballater craft shop for 10 years, has died in Bignold Hospital, Wick.

Mr Fountain and his son Charles had moved into a new workshop at Dornoch last year. In 1962 Mr Fountain gave up his dental laboratory in Glasgow. He moved to Ballater and opened a craft shop specialising in copper and pewter ware.

He was a Fellow of the Institute of British Surgical Technicians and was a City and Guilds examiner in dental technology.

Before his move to Ballater, he owned his Glasgow dental laboratory for more than 30 years.

He is survived by his wife and son.

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, February 6, 1974

Dornoch's Old Jail Becomes Craft Centre

By Andrew McKay

A number of well-known Sutherland people are to be jailed at Dornoch on Thursday - and the old town jail is to be opened specially to receive them.

In fact, the prison is likely to be full for the rest of the summer! But it is not a crime wave which has brought the jail back to life. It is the beginning of a new industry, **Town Jail Craft Centre Ltd.**

Behind the venue are husband and wife team Mr Terence Robertson Hart and Mrs Beryl Patricia Hart, who recently ran a craft centre at an old watermill in Devon. With them is Mr John D. Harts, no relation.

The Robertson in Mr Hart's name signifies that his forebears were Scots. The family originated in Elgin, but his grandfather was a silk screen printer in Ayrshire.

"We have wanted to come to the Highlands for some time," Mr Hart said yesterday, "and were looking for an interesting place both historically and architecturally. In Dornoch we found not only that but our other need - a nice place to live."

As well as selling craft products the new company will make them. Mrs Hart is an expert at soft toys and wooden prototypes for crafts were among the luggage from Devon.

"We want to be flexible." Said Mr Hart. "I would like Scottish artists to provide the nucleus for a range of new crafts. We are hoping that our retail staff during the summer will stay on and do craft work in the winter. In fact, more than half of them have already agreed."

The former town jail premises in the centre of the urgh are the same internally and externally as they were when the prison closed in 1884.

It has an interesting history which Mr Hart has recalled and published in a handbook.

The Press & Journal, Tuesday, July 16, 1974

Tough Scrutiny For Scottish Craft Fair

Business Bureau by Innes Stephen and Jack Page

North-east and Highland craftsmen and women are well represented in the final list of exhibitors who will take part in the Scottish Crafts Trade Fair next month.

Stringent selection procedures had to be put into operation by the organisers – the Small Industries Council for Rural Areas of Scotland and the Joint Crafts Committee – because of the demand from craft firms for space at the exhibition.

Over 200 firms applied for the same space allocated to 119 firms at last year's fair at the same location – the MacRobert Pavilion at Ingliston, near Edinburgh.

Tough scrutiny reduced the number of applicants to the final figure of 165 different firms located from Shetland to Stranraer. There will be a total of 144 stands.

The fair, to be held on October 8 and 9, is the third annual one, and well over 1200 buyers from all over the United Kingdom and abroad are expected to attend.

Last year the fair brought orders valued at £273,000 and it is now considered to be one of the most important sales platforms.

Mrs Sally Smith, who administers the fair for SICRAS, said: "Buyers at this year's fair will find fewer goods in the 'novelty souvenir' category. Instead, they will find a large number of new products and a lively variety in the textile, wood, ceramic and jewellery category."

The local exhibitors are –

Glen Tanar Pottery, Dinnet, Aboyne – showing pottery, lamp bases, large teapots, small sculptural pieces, bottles, jugs, etc.

Norscot Distributors, Kemnay – heat-sealed black and white Scottish prints, mounted framed or as plaques. Melamine tableware.

Scotcrafts, Peterhead – tartans, kilts, Cashmere and lambswool knitwear, hand knitted Arans. Jacken Products, Peterhead – natural Scottish stone giftware and jewellery.

Dess Station Pottery, Kincardine O'Neil – domestic and decorative stoneware pottery.

Harley and Company, Peterhead – Shetland circular and fully-fashioned knitwear/ Botany jumpers and cardigans, Fair Isle.

Roberta Buchan, Peterhead – hand painted silks etc., garments in leather and tweed.

The D. R. Press, Cullen – Celtic and wild-life postcards, greeting cards and prints.

P. & D. Forsyth, Fraserburgh – woodwork, Portsoy marble and enamel jewellery.

Rhona Gordon, Nairn – toys, stuffed mice, octopuses and tortoises.

Weavers of Tore, Black Isle – woven dress materials, hostess skirt lengths.

Malin Workshop, Fort-William – card mounted prints, calendar cards, lettertop packs etc.

The Stone House, Avoch, Fort-William – clocks, cigarette boxes, lighters, ashtrays, lamps, flower holders in agate and Skye marble.

Guisachan Crafts, Beaulieu – handwoven floor rugs, runners and carpets, bags and neckties, patchwork bedspreads.

Highland Agencies, Inverness – representing five craft firms.

White Mountain Crafts, Nethybridge – stag horn cutlery and jewellery and costume jewellery.

Cranloch Industries, Elgin – soft toys and nail pendants.

Ian Reid, Arbroath – Shetland and Fair Isle knitwear.

Nairn Pottery, Nairn – earthenware and porcelain.

Fountain of Dornoch Ltd., Dornoch – copper and pewter jewellery, pewter tableware and ornamental metalwork.

Highland Craft Producers, Beaulieu – representing five craft firms.

Cullernie Crafts, Balloch – felt and tartan soft toys and story and painting books.

Wilson's Scottish Crafts Ltd., Inverness – representing three Highland firms.

Craggan Mill, Grantown on Spey – handwoven rugs and handblown glass.'

Winners of Fix-the-Ball Contest No. 1226

...third prize of £10 to Mrs P. R. Fountain, 11 Bishopfield Road, Dornoch.'

The Press and Journal, Monday, December 2, 1974

1975

What's New...

We found some lovely pottery breakfast sets this week. In beautiful brown and green glaze, the sets consist of a cereal bowl, plate and mug.

Made by **Dornoch Pottery**, the sets were in the Highlands and Islands Development Board's annual gift show, held recently at Aviemore. The sets are £2.20 each.

Aberdeen Evening Express, January 14, 1975

Balnakeil Sheepskins

Station Square, Dornoch, Tel 525

Invite you to visit their Factory Shop where the following items are manufactured on the premises and offered for sale at well below normal retail prices:

Gent's Sheepskin Jackets

Ladies Sheepskin Jackets

(3/4 length or full length) from £48.

Ladies Hats and Hoods in a variety of styles.

Real Sheepskin slippers and mitts

Single and Double Skins.

Pure Wool Rugs to any Size, Colour, Shape or Design.

Also on sale is a fine range of Scottish Knitwear, Hand or Machine made, including Genuine Shetland and Hand-Knitted Aran Styles.

- Price List on Request for Postal Deliveries -

Hours of Business: 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. All Day and Every Day Monday to Friday.

Trade Enquiries Welcome.

The Press and Journal, Friday, January 24, 1975

1976

Attention Aviemore

Unique opportunity

Manager/ess Required

To take sole charge of new Quality Crafts Showroom, shortly to open in Santa Claus Land. The applicant should be smart, efficient, friendly and trustworthy. Some experience with sewing machines would be an asset.

Also required:

Evening and Weekend Staff.

Write initially to:

Balnakeil Sheepskins, Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland.

The Press and Journal, Friday, March 12, 1976

North tourist attraction liquidated

A top Highland tourist attraction – **Dornoch's town jail craft centre** which won a Civic Trust award last year – is going into liquidation.

A meeting of creditors of the company has been called on April 23 at the Caledonian Hotel, Inverness.

Managing director Mr Terence Hart said at his home at Rogart, Sutherland, last night: "It is regretted that the company cannot, by reason of their liabilities, continue business and, as a result, they must be wound up.

"At the creditors' meeting a full statement of the position of the company's affairs will be presented, together with a full explanation of the present position."

The company, who were aided by a grant and loan from the Highlands and Islands Development Board when set up in 1974, will have a liquidator appointed at the creditor's meeting.

Mr Hart added: "All I can say at this stage is that we ceased being viable when the board turned down a request for further assistance to help us with manufacturing soft toys.

"This one aspect of the business was the only one that was grant-aided – and it was just not paying its way."

A board spokesman in Inverness said last night: "We regret that this had to happen."

The seven full-time employees – all women apart from Mr Hart – were paid off in January. But Mr Hart has been trying to find someone who would take over the building on which he had lavished so much attention.

His restoration of the derelict Dornoch jail, making it a leading centre for visitors, with craft displays in the cells, won him one of Scotland's 52 Civic trust awards in European Architectural Heritage Year. He received his award from the Queen Mother in Edinburgh in June.

Mr Hart, a former London journalist, was managing director and his wife Beryl, who is a teacher, was also on the board. The other director was Mr John Harte, a London barrister . The town jail building, in Dornoch's principal street, is owned by the Highland Regional Council as successors to Sutherland County Council. It lies within a conservation area and its structure – with 3ft. thick walls and domed ceilings – could not be altered externally.

Press & Journal, Saturday, April 10, 1976

Briefly...

Inflation led to the liquidation of a Highland craft centre, one of the directors said after a creditors meeting.

Dornoch Town Jail Craft Centre was started by Mr and Mrs Terence Hart, and English couple who came to the Highlands to start a new life.

Mr Hart said: "There was a combination of factors which led us going into liquidation. The main one was the cost of postal marketing. We couldn't afford to pay a representative, so we had to post everything to customers.

Evening Express, Saturday, April 24, 1976

Kilt weavers take over Dornoch Jail

There are plans to start kilt cloth manufacturing... in a former Highland prison.

Lochcarron Weavers Ltd. Have taken over the lease of Dornoch Town Jail, which they will continue to run as a shop throughout the summer.

Owned by the Highland Regional Council, the property in the centre of the town was previously the Dornoch Town Jail Craft Centre. Started by an English couple in 1974, it went into liquidation earlier this year.

Mr Alistair Buchan, sales director for Lochcarron and the main manufacturing unit, John M. Buchan, Galashiels, said the jail was too expensive to run as a retailing centre and could only be operated if there was a manufacturing side.

Such is the demand for the cloth, the firm can "hardly cope". He said. Additional manufacturing at Dornoch would therefore help meet demand.

"It won't really start until the summer season is over and then we'll work out the details." The plans are that a drill hall, attached to the jail and at present a storeroom, will be used for manufacturing. It is expected that four or five weavers will be required.

Press & Journal, Wednesday, June 16, 1976

1977

Dornoch jewellery firm fined £160

A Dornoch firm of jewellery and tableware manufacturers were fined £160 yesterday for not keeping their premises sufficiently warm and not providing hot water for their employees.

Dornoch Sheriff Court heard that a factories inspector called on **Fountain of Dornoch**, Station Square, one day last December when the outside temperature was 1 degree Centigrade. Both of the co-directors were away on business in the south.

The only heating supply was a small domestic paraffin heater, though there were four electric convectors which had not been switched on.

The inside temperature was 5 deg. C when the inspector considered that a temperature of 13 to 16 deg. Would have been reasonable in the conditions. There was no hot water supply. Mr Charles Fountain, co-director with his mother, pleaded guilty by letter to two charges under the Factories Act of failing to provide a reasonable temperature to his workshop and hot water for his employees use.'

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, March 16, 1977

Eoin Mackay Ltd.

Bakers, Confectioners and Caterers

- Industrial & Private -

Suppliers of a wide range of Bakery Goods and Catering to Highland Fabricators whom we congratulate on their achievement.

Eoin Mackay Ltd., Station Square, Dornoch, Tel. 530

[In a special feature on the completion of the Ninian Field South Platform]

The Press and Journal, May 17, 1977

Dornoch past comes to life - in jail!

Life size figures of mid-19th century prisoners and their jailers now confront visitors to the cells in **Dornoch's Town Jail craft centre**.

The glimpses of the past are thanks to work by Mrs Sheena Macleod, a Dingwall born woman whose Highland character dolls are collectors' pieces selling all over the world. Mr Ian Stewart of **Lochcarron Weavers**, who runs the centre as a showroom for their products and those of other craft industries, contacted Sheena when he learned she was caravanning in Dornoch.

He invited her to lend her skills to help make the scene in the old prison cells more realistic. Four figures - a male prisoner, a female prisoner, a warder and a wardress - were found when the building was taken over. Mr Stewart asked Sheena if she would remodel them. Sheena, who now lives in Abernethy, Perthshire, and runs her dolls factory in Perth, put in about 34 hours work in the old jail building during her holiday.

Now, in one cell, a black bearded warder in a dark uniform is supervising a male prisoner at work repairing netting, and in the other, a woman prisoner with a bucket is scrubbing the floor, with a uniformed wardress looking on.

Shop window models were used for the figures of the warder and wardress, but Sheena built up the figures of the prisoners using chicken wire, papier-mâché, and even bricks and old newspapers.

Sheena numbers Lochcarron weavers among her many customers and uses some of their tweeds for dresses for her dolls.

The four-storey jail was built in 1850 at a cost of £2400. It was used as a county prison for Sutherland until 1882 when it was bought by the Sutherland Rifle Volunteers as a headquarters for £200.

There are many souvenirs of the building's use for military purposes.

Press & Journal, Tuesday, August 16, 1977

Big business for Sutherland

MOD Diary by Mitchell Reid

The MOD means big business for Sutherland. That is the opinion of Ian Telfer, who is Highland Regional Council's divisional development officer in the county.

Ian was speaking at the opening of an exhibition of Highland crafts at Golspie Masonic Hall, a show set up for the Mod.

The exhibition features a superb selection of quality crafts which are manufactured by 10 firms in Sutherland.

Ian, born at Balmacara in Wester Ross, said: "We see the Mod as a chance to put Sutherland really on the map, but it also gives us the opportunity to feature business throughout the whole of the Highland area."

When I called at the exhibition yesterday the hall was packed with visitors. Everyone was enthusing about the quality of work on show, which included sheepskins, pottery, silver jewellery, leather goods and knitwear.

One stand however, remained empty for the first hour. Eventually a breathless Hugh Ferguson, the owner of **Highland Armourers** at Dornoch, arrived and set up shop.

But he accepted no blame for being late – his late arrival was caused by a Californian who lives in San Diego. Last week, when Hugh was preparing for the Mod exhibition, the American walked into his shop and ordered three broadswords, three targes and two dirks.

Hugh hurriedly set to work and eventually finished the American's order.

But the unexpected overseas sale meant that he has been practically working 24 hours a day.

[part of a special feature on 'MOD 77 Golspie.']

The Press and Journal, Tuesday, October 25, 1977

Mixed business done at HIDB fair

The Highlands and Islands Development Board's annual crafts trade fair ended yesterday at Aviemore. Reports of business done varied. Some exhibitors said it was not so brisk as last year, but a HIDB spokesman said that new exhibitors – of whom there were 55 – had reported "terrific business".

Some of the long-established exhibitors might not have done so well compared with previous years, but he said the country generally was suffering an economic recession. He thought most people had won enough orders to make their visit worthwhile.

A Birmingham architect who set up a toy manufacturing workshop at the Station Square Craft Centre, Dornoch, in June, announced orders for £11,000 worth of toys.

It was the first time Chris Harris had exhibited. One Dutch buyer accounted for £10,000 of the order. [**Dornoch Woodcrafts**]

Dunoon Ceramics announced orders worth £27,000 for their range of stoneware and three students from Glasgow College of Art – Irene Harris, Liz Hoey and Guy Bowden – have won orders worth £3500 for their pottery products. They started at Dornoch Craft Centre only three months ago.

There was news yesterday of another newcomer promising well – the Isle of Barra Knitter Co-operative launched by the board 13 months ago and exhibiting for the first time. The board's industrial development division cast around for another use for an electrical components factory which had shut down on the Hebridean Island.

They found about 20 women on the island who had knitting machines in their homes and sent three people to Leicester for training. Now they have 12 people in the factory and 20 outworkers producing 100% Scottish woollen sweaters.

A board spokesman said the Barra factory was being run on an experimental basis, but if it all went well and marketing outlets were established, efforts would be made to find a commercial buyer for the enterprise.

A team of craftsmen, many of them fresh from the fair, leave for America and Canada next month to increase craft exports from the Highlands and Islands.

Nine craft firms have been selected for a second marketing mission, organised by the HIDB in New York, and Toronto from November 14 to 24. The first mission, in 1975, was an outstanding success and generated continuing business for the firms represented.

Aberdeen Press and Journal, Friday, October 28, 1977

1978

Newest firms formed in Scotland

Newest companies formed in Scotland last week included:

... **Wax Factor Candles** Ltd., Station Square, Dornoch, candlemakers. Capital - £50,000 in £1 shares. Directors – Bernard and Janice C. Hendry. Old Farm House, Pitgrundy, Dornoch. [one of six new companies from across Scotland]

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, April 19, 1978

Selling the Highlands

High and Mighty

THE TRAIN now pulling out of Dornoch Station is about 18 inches long, has wooden wheels and is made of pine wood.

It is only one of a vast range of toys, trinkets and trophies from a colony of craftsmen who have set up in business on an industrial estate created on a disused railway station site by Sutherland County Council in the North of Scotland seven years ago.

Now run by the Highland Regional Council and backed by the Highlands and Islands Development Board, the estate has more than a dozen different crafts and employs more than 50 people in custom-built workshops.

There is **an armourer, a potter, a pewterer, a toy maker, a sheepskin costumier, an enameller – and a baker and candlestick maker**, which seems only natural really. It is a prototype for craft industry on a scale which is both manageable and economic.

None of the craftsmen is a native of Dornoch, a quiet restful golfing resort which multiplies its 1,000 population ten-fold in the tourist season. It has magnificent beaches, a 12th century cathedral and Bishop's Palace and a town jail which now is also a craft centre.

Much of the encouragement given to these incomers – from London, Birmingham, Glasgow and even Cornwall – came from development officers who realised that the only hope of preventing youngsters migrating south would be to create new small industries to which they could be apprenticed.

Development officer Ian Telfer says: "I would prefer to see, in this county of 13,000 people, some 30 small industries employing ten people each, than one major factory with a work force of 300.

"I believe in the Swiss-style economy, which produces small, marketable luxury goods which do not rely on transportation as the determining factor for location. I believe even in times of recession that they are less fragile than some consumer goods like washing machines.

"There is always a sale for high quality, up-market articles like pottery and pewter, well-made toys and decorative candles."

Five years ago, Hugh Ferguson moved to Dornoch from his native Barrhead in Renfrewshire to lease the first craft shop. An engineer by trade, Hugh specialised in stainless steel and his passion has always been for pageantry. He was forging broad swords, claymores and Highland dirks as a hobby – until friends began to demand more and more from him for decorating walls of their living rooms.

Now his front shop is an armoury of choice swords in beautiful scabbards, dirks with Cairngorm stones set in the hilt and the old Highland claymore which used to flash in many a battle.

He gets requests for replica swords from Germany, Holland and particularly America and Canada. His principal job at the moment is kitting out an entire corps of Canadian Caledonians with ceremonial swords.

Charles Fountain is an expert in pewter and copper craft, producing exquisite jewellery, in the form of rings, necklaces and pendants and table ware. His work is in high demand at trade fairs throughout the country.

Robbie Bowie and his wife moved up from East Kilbride several years ago to install a precision engineering and enamel craft workshop on Dornoch's industrial estate. Now with a staff of five, the Bowies are well entrenched with markets for their products in the Forth-Clyde Valley and the Midlands.

'They have gone out of their way to be helpful...'

Peter Lawry came to Scotland from his native Looe in Cornwall as a National Serviceman at Kinloss RAF station in Morayshire. He married a Scots girl and decided to specialise in the treatment and fashioning of sheepskins at a craft centre set up at Balnakiel on Scotland's North-west tip.

He was one of the most successful craftsmen at the centre but decided that he was too far away from the tourist demands for his elegant hats, gloves, slippers and sheepskin coats. So three years ago he moved 90 miles south into the main stream of the North of Scotland's tourist trade. So successful has he been at Dornoch that he now has a branch shop at the Aviemore holiday centre.



Peter Lawry working with sheepskin in his workshop

Chris Harris, a 30-year-old architect from Birmingham preferred to see his own designs shape up by his own handiwork. His hobby is making wooden toys and friends showed such an interest in the fine quality locomotives, tractors and articulated trucks he made that he and his wife Sheila decided to move to Dornoch last June.

He has already landed a £10,000 order from a Dutch importer and more than £1,000 worth of work from craft shops throughout Britain. He now has a staff of four young school leavers.

The candle-makers are Bernard and Jan Hendy, who moved from London to the wild North-west because of their love of nature.

Their photographic taste for colour and tinting gave them clever ideas for making an ordinary candle into a thing of beauty – using pressed wildflowers, symmetrical moulds and vivid shades.

Their **Wax Factor** candles, in all shapes and sizes, have taken off and sales are booming. “We have doubled our business each of the three years since we started,” says a surprised and delighted Bernard.

Now they have leased the HIDBs 1500 square feet factory on the Dornoch site – and have already applied to extend it to cope with their expanding business.

Latest arrivals at the craft complex are two women and a man fresh from the Glasgow School of Art who took over the **Dornoch Pottery** after owners Alan and Jan Walker decided to move south to Norfolk to develop their scientific clothing interests.

Guy and Liz Hoey and Irene Harris were nearing the end of their courses at art college and facing a summer of job searching. They had originally thought of applying for teaching jobs but, with the current cut back in educational spending, their prospects looked slim. Now, with assistance from the Highland Development Board they produce ornate pottery. “The people of Dornoch have been absolutely amazing in their welcome,” Liz says. “They really seem to want us to succeed and have gone out of their way to be helpful.”



Chris Harris assembles one of his range of wooden toys

Nottingham Evening Post, May 23, 1978

Concentrated Craft

By TIM POWER

Skills come home to the country

There must be some special molecules in the air around Dornoch – something that gets the craftsmen’s fingers twitching.

There are more potters’ weavers, candlemakers and assorted cottage crafts in Dornoch than any other part of Scotland. One estimate puts the number of full-time craftsmen in the area at over 50.

Which isn’t bad going for an area which eight years ago had virtually nothing in the way of local crafts.

One of the first to get bitten by the Dornoch craft bug was Terry Hart. His prize-winning renovation of the old County Gaol – used as an Army drill hall – began the trend.

Since then, Loch Carron Products has taken over the Gaol and now has a craft museum, café and weaving sheds employing a total of seven full-time and 10 more in the season.

Manager Kenneth Brill explains: “We have a small hand-knitting production, but the main business is weaving single width kilt cloth. We can make anyone of 1200 tartans here, using semi-automatic looms.”

The company was called Loch Carron Handloom Weavers until three years ago, then the looms were powered so the name had to change to meet the Trade Descriptions Act.

Down the road from the old Gaol, an old railway station provides the setting for an even greater concentration of crafts.

There, some seven craft businesses are at work in purpose-built premises set up since 1971 – result of a £100,000 investment by Sutherland District.

The variety is incredible. As are the craftsmen themselves, who range from an ex-Ford executive to a Glasgow silversmith.

The ex-Ford executive is Charles Fountain. An economist, graduate of Glasgow University, he held an important job with the motor company.

His father set up the business originally in Ballater, about 15 years ago.

When the craft factories were made available at Dornoch six years ago, the family moved the copper and pewter business to Dornoch.

Mr Fountain senior has since died, but today his son carries on the business making pewter and silver goblets and has a thriving export trade.

Another company which is doing well in the craft export stakes is Balnakeil Sheepskins. Peter and Sheila Lawry employ four others and make almost anything you care to name from sheepskins.

Each year their business gets through about 3000 skins and turns them into coats, jackets, hats, gloves and even baby booties. Recently they have begun making decorative sheep-skin rugs and today they export literally world-wide.

Peter was in the RAF for 12 years. “The I decided I wanted to be self-employed, and I started with £100 in my pocket.” The generous terms of the industrial estate craft factory helped make it possible, he says.

One of his neighbours is Hugh Ferguson – the first to move into the Dornoch estate. Hugh is one of a vanishing breed: an armourer specialising in authentic Scottish dirks, claymores and other sharp-edged weapons.

Such weapons are a far cry from the chalices that Hugh used to make in his 20 years as a Glasgow silversmith. Now, with just his wife and son to help, he reproduces ancient Scottish weapons straight from the history books.

Customers will pay up to £600 for a dress dirk and for £92 you can buy a claymore indistinguishable from the original. “My stuff’s the real McCoy,” says Hugh, who has researched the patterns for dozens of targes – studded leather shields.

Other businesses thriving on the estate include a candle factory – with the original name Wax Factor – a pottery and a wooden toys factory.

The toys are made by Chris Harris, a young architect from Kidderminster, who made the break into crafts full time after a big order at the Aviemore Craft Fair.

Everyone who has settled in the Dornoch area to build a craft business seems to be doing well. Orderbooks are full and a lot of youngsters find the craft workshops more enjoyable than the factory floor.

According to Ian Telfer, development officer for the area, the secret of successful crafts is to avoid the kitsch. There’s plenty of people prepared to pay for “small, quality artifacts.” “The thing about the Dornoch crafts is they are all at the top end of the class. There’s no rubbish here, none of the Scottish kitsch you’ll find in Princess Street.” Says Ian.



Hugh Ferguson looks fighting fit here, demonstrating his work... but as an armourer he's one of a dying breed.

Evening Express, Friday, September 22, 1978

Person required at Dornoch Craft Centre

To assist in operating small weaving unit of four Narrofast Hattersley 6 and 1 Box Looms. Previous weaving or tuning experience preferred but training is available. Successful candidate would on occasions be required to lift heavy weights. Assistance will be given if housing required.

Please apply to Mr Kenneth Brill, Dornoch Craft Centre, Sutherland. Tel. Dornoch 555.

Press and Journal, Wednesday, November 1, 1978

1979

Dornoch mother wins dismissal case

The Dornoch mother of five who took her employer to court for unfair dismissal has won her case and has been awarded £605 in compensation. Her employer Mr Peter Lawry of **Balnakeil Sheepskins Ltd.**, Station Square, Dornoch, is now likely to appeal.

Mrs Janet Webster (35), The Cottage, Cuthill, had been employed by Mr Lawry for eight months, latterly as a piece worker from her home.

Mr Lawry dismissed her on August 28 last year. He claimed she was setting up in competition against him, using his materials by making gonks in her spare time and selling them to local shops.

Giving evidence at the industrial tribunal at Inverness Mrs Webster admitted using Mr Lawry's raw materials but said she did so with his knowledge as he originally bought some gonks from her for 25p each.

She said she did not know that her employers sold gonks. She emphasised that the material used was waste which was normally destroyed.

In an eight page decision from the three-man tribunal, it was clearly indicated that Mrs Webster's story was accepted on almost every point of contention with Mr Lawry.

They said that although the reasons given for dismissal – mainly dishonesty – fell within the general description of conduct they thought this was not the real reason for dismissal. They were persuaded that Mr Lawry had not manufactured gonks for some years and therefore Mrs Webster had not set up in competition against him.

Mrs Webster said afterwards: "I just wanted to clear my name, and these results pointedly do. I never meant to defraud Mr Lawry in any way."

Mr Lawry said: "This is the distasteful face of industrial justice today. The woman admitted using my material without my company's consent, used them to make money on the side, and made money from them.

"One thing you can be certain of. My company will not rest until a just conclusion is reached."

The Press and Journal, Friday, January 19, 1979

The All Wood Toys

Designed for and tested by children

Finished in a hard-wearing varnish which conforms to all relevant British Standards

Dornoch Woodcrafts

Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland, Scotland Telephone: 086-*** **

The Scotsman, Thursday, August 16, 1979

Employment Opportunities

...A unique opportunity will shortly become vacant for ladies with flair and initiative. There will in a few weeks be opening a branch showroom in Castle Street, Inverness.

There will be vacancies for a
Manager/Manageress & Assistants

Their position will require the Manager/Manageress and Staff to totally run the Inverness Branch without interference from the Dornoch factory. If you know you could handle any situation, and manage an exclusive showroom selling quality goods, write to us for an interview.

Balnakeil Sheepskins Ltd.,
Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland.

The Press and Journal, Friday, October 19, 1979

1980

North firms at exhibition

Eight firms from the Highlands and Islands will be on the Highland Region Development's stand at the Business exhibition, organised by "The Sunday Times" at Earl's Court from June 8 to 11.

Companies represented on the Highland Region stand will be: Highland Fine Cheese, Tain; Savo Electronics, Inverness; **Fountain of Dornoch**, specialists in handmade silver jewellery, tableware, and ornamental metal work; MAC Design, Nairn, gold jewellery; Caithness Leather, Wick; Nevisprint, Fort-William; Barratt Scottish Properties, Aviemore; and Praban na Linne, Skye, Te Bheag Scotch whisky and knitwear.

The Press and Journal, Friday, May 30, 1980

Highland mission seek Scandinavian success.

Two Caithness firms are to take part in next week's Highland Regional Council sponsored trade mission to Scandinavia.

Croft Crafts - run by Castletown couple Mr Ken Wyley and his wife Margaret - and Sutherland Knitwear Co. of Occumster, near Lybster, are among six Highland firms who will be displaying their products at a one-week floating exhibition.

The party sails for Bergen, Norway, from Leith on Sunday and will then visit three other Scandinavian ports, and also Hamburg and Amsterdam.

Both firms are hoping the trip will help bolster their already healthy export trade.

Also represented on the trip will be Highland Aromatics, Drumchardine; Mac Designs, Nairn; **Fountain of Dornoch** and Savo Electronics, Inverness.

Highland Region will also exhibit their own stand.

The mission was set up by former Caithness development officer Mr Bill Mathieson, who has just taken up the post of assistant director of development at Inverness. He explained the region were sponsoring the mission to promote tourism and attract foreign investors to the Highlands.

The Press and Journal, Friday, September 5, 1980

Craft industry is being hit hard

The crisis currently hitting the craft industry claimed its latest victim last week, when it was announced that **Dornoch Woodcrafts** was to go into liquidation. It is the second company on Dornoch Industrial Estate to close in two weeks.

Proprietors Chris and Sheila Harris declared their intention to liquidate last weekend. Only a fortnight previously, Bernard and Janice Hendy, of **Wax Factor Candles**, had a creditors meeting in Inverness.

Both companies have received help from the H.I.D.B. Wax Factor Candles were accommodated within an H.I.D.B. purpose-built factory, while Dornoch Woodcrafts were part of the Regional Council's main complex at Station Square.

Dornoch Woodcrafts produced children's toys as well as a variety of tableware, and was established in August 1977. Mr and Mrs Harris moved to the area earlier that year from Birmingham.

Mr Harris (33) said: "Things have been building up for a few weeks now, but there is one particular reason for us closing, which I am not allowed to give at the moment because it might prejudice legal action.

"I do not know yet what I am going to do in the future. At present I am still just sorting things out with the liquidators."

The company made the last of its three employees redundant in the summer and recently only Mr and Mrs Harris have been working at the factory. They have two young sons.

Mr Ian Telfer, the Region's divisional development officer, said: "I am very sad to hear that the Harris's have had to take this step. Unfortunately, with the current recession, the first thing that is affected is something like the craft industry. Everybody is feeling the pinch, and these kinds of companies suffer. I feel particularly sorry for Chris Harris, though, because he worked very hard."

But Station Square is not all doom and despondency. Mr Jimmy Campbell, of Dornoch electricians, **J. M. Campbell**, said this week "It appears that I am now the biggest employer on the Industrial Estate, and yet I received no help or grants from the H.I.D.B. or anyone else. I am now employing four full-time workers and one part-time.

"It seems that all the firms that were helped out by the Board are now going bankrupt. I have been in business for eight years, and we were one of the original factories to open on the estate about six years ago. The only assistance we got was our first two years' rent at 50%.

"I am in no way attacking Chris Harris, I think he worked very hard - perhaps one of the hardest - and I am sorry to see him go. But these sort of companies are all tied up with the tourist industry, and it only needs two bad seasons and they are all affected. I am lucky that my kind of work is constant, 52 weeks a year.

Another country craft industry, Sutherland Model Casters Ltd., of Bonar Bridge, are happy to deny rumours that they are closing down.

Principle Mr Ron Charlton said yesterday: "It's true we are not doing as well as we would like to - but who is nowadays? We are ticking over with our main business in exporting models to Europe, and there's still a lot of interest in our product."

The company became automated about eighteen months ago and about five members of staff left, mainly through natural wastage. But there are still seven on the payroll.

The Northern Times, Friday, November 21, 1980

1981

Lobster creels firm move to Skye

Now established at Uig, Skye, are Skye Creels and Fabrications, set up 18 months ago at Dornoch and Golspie by principal Mr Stuart Barrow as **Pots Fishing**. The change of location and name had resulted from the realisation that he should be nearer the market for his speciality, purpose-made lobster creels to the individual requirements and design of fishermen.

And bringing about the move has involved the co-operation of Caledonian MacBrayne Limited, because the firm's new location is inside the shipping warehouse at the head of the Skye pier which is the terminal for the Western Isles car and passenger ferry Hebrides.

The negotiations with Calmac, praised by Mr Barrow for their help, has resulted in half their building being partitioned off on a long-term agreement.

"We will be back in production in May," said Mr Barrow. Two jobs in the factory and netting work for outworkers are the immediate benefits for Uig area.

"We have lots of orders," Mr Barrow said. "And we have many inquiries, although we never advertise. The word-of-mouth system works in the fishing trade."

Press and Journal, Thursday, April 2, 1981

Sutherland Printers Ltd

Notice Is Hereby Given pursuant to Section 293 of the Companies Act, 1948, that a Meeting of the Creditors of the above named company will be held at the Dornoch Social Club, School Hill, Dornoch, on Friday, 27th November 1981, at 11'00 o'clock in the forenoon, for the purposes specified in Section 293 and 295 of the Companies Act, 1948.

Notice Is Also Hereby Given that for the purpose of voting, particulars of the claims of all creditors, accompanied in the case of a secured creditor (unless he surrenders his security) by a statement giving the particulars of his security, the date when it was given and the value at which he assesses it, be lodged at the Registered Office of the Company, Station Square, Dornoch, before the meeting and further, every Creditor must specify any other person he holds bound for his debt.

Dated this 30th Day of October 1981.

J R Cameron, Director'

The Press and Journal, Thursday, November 5, 1981

1982

Job Boomerangs

Jobless teenager Stephen Roe has whizzed back into work – as a boomerang maker. Stephen (180 trained at **Treecraft Woodwork** of Doncaster carving ash wood boomerangs as part of the Government's Youth Opportunities Programme.

After two months on the dole Stephen has been asked by the firm to return full time.

Evening News, Wednesday, June 23, 1982

1983

The companies at the exhibition... in alphabetical order

(Scotland's Business and Industry Exhibition)

Presentation Plastics (Inverness) Lonemore, Dornoch. Sutherland. Dornoch (086 2**) ***. Manufacturers of items in Flexible PVC for industry, trade and commerce to individual requirements. Stand No. 394

Press & Journal, Friday, May 20, 1983

The boomerang that just wouldn't come back

By Maggie Barrie

"My boomerang won't come back"... a plaintive Australian cry from the heart, echoed on a fine day in Duthie Park by half a dozen Aberdonians.

A dearth of desert, kangaroos and swagmen led us there to discover how the Scots would take to what could become a native sport. A little known Yorkshire company, **Treecraft Woodwork**, is considering setting up in Scotland, and one of its specialities is – you've guessed it – boomerang making.

And it's odd how a simple piece of wood can bring grown men out in a sweat, cause sunbathers to recoil in horror and irritate the most mild-mannered of folk. For there is nothing more frustrating than a boomerang which won't come back. And unlike Bruce's spider, success is not the natural follow on from continuous attempt.

"Hold your boomerang as close to the end as possible, tilting it outwards about 10 degrees to the right and aim it at an imaginary object 50 yards away." Went the instructions. Student Karl Wright was game to give it a try. But he did tend to be the impetuous type. "Watch where you're throwing that thing." Growled an angry onlooker. Hastily we turned Karl round and urged him to try again.

Total disregard

With individuality and total disregard for the instructions, Karl took a low-flying swipe from the hip and off went the boomerang.

Well, it didn't quite come back but the technique was unusual, and we've recommended him for a dance spot on Top of the Pops.

Our next guinea-pig was 19-year-old Beverley Jack, who is doing a course in hotel catering and management. Egged on by her friends, Beverley took a long slow look at what she had to do. She discussed tactics with photographer Mike Stephen and then, with the theory and the boomerang firmly grasped – off she set.

The wood flew out of her hand – and plummeted to the ground. A second try proved to be better -marginally – but it was clear that boomerang throwing was not Beverley's forte, and we were just beginning to wonder if it was anyone's when a voice from our feet informed us we were doing it all wrong.

Deadly fashion

Steve Buskie, an oceanographic technician, had been watching us while he sunbathed. His brother is in the merchant navy and had brought back a boomerang from Australia. Stev had had a go and could show us what to do.

"I'm not guaranteeing it'll come back, he warned as he got to his feet. And it didn't. But to be fair, he was only warming up. A short series of trials and he was off. While the boomerang never actually came back to his hand, it did turn in mid-air and spin towards us in a deadly fashion. The Australians use them to kill wild animals. Steve was having a go at murdering photographers.

The secret it seems is in the hold. Steve demonstrated the "swan neck" – the arm bent and the wrist twisted slightly to the side. As he threw, he dipped the boomerang so that it swooped down and then soared up, giving it the spin to return.

His efforts received a resounding cheer from Beverley Jack and her friends who had formed an appreciative audience.

With some resignation we realised on re-reading the instructions that Stev's method was exactly opposite to the one recommended by the manufacturers.

But then, of course, had we been in Australia we would have been the opposite way up – wouldn't we?

Before we left Duthie Park we had to let the older generation have a go. And who better to try than Mrs Chrissie Youngson from Adelaide in Australia. She emigrated 30 years ago but was home on holiday visiting Archie and Margaret Henry, 70 Cairncry Road, Aberdeen.

Chrissie was delighted to have a go despite the fact she had never thrown a boomerang in her life before – and it showed. She was worse than a wallaby in a wet paper bag.

"I brought some boomerangs home to my family once," she giggled, "but they used them as coathangers. I've seen a lot of boomerangs in Australia and maybe now I'll have a shot when I get home."

For the honour of Scotland, Archie Henry also had a go and proved that with practise he could become an expert. It must have been Chrissie's Australian influence – or could he have some Egyptian blood in him?

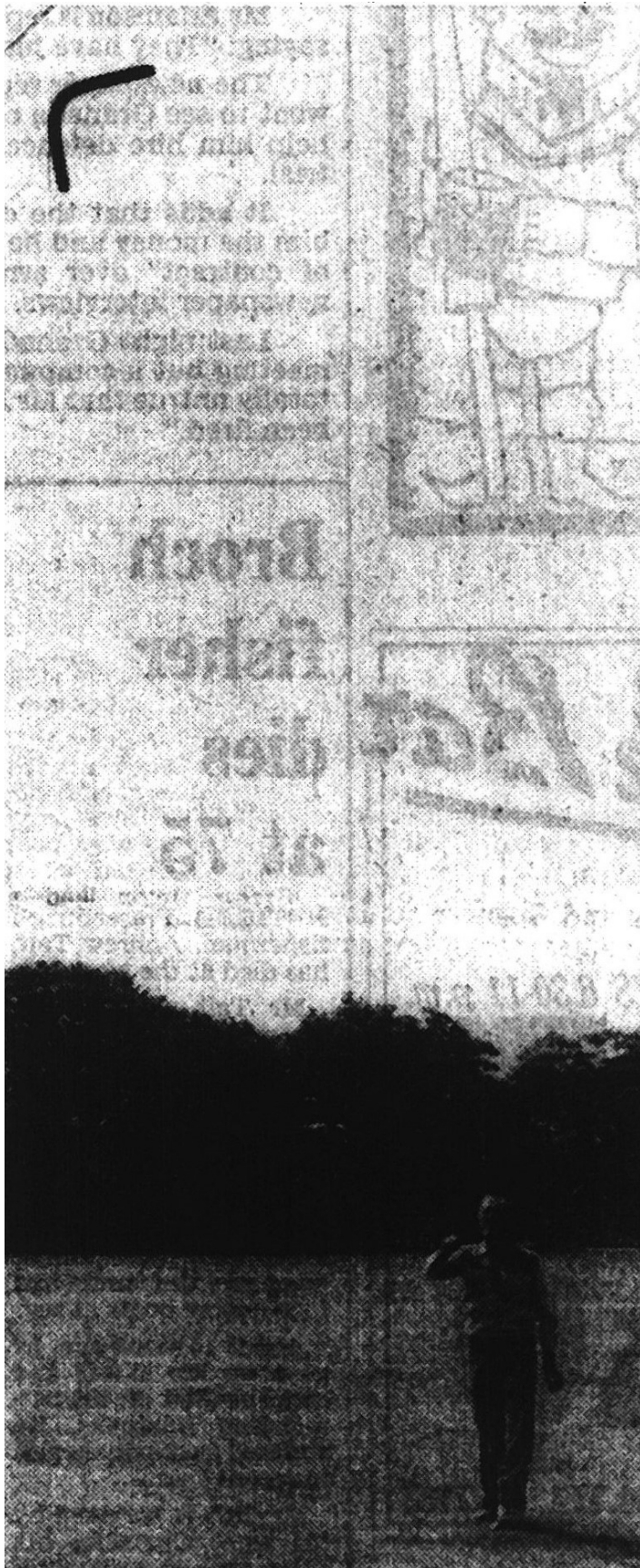
Human exertion

Wooden and gold capped ivory boomerangs have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs and dated long before the first Australian ones. In years to come perhaps the Scots will be credited with being first-class boomerang throwers.

At least they may be as long as no one finds a record of this little experiment. To paraphrase the words of Winston Churchill: "Never in the field of human exertion have so few given so much for so little."



The art of attempting to throw a boomerang. Left: Karl Wright demonstrates his hip throw. Centre: Beverley Jack – throwing was not her forte. Right: Steve Buskie came closest to success with his "swan neck" hold.



We have lift off: Archie Henry proved that with practice he could become an expert.

Aberdeen Evening Express, Friday, July 8, 1983

Firm set for take-off

By Gordon Fyffe

Boomerang man chances arm in North

Britain's only commercial boomerang manufacturer, Mr Adrian Green, is throwing in his job in Yorkshire to set up business in the Highlands.

And he is confident his move to Dornoch will produce as good a return as he reaped in Doncaster.

Mr Green, 33-year-old proprietor of **Treecraft Woodwork**, has bought a house at Clashmore and hopes to be operating at nearby Dornoch by the end of the year.

He has been offered a Highland Regional Council factory unit at the Dornoch industrial estate and is on the point of finalising the lease.

For some time, he has wanted to move to the Highlands and the impending retirement of his partner triggered his decision.

He employs two other workers, and they manufacture about 70 boomerangs a day - mainly for the overseas market.

When he moves North, he intends taking one assistant. "If things go well, I will obviously be thinking of engaging other staff.

My marketing outlets will remain the same so hopefully I can carry out operations as successfully at Dornoch as in Doncaster. About 90% of my products are exported." He said. Mr Green carves his products, which include rotorangs, out of ash. He recently appeared on the BBC1 children's programme, "Blue Peter", to demonstrate his technique.

Press and Journal, Friday, August 12, 1983

1984

North gem traders sparkle

Highland jewellery manufacturers have made a big impact on the US market following their appearance at a major New York trade fair.

A spokesman for Highland Craftpoint, Beaully, said yesterday they were very pleased with the sales by the 11 Scottish producers who exhibited in New York.

American buyers were especially attracted to the traditional silver pieces shown by Shetland Silvercraft of Weisdale. Established some 10 years ago, the business now has 12 employees with a strongly Shetland-oriented product range. Hebridean Jewellery from South Uist also received substantial orders for their unusual silver pieces.

One of Scotland's largest jewellery manufacturers, Ortak of Kirkwall, exhibited their large range of silver and gold jewellery which reflects Orkney culture and wildlife, while the copper and pewter bracelets, gauntlets, pendants and earrings displayed by **Fountain of Dornoch** were well received by the Americans.

Best known for setting precious and semi-precious stones, Grant Logan from Campbeltown gained worthwhile orders and Pat Cheney from Appin attracted attention with her unusual range of silver and enamelled jewellery.

Tony Holland from Highland Line, Achnasheen, showed his remarkable range of silver spoons.

Ola M. Gorie, Orkney-based and already well established in the US market, received large orders for her gold and silver jewellery.

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, February 29, 1984

Alphabetical list of exhibitors at the show (Scotland's Business and Industry Exhibition)

Presentation Plastics Lonemore, Dornoch. Sutherland. Tel. Dornoch *****. Marketing promotional and gift ideas in pvc. Stand No. 292.

Press & Journal, Friday, June 1, 1984

Business blooming at Dornoch

Dornoch Glass – whose delicately moulded glass flowers have impressed international crafts buyers since they made their debut at Aviemore’s Highland Trade Fair – are branching out.

Company Proprietor Mr Richard Bridges hopes to build on his past success with an improved range of flowers which he will unveil at the 1984 fair which opens at Aviemore on October 23.

Dornoch Glass and about 180 other craft businesses will be showing at this year’s 14th Highland Trade Fair, organised by Highland Craftpoint on behalf of the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

Press and Journal, Tuesday October 9, 1984

Glass ornaments shine at trade fair

By Duncan Ross

Success at the annual Highland Trade Fair at Aviemore has posed a dilemma for **Dornoch Glass** chief Mr Richard Bridges, who set up his business in the Sutherland town less than a year ago.

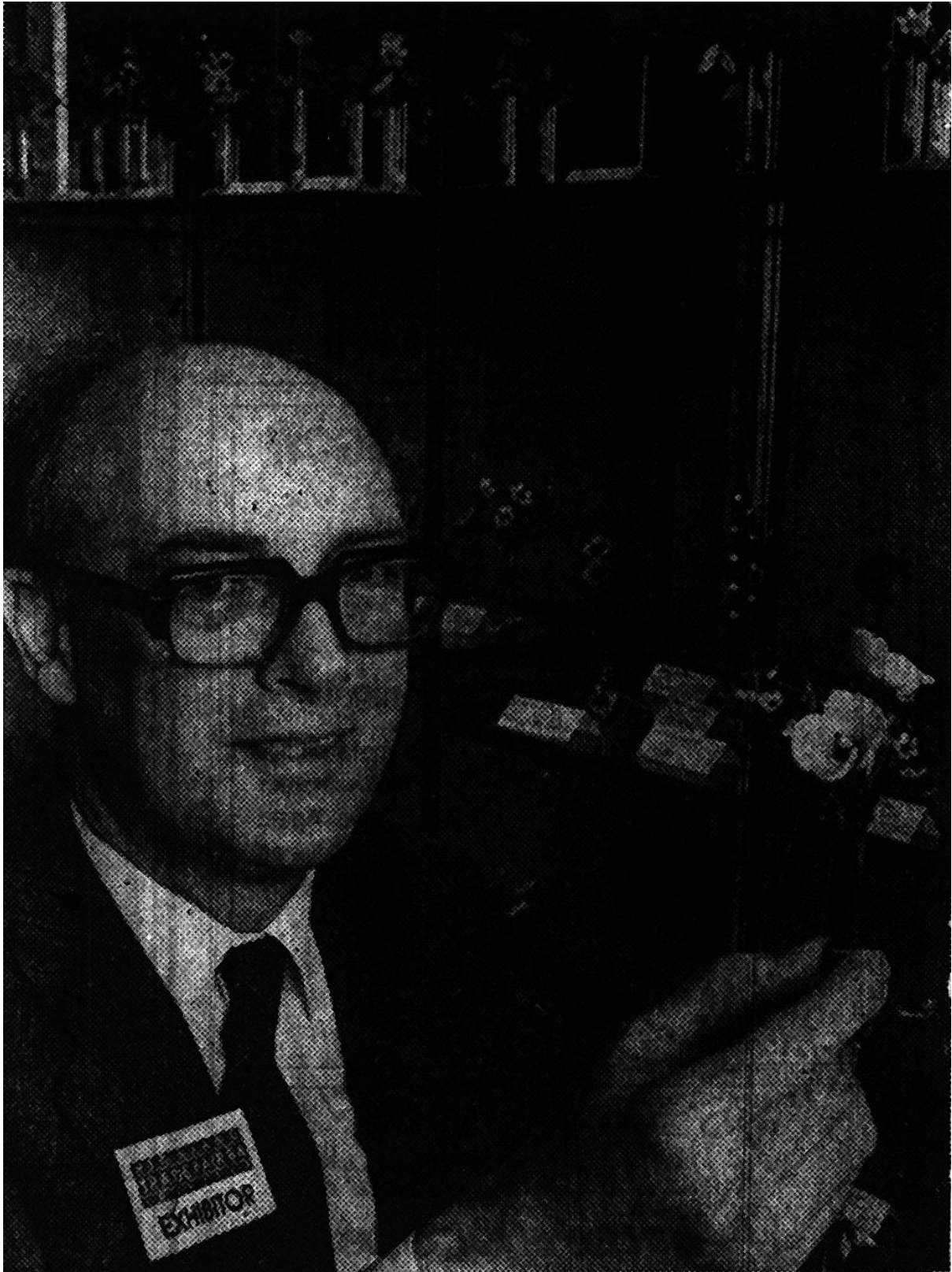
For he has been offered an order from Saudi Arabia for at least 2000 of his delicate ornaments, which are glass reproductions of wild and garden flowers.

However, he is worried that his business is not yet sufficiently established to go into the export market and is considering turning down the order.

Mr Bridges said yesterday “The buyer’s agent thinks these ornaments will sell well throughout the Middle East, and that the first order could be for up to 2000 of them, with more to follow. But he wants to check out the competition, and I will not take a decision until he comes back to me with the reaction of the market.”

The response from buyers had been “breathtaking” said Mr Bridges. “I have already sold my order book up to Christmas and we can now only accept orders for delivery next April.”

The event has also led to a prestigious order for Wester Ross cabinetmaker Mr Sydney Dempster – a range of up to 200 inlaid boxes for use on the world-famous “Orient Express”.



DORNOCH GLASS proprietor Mr Richard Bridges pictured with some of his miniature glass flower arrangements which have attracted a Saudi Arabian buyer.

Press and Journal, Friday, October 26, 1984

1985

Alphabetical list of exhibitors at the show

(Scotland's Business and Industry Exhibition)

Presentation Plastics, Inverness, Stand 262, Lonemore, Dornoch. Sutherland. 0862 *****
manufacturers of items in pvc.

The Highland Regional Council & Highlands and Islands Development Board Invite you to Visit their joint Stand No. 307

At Scotland's Business and Industry Exhibition, Bridge of Don from 2nd-5th June.

In conjunction with HRC and HIDB eight companies will exhibit on these stands as follows:

1. Duncan Chisholm, Kiltmaker (Highland Dress and accessories)
2. J G Eccles Printers Ltd (Printing)
3. Highland Insulation (Double glazed doors and window units)
4. Anne Morrison Designs (Designer Knitwear)
5. Tom Morrow Tarpaulins Ltd (Tarpaulins and related products)
6. Sutherland Knitting Company (Sheepskins and tartan hose)
7. **Treecraft Woodwork (Boomerangs, bobsleighs and camans)**
8. West Park Cabins (Jack leg cabins and chalets)

Information on investment and facilities in the Highlands and Islands will be available on the Stand or Contact:-

Development Department, Highland Regional Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, Tel: 0463 *****

Highlands and Islands Development Board, Bridge House, 27 Bank Street, Inverness Tel: 0463 *****

Press & Journal, Friday, May 31, 1985

Highland Regional Council development committee yesterday rubber-stamped a deal which will give Lancashire firm Inglefield Dales a 21-year lease of a factory at Brora and a short-term lease of a factory at Dornoch to manufacture creels.

The firm are to employ 12 people at each factory in a deal worked out with Development officials and the committee chairman, Councillor Duncan McPherson, Cromarty.

The firm - who will initially providing a local service to static-gear fishermen - could create another 20 jobs if they expand into the fish-farming industry.

The development committee gave a pat on the back to Sutherland area development officer Mr Ian Telfer for his work in arranging the deal.

Councillor Ron Macdonald, Brora, said Mr Telfer had persuaded the firm to set up in the area rather than in another region that they had been looking at.

Press and Journal, Thursday, August 8, 1985

Scots' toys and togs hit London

Jane Gill reports on small firms' success

Cabbage Patch dolls, beware – the Little Rascals are coming. They went down to London from Lairg for the Scottish Development Agency's trade show of toys and togs for children by Scottish designers currently showing at the SDA Trade development Centre.

The show, which continues until June 14, has work from about 60 small Scottish companies, more than 20 of them in the northern half of Scotland, several from the more remote areas. Designer Jayne Goulden's approach to her work is typical of her fellow-exhibitors. "I was uninspired by traditional 'pan-faced' rag dolls, so I set to work to evolve a more acceptable alternative."

The result was the Little Rascals, each unique in colour and character, with hand-sewn toes, feet and hands, and removable, washable clothes.

From Clatt, near Huntly, there are dolls' cots and cradles and an engine – all in pine. They are the work of Gillian and Simon Dalby Ball, who launched their business just over a year ago.

Simon, 34, trained as a teacher, then became a pig farm manager for eight years, until he was made redundant in 1983. He applied for an allowance under the Government Enterprise Allowance Scheme and spent six months converting his garden shed into a workshop to turn his hobby of toy-making into a living.

With his wife Gillian, also a trained teacher, he started making play-group equipment. Now the toy drop-sided cot which they sent to the London Design Centre carries a Design Centre label.

Both are now working full-time making a range of dolls' furniture in pine and on-the-spot testing is carried out by a resident research team – their nine-year-old son and a daughter of six.

Not only Cabbage Patch, but also Continental manufacturers of quality children's wear would do well to look to their laurels.

Knitwear at the current trade show includes hand-knitted baby shawls from Yell, Shetland; Fair Isle sweaters and children's jumpers from Lerwick; knitwear from South Uist, and from Lewis, the work of Alice Starmore who was featured in Lifestyle earlier this year, shortly before she went to Texas to lecture at the first annual convention of the Knitting Guild of America.

Other children's wear at the show includes pinafores from Quendale, Shetland, and sheepskin waistcoats, muffs, and hats, also from Shetland.

Among the toys are clowns and rag dolls from Old Deer; wooden spinning tops and teething rattles from Inch; soft toys from Newton-dee, Bielside, Aberdeen and from Sandness, Shetland; rag dolls and clowns from Stonehaven and wooden clowns from Orkney; teddy-bears from Lewis; dolls from Chapel of Garioch, and **bobsleighs and boomerangs from Dornoch.**

There are pram covers from Fortrose; hand-painted pewter miniatures from Kiltarlity and pottery with child-appeal from Helmsdale, and Orkney chairs from Westray.

Patricia Berry, SDA Trade Development Officer, says: "I am convinced that there is a lucrative market eager for the kind of individual, hand-made children's products currently being developed on a small-scale in Scotland. First-rate craftsmanship and design are being put into really beautiful clothes and such things as wooden toys, which parents are now demanding instead of mass-produced plastic.

"Many of the companies we are featuring are virtually 'one-man bands', but if order books are filled as a result of this promotion, there could be jobs available throughout Scotland for permanent employees and out-workers.

The Press and Journal, Thursday, June 6, 1985

1986

Printers hope to make good impression

A new printing business will be launched on Highland Regional Council's Dornoch industrial estate next week.

Smith and Deacon have been set up by two brothers-in-law from Derbyshire, and already their order book is filling up. Eventually, they hope to create four or five new jobs.

Mr David Smith worked for a large printing company in Derbyshire before moving to Dornoch a few years ago. His wife, Gillian, has a hairdressing business in the town.

His brother-in-law, Mr John Deacon, has a background in management and agreed to join the business when Mr Smith decided to set up on his own, with help from the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

Mr Deacon said: "We have taken delivery of our machines, and we hope to be ready to start up on Monday."

Smith & Deacon

Printers

We are a new firm of Lithographic Printers who can give you high quality and good delivery. Let us quote for your next printing requirement.

Unit 5A, Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland

Tel. Dornoch (0862) 810153

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, April 16, 1986

Alphabetical list of exhibitors

(Scotland's Business and Industry Exhibition)

Menzies Engineering Design Ltd. Stand 314 Whinhill, Dornoch, Sutherland. Tel. 0862 *****. Computer Aided Design Systems and Consultancy

Presentation Plastics (Inverness), Stand 253, Lonemore, Dornoch. Sutherland. Tel. 0862 *****. Manufacturers of complete range of flexible P.V.C. items.

Press & Journal, Friday, May 30, 1986

1987

Match of the day at Mossfield

Teams North and South take time off from searching for valuable League points this week, when knockout cup competitions take over...

Last Saturday, the Highland Queen Indoor 6-a-side Shinty Championship, the ninth in the series, proved once again both an outstanding social and sporting occasion...

The player of the tournament award – a presentation shinty, donated by Adrian Green of **Treecraft**, was won by Gordon MacIntyre (Oban Camanachd) despite his booking in the final.

The Oban Times, Thursday, October 22, 1987

1988

Dornoch businessman dies

Vice-chairman of Caithness and Sutherland Conservative Association Mr Ron Cameron has died in hospital at Golspie after a short illness.

Mr Cameron (68) Lonemore, Dornoch, was deeply involved in many aspects of community life after he and his wife, Marjorie, settled in Sutherland from London in 1977.

He was a vice-chairman of east Sutherland Council of Social Service, an active member of the local Speakers' Club, a former chairman of Dornoch Cricket Club and a member of Dornoch Community Council.

He set up **Sutherland Printers Ltd.**, in Inverness, then transferred the company to Dornoch. He was also a director of **Presentation Plastics Ltd.** Of Inverness, who specialise in the production of custom-made company giveaways.

Mr Cameron is survived by his wife and three children.

Press and Journal, Saturday, May 28, 1988

Definitely on right lines

A former Liverpool bobby's decision to start major railway-magazine publishing from his Dornoch base is paying dividends, with the makings of a worldwide readership for the new Highland-based publication.

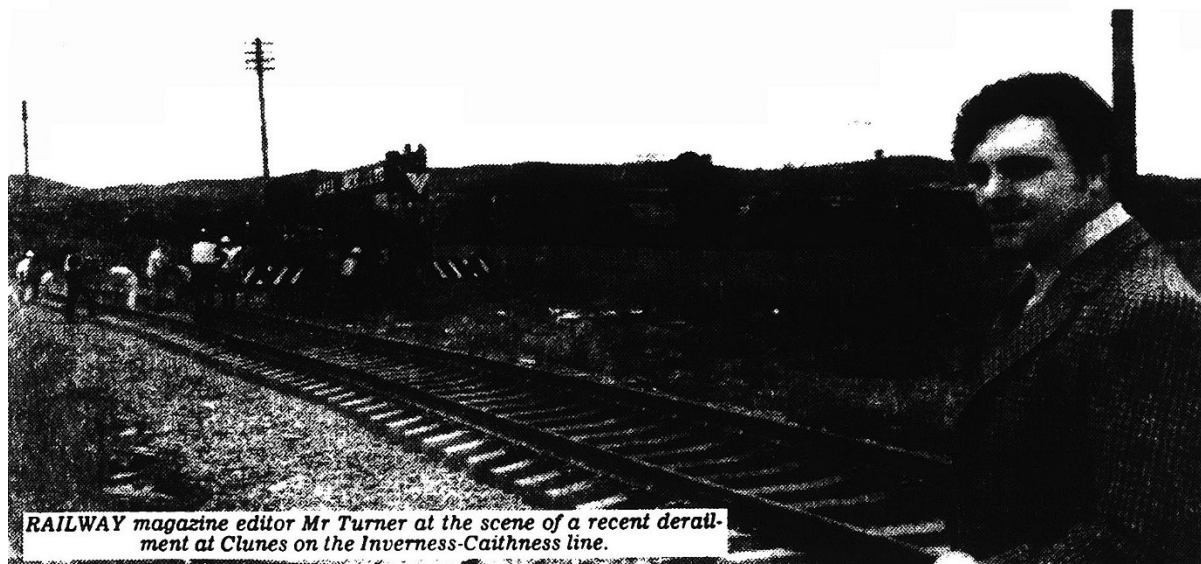
Fed up with life in Liverpool, railway enthusiast Mr Barry Turner (33) moved north seven years ago and, last year, decided that Scotland's railways were not getting the coverage they deserved from existing railway magazines.

Spurred on by the belief that there was definitely a market for more "homegrown" railway news and by his success with a small booklet on the former Dornoch to the Mound branch line, he single-handedly set about editing and producing the new magazine under the title "Railway Digest Scotland".

The first issue hit the streets in February this year and the venture has been well-received, with subscriber numbers steadily building up.

Six issues on, a significant development has been Mr Turner's recent decision to carry out his own printing - a move aimed at transforming the magazine from its marginal financial success to one with more potential.

He feels the acquisition of the **printing operation** will secure the long-term future of the magazine and also help with his hopes of publishing a number of books on Scottish railways. From his base at Dornoch's Station Square he said: "the response from railway enthusiasts has been tremendous, and now we have subscribers throughout the world."



Railway magazine editor Mr Turner at the scene of a recent derailment at Clunes on the Inverness-Caithness line.

Press and Journal, Saturday, August 27, 1988

Alphabetical list of exhibitors

(Scotland's Business and Industry Exhibition)

Menzies Engineering Design Ltd. Tel. 0862 *****. Stand 185. Whinhill, Dornoch, Sutherland. IV25 ***.

MED provide a full range of micro-based computer aided design and drafting services, from consultancy and evaluation to the installation of turnkey systems. They have recently launched two specialised engineering packages for profile burning and tool designing.

Press & Journal, Friday, October 21, 1988

Couple have designs on Highland history

David Telfer

Highland couple Hugh and Margaret Sutherland and their son Callum are making a name for themselves – and for other hundreds of other people in Britain and overseas – thanks to their range of sweaters embroidered with authentic clan badges.

They have already sold close to 700 lambswool sweaters with Lord Lyon-approved crests, and next year as their new business gets fully underway, they expect to sell up to 3000 at £25 per sweater.

Hugh and Margaret have run their own men's and ladies wear shops at Dornoch for 10 years. Last year, when they were looking around for an additional business, they hit on the idea of clan sweaters.

"It came simply as a brainwave, and as far as we know we are the only firm marketing this idea," said Hugh.

"We began with our own Sutherland crest, but after selling about 150 sweaters over a few months last summer we decided this was a business idea with considerable potential and that we should expand.

"It took almost 12 months of research to come up with authentic crests and mottoes and get them approved by the Lord Lyon, but now we can offer 30 of the most popular clan badges. If sales take off, we hope to go back to the Lord Lyon next year for approval for more crests."

All the badges feature a circular belt and buckle motif with the appropriate crest in the centre and a motto around the belt, and all are fully embroidered at Dornoch on sweaters bought in from the Borders.

At present the Sutherlands are using a £6500 computerised sewing machine to do the embroidery, but within the next month they plan to invest in a £17,500 twin-head machine to step up production. This will also allow them to develop areas of business such as embroidered sweaters for golf clubs and other clubs and associations.

The new venture has already meant one more job within the family business. Som Callum (25) has left his banking career to run the company formed to market the jerseys – **Clan Sweaters Ltd**. Once the new machine is installed, two more jobs will be created. Brochures sent abroad in Clan Sutherland newsletters have already brought a healthy response from North America, Australia, and New Zealand. The sales potential abroad is clear, and could soon lead to one or more of the Sutherlands visiting clan societies and major stores in the US to sell their products to expatriate Scots and their descendants.

- David Telfer

The Press and Journal, Friday, October 28, 1988

Finished item finishes up with the Finnish!

Finnish trade commissioner in Edinburgh, Mr Matti Koiranen, asked Sutherland development officer, Mr Ian Telfer, for something unusual to send back in his diplomatic bag to Helsinki.

And when Mr Telfer suggested a Dornoch-made boomerang, Mr Koiranen, who has extensive fish-farming interests in Sutherland, jumped at the offer.

But when Mr Telfer asked the manufacturer, Mr Adrian Green, of **Treecraft Woodwork**, Dornoch, to send a sample to the Finnish consul's office in Edinburgh's George Street, back came an order for 1000 boomerangs – which are to be sent out by a Finnish mail order company as a sales gimmick.

The real “boomerang” is that Mr Green makes his versions of the ancient Aborigine weapons from birch plywood – imported from Finland!

- Tailpiece -Getting their own back, eh!

The Press and Journal, Thursday, April 4, 1988

1989

Letters

... Stick to facts.

Sir, - I refer to your recent Editorial regarding the removal of our new Sprinter units to Wales to replace defective units there, and also to Mr Ellis's reply (December 21).

I have to agree with Mr Ellis when he says he was appalled by the “flippancy, insensitivity and downright inaccuracy of your Editorial”.

Why waste space and time making up stories, when the facts and the real truth make much better reading?

The facts are that no matter how good the reason may be, British Rail have demonstrated that at a moment's notice the so-called “investment in” and “commitment to” the railways in the North can be diverted elsewhere.

Real commitment and real investment would be shown by the construction of the Dornoch Firth rail crossing.

Barry C. Turner, Editor, **Railway Digest Scotland**, Station Square, Dornoch.' [**Dornoch Press Ltd.**]

The Press and Journal, Monday, January 2, 1989

Sutherland hotels raided

Police in Sutherland are hunting housebreakers who raided four premises at Dornoch during the night.

They broke into the Burghfield House Hotel and took £350 in cash from a bar, and the Eagle Hotel where they removed £40 from a collection bottle.

They were less lucky in the Treecraft woodwork factory and Gordon's bus garage on the industrial estate, where it appears only tools were taken – possibly to assist in the other break-ins.

Press and Journal, Saturday, June 10, 1989

TREECRAFT CAMANS

“These Treecraft shinty sticks sure are great.”
Full length laminated camans made in hickory and ash
Primary . Junior . Senior
Contact – Adrian Green
Treecraft Woodwork, 6C Industrial Estate
Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3JF
Telephone – Work (0862) 810021; Home (0862) 88282

Press and Journal, Monday, September 25, 1989

TREECRAFT CAMANS



**FULL LENGTH LAMINATED CAMANS
MADE IN HICKORY AND ASH**

Primary • Junior • Senior

Contact — ADRIAN GREEN
TREECRAFT WOOKWORK, 6C INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
DORNOCH, SUTHERLAND IV25 3JF
Telephone — Work (0862) 810021; Home (0862) 88282

1990

Sale by Public Roup, on Wednesday, March 21, at 11 a.m., Volkswagen LT28 Mobile Chip shop (Y registered). 19,000 miles, MOT to November 1990. At **Gordon's Bus Garage**, Station Square, Dornoch. Terms Cash. For Viewing, telephone 0862 810 503.

The Courier and Advertiser, Friday, March 9, 1990

Highlands and Islands Development Board Short Courses for Business

HIDB have arranged the following short course which will be staged at the HIDB/Craftpoint premises, Beauly

All you need to know about wood finishes

A 2-day short course, 31 March and 1 April 1990

This demonstration based course will attempt to provide a rich and informative overview of the subject by bringing together experienced practitioners from different wood sectors.

The course will be tutored by 5 experienced woodworkers
Willim Trist of the Edinburgh firm Trist & McBain, a commercial workshop specialising in all forms of furniture restoration.

Rod Wales of Wales & Wales, East Sussex, a furniture design and production workshop producing prestigious commissioned work for the corporate/ commercial market.

Adrian Green of **Treecraft Woodwork, Dornoch**, who is concerned with high quality joinery work, especially door and window manufacture. The firm also manufactures thousands of boomerangs every year.

Howard Raybold, a London-based artist and woodcarver of decorative objects. His finishes are usually arrived at through a process of applying and removing pigments to carved or 'worked' surfaces.

Sandy Mackilligan, the event co-ordinator, who has recently relocated his workshop from the south of England to Argyll. He specialises in commissioned furniture and was one of the presenters at the Highland Craftpoint Furniture Seminar staged in 1982.

The fee for the course, inclusive of lunches on both days, is £60

For a fuller description of this course and an application form, please telephone or write to:
Barbara Campbell, Training Services, HIDB Business Unit
Bridge House, 20 Bridge Street, Inverness IV1 1QR,
Telephone Direct Line (0463) *****

The Oban Times, Thursday, March 22, 1990

1991

On the tartan trail to success

Tartan, with the possible exception of whisky, is probably Scotland's most famous and enduring icon.

Whether decorating shortbread tins and kitsch Highland Dolls for the tourist market, or in the kilts and plaids worn by Scots all over the world, tartan is instantly recognisable as a part of Scotland's heritage.

There is even a piece of tartan on the moon, left there by Apollo astronaut Alan Bean, as a tribute to his McBean ancestors.

The earliest recorded reference to tartan is in the Lord High Treasurer's accounts of 1538, but a tartan-like piece of cloth found stuffed in the neck of a roman pot, circa A235, suggests that the material was worn long before then. Now there are over 2,000 different tartans registered with The Scottish Tartans Society in Comrie, Perthshire.

Mr David Herschell, Curator of The Tartan Museum which is operated by the Society, said: 'We have a register of all publicly known tartans and most of these are accredited by the Committee of the Society which checks to ensure that any new tartan does not duplicate an original design.'

The motto of the Society is 'Bring forrit the tartan' which they adopted from the days of the British Raj when a force was trying to break through to the beleaguered city of Lucknow and was held up by the tenacious defence of the Indian Mutineers.

General Sir Colin Campbell, exasperated by the delays, shouted: 'Bring forrit the tartan! Let my own lads at them.' A piper played 'On with the Tartan' and the Highland soldiers of the 93rd (The Thin Red Line) stormed a breach in the walls winning six Victoria crosses in the process.

Mr Herschell said: 'It is stories like this that create interest in the kilt and tartan in general, we get 'phone calls from people all over the world telling us their name and asking what tartan they are entitled to wear. If there is none, they often want to have one designed and we advise them on how to go about it.'

According to Mr Herschell only one per cent of Scots wear a kilt as part of everyday dress, although the majority of Scotsmen own one or hire one out for special occasions.

Tartan is rapidly becoming an item used by various companies, societies and institutions as logo of sorts. In recent years tartans have been designed and registered for Glasgow's Year of Culture, the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the town of Cumbernauld, British Gas and most recently, the Flower of Scotland tartan as a tribute to the late Roy Williamson.

One of Scotland's major manufacturers of tartan cloth is **Lochcarron of Scotland who have small mills at Lochcarron and Dornoch** but are based mainly in Galashiels.

Mr Jack Short, the firm's General Manager, said: 'We have the world's biggest range of tartans, producing over 600 for most of Scotland's major kiltmakers.'

Lochcarron produce various weights of cloth to suit manufacturer's needs, ranging from 16oz for kilts to 10oz for scarves, ties and ladies' skirts. According to Mr Short, amongst the most popular tartans for the tourist trade are Royal Stewart, Black Watch, Lindsay and Mackenzie.

Mr Short continued: Last year we produced over 155,000m of cloth which is not a particularly large amount. In a good year we would expect to produce around 200,000m.'

The next stage of production of tartan items are kiltmakers like Kinloch Anderson, Kiltmakers to the Royal Family. All kilts and other items of highland dress are made to measure, and the process may take anything from four to eight weeks to complete.

A spokesman for the company said: 'As well as dealing with the Royal Family, we cater for around 300 individuals a year. Unlike a suit a kilt can last a lifetime and therefore a lot of care is taken in getting it to hang right etc.'

The Royal Family's interest in highland dress began when Queen Victoria bought Balmoral and then Prince Albert himself designed the Balmoral Tartan which is now supplied exclusively by Kinloch Anderson.

This probably finally helped bring tartan and the Scottish way of life back into favour after the English Government banned the wearing of Highland dress after the defeat of the Jacobite rebels at Culloden in 1746.

An act was passed which decreed: 'No tartan or partly coloured Plaid or Stuff shall be used for Great Coats or Upper Coats' and also forbade the wearing of the 'Plaid, Philibet or Little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder Belts, or any part whatsoever of what particularly belongs to Highland Garb.' The one link which was allowed to remain were the kilts of the Scottish Regiments.

The modern kilt is based on the feileach beag, the little kilt, which itself was derived from the feileach mor, the long plaid which the wearer wrapped around his body, belted at the waist and then the ends slung over the shoulder.

Interest in Highland Dress and tartan in general seems to be constantly increasing. The Scottish Tartan Museum last year saw 14,000 visitors pass through its doors, compared to 8,900 the year before. Mr Herschell said: 'We seem to have even more people already this year. The attendance is 90 per cent up for the same period last year.'

If the attendance figures for Comrie's Tartan Museum are anything to go by, then a cloth that has endured for nearly 2000 years, has a future which is anything but chequered.

The Oban Times, Thursday, June 20, 1991

Training Group's 25th Anniversary Dinner

East Kilbride and District Engineering Group Training Association Ltd celebrated its 25th anniversary in style last weekend with a dinner held in the beautifully appointed Trades Hall in Glasgow.

It was a memorable evening at which all four former members of the Association, the first top apprentice of the year from 1966, and representatives of companies and organisations who have been associated with the Training Association over the past quarter of a century gathered to pay tribute and renew friendships...



Who cut the cake?

Staking their claim for the honour (left to right above) are second chairman Bob Bowie now chairman of Menzies of Dornoch, Norrie Caddenhead, personnel manager Joy Manufacturing who was fourth chairman, Jack Martin retired Scottish manager of the Engineering Industry Training Board, Peter McCree formerly of John McDonald who was third chairman, David Mackay formerly East Kilbride Coachworks the first chairman, general manager George Roger who served with them all and his current chairman Tom Lister.

East Kilbride News, Friday, September 13, 1991

North couple build business on boomerang success

A boom trade in boomerangs has set a Sutherland firm on course to establishing a thriving joinery business.

Since moving to Dornoch eight years ago, English couple Adrian and Judith Green have steadily built up the order books at Treecraft Woodwork.

Their expertise in making boomerangs remains an important part of their operation. Some of them end up in Australia – and never come back again!

But over the years the couple have diversified, with their main stock-in-trade now being the manufacture of doors and windows.

Treecraft's turnover has increased sixfold since it started up, and it currently employs two full-time workers.

The latest expansion plans at Dornoch industrial estate are being backed by a grant from Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise (Case).

Case is contributing £4,800 towards the purchase of a four-sided planer which will significantly speed up the production line.

At the same time, Treecraft is in the throes of negotiating a long lease with Highland Regional Council.

The couple hope to increase the workforce as the business develops, though Mr Green is wary of making forecasts.

"I'm not one to exaggerate the potential. People who set job targets and try to fulfil them can take gambles that are unwise.

"We'll recruit as soon as we are able – but we can't expand until we get more space to work in."

Case chief executive Mr Andrew Thin yesterday said Treecraft was exactly the type of small firm the local enterprise company wants to encourage.

"The main reason we have helped this firm is that they have shown initiative and imagination in building up their business so successfully."

Press and Journal, Wednesday, September 18, 1991

1992

Recruitment**... Dornoch Press Limited**

Colour Print Professionals

Print Worker

We are looking to recruit a person with a good knowledge of Small Offset Litho Printing. Preferably with some experience of full colour printing and the ability to work to high standards with minimum supervision.

Please apply in writing to:

Mr Barry C. Turner, Dornoch Press Limited, Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland, IV25 3PG

The Press and Journal, Friday, September 11, 1992

Dornoch Press proudly sports the print industry's badge of excellence

Jean Bambrick

An expanding Sutherland firm is making its own imprint through top quality service

When ex-policeman Mr Barry Turner took over as managing director of **Dornoch Press** in 1988 while looking for a competent printer for his own use, he little thought the company would become the first printers in the North of Scotland to be awarded the British Standard for excellence.

Now, with the award proudly displayed, Dornoch Press is en route to an expanding future as commercial printers offering competitive and speedy offset-litho full colour printing.

The business was started in 1985, and it is some measure of its success that these are the fourth premises it has occupied since then. Now, once again, a move to bigger premises is required!

Mr Turner's own move into the world of printing began with a magazine called "Railway Digest Scotland" which he launched because of his own keen interest in trains.

"As the company became busier the pressure of work made it impossible for me to do justice to the editorial," he explained, "so today it is published in Dundee but printed by us."

His other publications come from as far afield as "Oil and Gas Finance and Accounting", published in London, to short-runs of books and magazines, stationery, forms, cards, brochures, leaflets and posters.

The present print shop, which occupies 1000 sq. ft of a Highland Regional Council industrial unit, has three presses, and has just taken delivery of a RYOBI 522 top quality two-colour offset litho to complement the 500K and the 500 NNB already installed.

This makes it possible for Dornoch Press to handle a wide variety of work at competitive rates.

Mr Turner is grateful for the financial help and encouragement he received from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise schemes, which made it possible for him to apply for the British Standard award.

"We had 18 months to work towards it," he said, "beginning with a 16-day consultancy to introduce us to what the BSA entailed, and its application to our particular business.

"We had to generate records to prove that we were complying as a company, and then an assessor came and spent two days checking to make certain that all the conditions had been implemented.

"In future we shall be subject to twice-yearly checks to ensure that we continue to comply with these standards," he added.

The hard work and dedication finally paid off when Caithness and Sutherland MP Mr Robert MacLennan presented the award at the end of last month.

"I feel it will help us to win many more orders, as clients today are increasingly looking for firms with an independently evaluated reputation for quality," Mr Turner said.

Already the annual turnover has increased from £10,000 in 1988 to £150,000 in the current year, and the firm employs seven people. It is hoped to take on two more staff before the end of the year.

In the past, much of the work came in through personal recommendation, but next month will see the start of an ambitious direct mail targeting of businesses with details of all that full-colour printing has to offer.

"I find this a challenging and satisfying business to be in." Barry Turner added.

If Dornoch Press Limited had a motto it could well be: From Conception to Completion, which is good news for all firms and individuals wanting to print anything from a sheaf of poems to a well-designed full-colour leaflet extolling the tourist attractions of the Highlands!



'Robert MacLennan, MP for Caithness and Sutherland (left) presents the BS5750 Certificate to Barry Turner, Managing Director and David Smith, Production Director of Dornoch Press. The certificate is a testimony to the quality achievements of the company.

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, September 23, 1992

Dornoch Press Limited
Colour Print Professional
Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland, IV25 3PG
Telephone: (0862) 810153 Fax: (01862) 810608'

[one of a group of adverts for associated companies in a feature on the opening of John Glover (Tractors) Conon Bridge]

The Press and Journal, Saturday, December 19, 1992

Eggsactly What You Need!

Come and see the egg-citing range of Christmas specials of Eggbert and friends.

Not to mention our wonderful Christmas gift ideas from
Ola Gorie . **Fountain of Dornoch** . St Justin . Enchantica

And our Eggstensive range of Horizon Porcelain Jewellery and Gifts.

To solve all Christmas present problems visit:

The Celtic Craft Centre

15 Inglis street, Inverness

Tel: (0463) 713123

Open Mon-Sat 9.00 p.m.[sic] – 5.30 p.m.

Late Night Christmas Shopping

14-19 December 9.00 am – 7.00 pm

21 -24 December 9.00 am – 8.00 pm

The Press and Journal, Monday, December 21, 1992

1993

Highland Leathercraft

Handmade Saddlery to order Disabled equipment specialist Driving Harnesses High Quality
Tack repairs

Unit 5B, Station Square Dornoch

Tel. 0862 811030

The Press and Journal, Friday, July 23, 1993

Real community spirit 'alive and kicking'

Judith Napier examines the efforts in Sutherland to arouse more confidence'

A new effort to inspire business enterprise around Scotland looks as though it will pay dividends.

People may be diffident about making formal overtures with officialdom, but when officials are prepared to go to them it's a different story.

According to Highland Region's development officer for Sutherland, clinics held jointly with Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise around the district have borne fruit.

Now, the scheme will be extended to regular dates throughout Sutherland to give everyone, including those away from the main population centres, the best chance to benefit from business advice.

"People may have a seed of an idea, and with just that little bit of encouragement they may decide to go for it," says Dornoch-based Iain Telfer.

"The district needs plenty of help to regain self-confidence in the face of a number of economic setbacks."

Employment crises out-with the district have at times had repercussions here – in the heyday of oilrig jacket fabrication at Nigg, 370 people commuted from East Sutherland.

Manufacturing has been less successful because of Sutherland's distance from markets and raw materials – although the revitalising of Brora woollen mill has proved a success, with an enthusiastic management and 110 workers now employed there.

Service industries generally do better. Iain Telfer says that, in this context, the loans provisions through Highland Opportunities Ltd. Has been a particularly effective device in fighting the area's problems.

"Services can do well, and they are usually about local people."

Clearly about local people is the region's Community Development Projects Initiative, which has been well used in Sutherland.

"There is," says Mr Telfer, "a real community spirit still alive in this area."

A quarter of all the region's grants in this category have come to Sutherland.

Testament to this are projects as diverse as the Durness Golf Course clubhouse, Am Bratach magazine, Bonar Bridge/Ardgay Golf Club's expansion, Skerray croft renovations and investment in projects still in their early stages like a museum for Dornoch and a Pictish centre at Kincardine old church.

Timespan, Helmsdale's award-winning heritage centre, was an early success.

“It just shows what a very enthusiastic and hard-working committee can achieve.” Says Mr Telfer.

Development officer since 1974, he is more qualified than most to comment on Sutherland’s prospects. And he agrees it would be wrong to paint too rosy a picture.

“But on the horizon, it looks as though there are a lot of opportunities in the offing.”

Among those he lists marine activities. Fish farming, with new opportunities opening up, for example, in Loch Shin, offers year-round employment and, he believes, is a regime well suited to a rural population.

“In the Highlands, we may not have a factory-floor attitude, but that type of husbandry appeals.”

Shellfish farming, too, with a minimal investment, is a useful adjunct to the crofting way of life.

Equally appropriate for such a remote area are high-tech computer industries where distance is no object to success. This will be demonstrated in the establishment of a telecottage at Bettyhill.

Varied views on prospects in the wind

Alternative energy sources have been tested in the North for some years and Sutherland, with its miles of coastline and remote hilltops, has potential for renewables, including waves and wind.

Sutherland District Council, among others, has already voiced doubts about the benefits to the indigenous population from wind farming.

A number of planning applications for test turbines have been lodged, but there are fears that developers might reap the rewards, with no benefit to local residents who, in the words of one Melvich farmer, must “bend to the wind” 365 days a year.

In the construction phase, jobs would become available but thereafter employment would be scant, and there are demands that community funds should be a condition of wind farms.

More demands for community funds – in the “megabucks” league, this time – come in relation to the proposed superquarries at Durness and West Loch Eriboll.

Mr Telfer says, in common with regional councillor Francis Keith, that, given built-in environmental safeties, the projected 80 jobs stemming from such a development mean the region must pursue it.

On the other side, a swiftly established opposition group claims new jobs would be offset by those lost in tourism and fish-farming and would destroy the “clean” image which is one of Sutherland’s most powerful assets for fishing, agriculture and tourism.

‘Other prospects include forestry – a topic being addressed in the multi-agency Mid-Sutherland Initiative, designed to tackle the particular problems of an area badly hit through being bypassed by the Dornoch Bridge.

Both forestry and fishing could be even more profitable, it is accepted, if more value – fish processing, timber dressing – could be added to the product before leaving the district.

The advent of the single European market could be a powerful encouragement to start adding more value to raw materials produced in Sutherland. The regional council is hosting a “European awareness seminar” in Golspie next month, to encourage Sutherland people to confront this new market.



Sutherland development officer Iain Telfer (right) at Dornoch industrial estate speaking with **Fountains of Dornoch** proprietor Charles Fountain. The firm produces a wide range of hand-made jewellery and tableware in silver, pewter and copper.

The Press and Journal, Monday, September 20, 1993

This year's trade fair is voted 'best yet'

Three Highland companies with a record 63 appearances between them in the 23-year history of the Highland Trade Fair agreed that this year's event in Aviemore was "the best one yet".

Plumemakers Garvie Enterprises, of Kilmore, near Oban, have attended every fair since it began at Aviemore in 1970; silversmiths **Fountain of Dornoch** have clocked up 21 appearances, and Highland Stoneware, of Lochinver, have just completed their 19th visit.

Iain Wells, of Garvie Enterprises, said: "This event has, down the years, given us customers worldwide – just anywhere there are people of Scots heritage.

"But this year's fair has been especially good, coming at such a difficult time – I'm now even more optimistic that the recession is ending than I was a week ago."

And as he surveyed the record 700 stands, he said: "The growth has been staggering – and a great tonic to Scottish crafts."

Highland Stoneware, which employs 24 people at Ullapool, have done so well that managing director David Grant has a real ... head-ache.

"Our Christmas orders require 14 weeks' full protection – and we've only half that time to complete them," he said happily.

"We'll need to work flat out to get through the workload, but at least it's a problem of success. In fact, we're now looking to take on more skilled people.

"We've picked up new offers from Dubai and Hong Kong – but what has impressed me is the really strong commitment of the Scottish buyers, who have bought in far greater numbers than a year ago."

Highland Stoneware, launched 20 years ago next summer, now has a £500,000 turnover and their hand-painted crockery sees three Securicor lorries leave Lochinver for destinations worldwide.

Charles Fountain, whose Sutherland silver jewellery range celebrated its "coming of age" at the fair, said: "The event has blossomed into a wonderful shop window, pulling in more buyers each time from far and wide.

"We've had a good build-up this week to add to our US and European client list for our Celtis-era items."

The Press and Journal, Thursday, October 28, 1993

Companies in Euro push

By John Vass

Europartenariat Scotland 1993

Management teams from nine companies in the Highlands and Moray will join representatives from nearly 1,300 firms from all over Europe at Scotland's first Europartenariat, next week.

This annual business get-together, backed by the European Commission, is designed to encourage the smaller enterprises establish business relationships.

They want to see development, particularly in the less-favoured regions of the EC, stimulated by companies linking in joint ventures or by making manufacturing, marketing or distribution agreements with each other.

This year's gathering, which is being staged at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow, runs for two days - Monday and Tuesday - and is expected to boost trade for Scottish companies by a total of well over £10million.

The Highlands and Islands and Moray companies taking part are:

Celtic jewellery specialists Ola Gorie, Kirkwall; Callanish pharmaceutical manufacturers, Breasclate, Lewis; fish processors Pescanova UK, Conon Bridge; electro machine engineers Al Welders, Inverness; computer service firms Albanet, Evanton, and James Brough, Inverness; **Menzies Engineering Design, Whinhill, Dornoch**; micro process firm Speyside Electronics, Burghead; off-road and tracked vehicle builders Scot-track, Elgin, and William Reid Engineering, Forres.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise Euro Information Centre manager Roddy Dyce said Europartenariat was primarily aimed at medium-sized and small businesses.

Press and Journal, Wednesday, December 8, 1993

Highland firms are enthusiastic about part in Euro forum

John Vass

Highland business firms last night ended a two-day marathon of making contacts and forging trade links with companies from all over Europe and overseas. And the compound verdict was: "Tremendous: Terrific: Very, very worthwhile: Great bit of organisation."

All were pleased with the prospects for their work.

For John Currie, managing director of **Menzies Engineering Design**, Dornoch, one of the 300-plus UK small and medium-sized firms at Europartenariat Scotland, in Glasgow, it was a round of visits from potential partners from Trieste to Tel Aviv.

The head of the small firm that produces productivity tools for computer-aided designs spoke to a succession of foreign architects and engineers.

They included some not that far away, like Belfast architect Sam Thompson, who recalled preparing plans of Aberdeen's Triple Kirk development five years ago.

Ola and Arnold Tait, who own Orkney jewellery makers Ola Gorie, had earnest discussions with French businessmen attracted by the potential of their products as corporate gifts.

Hallmarking

The firms could be particularly use to the Orkney company in tackling the French import regulations o hallmarking, said Mrs Tait.

“Our goods have to be hallmarked in France and we are not that happy with the present arrangements.

Albanet/Qdata, based at Evanton, were finding interest from a dozen countries in both East and West Europe.

Breaking off from showing Dutch telecom expert Kees Versloot the advantages of their equipment, geared for the sophisticated telecommunications network which links the Highlands with the rest of Europe, director Iain Clark said he was delighted with the overall response.

Jim Hunter, managing director of A I Welder, Inverness, had a line-up of possible partners and customers.

Among them was Galway locomotive builders Unilok, whose managing director Michael Lalor discussed the prospects of links with the Inverness electrical engineering company. As far as trade was concerned, the busiest stall of all was Made In Scotland, Beauly, specialising in top-quality knitwear, crafts and other luxury products.

Quality

Manager Kathleen Hardie, who had five staff working on their big stall, said: “We feel we are spreading the word of Scottish quality goods simply by selling them as we are doing.

Visitors take them home and they’re asked where they came from – and that is how the word is spread.

“We are very pleased with business as you can see.”

Press and Journal, Wednesday, December 15, 1993

1994

New cash boost for port plan

Iain Grant

Scrabster Harbour Trust is to get £28'700 in business support from Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise.

The local enterprise company is chipping in the money towards the cost of storage buildings on newly reclaimed land at the port.

The trust's £115,000 scheme is part of a major £5.3million redevelopment of what is claimed to be the fastest-growing whitefish port in Scotland.

Further office and fish processing buildings are due to be built before the autumn at a total cost of about £450,000.

Case previously contributed £400,000 towards the £1million project to reclaim the land adjoining the new fish quay.

Trust chairman John Henderson said the prospects look encouraging, with the trust in contact with two prospective developers interested in processing ventures.

"The volume of business on fish landings continues to give us confidence and we're confident that everything we're doing will pay for itself at the end of the day," he said.

Last month, Case also contributed £14,300 towards new equipment for Hunter's woollen mills, Brora, in a development expected to protect 11 jobs.

A new decorative glass-blowing business in Caithness is among other new ventures supported by the enterprise company.

Katherine Dearness and Paul Brown, from Thurso, secured £2,700 to help them set up the venture in a Case-owned industrial unit at John O'Groats.

Other projects helped included: John Cook, Bettyhill, (purchase of digger equipment), £8,500; John O'Groats Laundry, Wick, £4500.

John Macleod, Geise (fishing equipment), £3,700; Budge and Swanson machinery group, Castletown, £3'400, Scourie campsite, £3,000; James Carter, Wick (fishing diversification), £2,800.

Ben Loyal Hotel, Tongue, £1,500; Barbara Morrison, Durness (bed and breakfast establishment), £1,400; Balnakiel Craft Shop, £700. Rhiconich Hotel, £300.

Sales promotion grants – Caithness Homes, Wick, £2,978; Assynt School of Flyfishing, £605; Dunroamin Caravan Park, Lairg, £520; **Menzies Engineering Design, Dornoch, £132**; Ousdale Weaving, Berriedale, £80.

Business consultancy grants – Highland Upholstery, Thurso, £550; Robin Clarke, Thurso, £463; Stag's Head Hotel, Golspie, £264.

Press and Journal, Monday, January 10, 1994

Shaving the costs will help keep Sutherland wood workers warm.

Judith Napier

A Dornoch carpentry firm is recycling its wood shavings to keep employees warm over the winter.

Adrian and Judith Green, who set up **Treecraft Woodwork** 11 years ago, have installed an automatic woodwaste-burning system which not only heats their workshops but cuts costs. The firm makes a wide range of products, mainly hardwood windows and doors, although among its other goods are boomerangs exported to Europe.

The processes generate dust and shavings which up to now, have had to be extracted and removed by a contractor. Increased production put a strain on that system.

Judith Green said: "Dust and wood shavings are natural by-products of our work and we need a highly efficient and reliable system to deal with them."

The business decided to invest £17,000 in an automatic heater which, said Mrs Green, allowed their existing extractor to operate efficiently again.

"The heater burns all our waste and returns heat into the workshop, making for a better working environment.

"The new system will enable our extraction system to function at maximum efficiency too and we will no longer rely on somebody else taking away our waste."

Local enterprise company CASE backed the project with a £4,300 grant.

Press and Journal, Wednesday, November 2, 1994

1995

Dornoch Press Limited

Notice is hereby given that in a petition presented by Donald Murray (Paper) Limited and R A Brand & Company Limited on January 5, 1995 craving the Court inter alia to order that Dornoch Press Limited having its Registered Office at Station Square, Dornoch, Sutherland, IV25 3PG be wound up by the Court and to appoint a Provisional Liquidator and an Interim Liquidator of the said Company, the Sheriff at Dornoch by Interlocutor dated January 9, 1995, ordered all parties wishing to oppose to lodge Answers with the Sheriff Clerk at Dornoch within eight days after intimation service and appointed Ian P Souter CA Moray House, 16 Bank Street, Inverness to be Provisional Liquidator of said Company until an Interim Liquidator of the said Company is appointed or the said Petition dismissed.

Bird Semple, Solicitors, 249 West George Street, Glasgow G2 4RB

Solicitors For Petitioner

The Press and Journal, Friday, February 24, 1995

1996

Top quality response to drive for excellence of service

By Bill McAllister

North companies are rushing to contribute their ideas to a new initiative aimed at strengthening the area's economy through enhancing business quality.

This follows last week's brainstorming sessions in Wick, Fort William and Nairn attended by representatives of some 150 firms as a prelude to a Champions of Excellence event at Eden Court Theatre, Inverness. On November 5.

"We've been delighted by the enthusiasm and calibre of the response," said Fiona Larg, chief executive of Inverness and Nairn Enterprise which is co-hosting the event with pan-Highland body The Quality Partnership.

It is encouraging that so many forward-looking business people are so willing to pass on their insight to other companies in the area - and we'll now be using 15 of these people at Eden Court rather than the nine we had originally intended.

"It means the quality message will be outlined on a business-to-business basis, which is the best way forward."

Lorraine Denovan and David Irvine Flett, of CSC Forest Products; Joan Currie, of **Menzies Engineering Design, Dornoch**; Raymond Taylor, of Royal Hotel, Thurso; Lisa Coghill, of Ackergill Tower, Wick; Paul Hafren, of Inverness College, and Richard Carey, of Caithness and Sutherland NHS Trust...

...These people will make presentations on business success at the Eden Court seminar which aims to spread best total quality practice through the Highlands and Islands economy. The aim is to air ideas for collaborative advantage to benefit the area's business sector.

The service and retail sectors have lagged behind others in the North in seeking quality recognition and the business gains this brings.

The Champions of Excellence aims to showcase innovation and to highlight key factors for achieving an outstanding level of performance.

It then aims to drive forward an action-oriented agenda to sign up more firms to work together in pursuit of excellence.

Press and Journal, Wednesday, October 16, 1996

1997

Sutherland jewellery firm to move south

By Willie Morrison

One of the Highlands' best known jewellery manufacturers is to relocate from its Sutherland home of 24 years.

Fountain of Dornoch Ltd., the second workshop to set up at Station Square industrial site in the historic cathedral town, is moving to smaller premises on Loch Lomond-side.

The name, however, will continue at the firm's new location near Dumbarton.

Yesterday silversmith Charles Fountain, who set up in business with his late father James, and mother Peterina in 1973, said health problems had forced him to scale down production.

"My hands have become slightly arthritic. I can still make jewellery, but not at such speed, so I must adapt to a studio rather than a workshop output," he said.

Glasgow-born Mr Fountain, 53, plans to move home from Golspie to Renfrewshire, where his wife Elizabeth already has a house, and commute to his new premises across the Erskine Bridge.

His mother, who worked long beyond retirement age and promoted the firm's goods at trade fairs, is to retire to Largs.

Worldwide

Strathclyde University honours economics graduate Mr Fountain spent his early career as a fast-track young executive with motor manufacturer Ford, before deciding his future lay in craftsmanship.

His father, a former dental technician who had adapted his skills to the silversmith's art, died only 10 months after the firm was set up, but his son and widow persevered, and between them turned Fountain of Dornoch into a success story.

Its silver and pewter products sell in tourist outlets all over Scotland, and it has exported worldwide.

Mr Fountain is now the sole employee at Dornoch and is to continue production until the end of this month, to complete a number of orders.

"I've seen over 30 businesses come and go at Station Square since we first set up," he mused.

"We remain a workshop rather than a factory. And latterly my mother and I were the only employees, along with the odd casual worker.

"But 70 people have worked here, in full-time, part-time or casual capacities, over the past 24 years. Our last full-time employee, Tom Clelland, retired last year after 22 years' service."

During his busy period in Sutherland, Mr Fountain travelled frequently to craft fairs in Britain and the Continent.

Despite working long hours as craftsman and administrator, he still found time to serve in the Territorial Army for 11 years, ending his service as major and company commander of the former 2/51 Highland Volunteer' Caithness and Sutherland company.

Quality

Former Highland Regional Council Sutherland development officer Iain Telfer said: "Fountain of Dornoch made a substantial contribution to the economy of East Sutherland, and it will be a big loss from Dornoch, especially as it was a good quality business, and a good tourist attraction.

"Charles himself was a strong supporter of craft fairs, he looked very smart in his kilt, and he was an excellent ambassador.

"I'm very sorry to see his business leave Sutherland."



Charles Fountain... in Dornoch for 24 years

The Press and Journal, Wednesday, May 7, 1997

1998

1999

Elegant town jail: offers over £100,000

A nineteenth century jail, where impoverished Highland crofters were at one time locked up by the laird for falling behind with their rents, is up for sale.

The historic Dornoch Town Jail, which comes complete with craft centre and its own little jailhouse, is being advertised in top journals throughout the country for the price of only a four-bedroom bungalow.

Although the Inverness-based agency selling it believes it could be a brilliant buy for the right person, it has been given a minimum price tag of £100,000 because they realise it might not be everyone's cup of tea.

The jail was built in 1850 and was used as a prison for 30 years before being sold to the army. Although the building has been used as a visitor centre in the summer, it still boasts all of its original features including narrow stairways and the stark flagstone corridor of 20 primitive cells reinforced with heavy iron doors and escape-proof locks.

The jail has never accommodated any murderers.

"Sheep-stealing was probably the most serious crime ever committed by any prisoner held in Dornoch Jail." Said Jimmy Bell, spokesman for the Dornoch Heritage Society.

The jail, in Dornoch's town square, has been run as a museum and craft centre since its current owners, Galashiels-based knitwear company, **Lochcarron**, bought the property in 1972.

Mr Bell added: "We were all a bit worried when this company bought it all those years ago because the town council had hoped to acquire the building, but it has been looked after very well.

"We hope that any new owners would retain it as it is, and not make big changes."

Andrew Broadbent, of chartered surveyors, Finlayson Hughes, said: "We have handled a few unusual properties over the years, but we don't sell jails very often. For the right person it could be a brilliant property, but it is not just a run-of-the-mill retail tourist outlet, even though it has quite a chequered history as a jail."

He added: "It has been owned by a large knitwear company for over the last 20 years.

"They have a big weaving room at the back, a shop at the front, holiday accommodation and a coffee shop, which is closed at the moment."

The listed building, which is in the centre of the town's conservation area and close to the town's championship golf course, will be subject to numerous planning restrictions owing to its important site.

Mr Broadbent said: "The jail has only just come on the market, and we are beginning to receive some interest, but it is an unusual property to sell.

"It needs imagination to get the best out of it, but the jail certainly has a lot going for it. The centre of Dornoch is a pretty busy place in the summer, but there is golfing all year round at Royal Dornoch golf course."

He added: "There is a lot of building for the money, but often when a building is listed, extra restrictions are placed on it.

Press and Journal, Tuesday, March 2, 1999

2000

Jail attraction

A 19th-century Sutherland jail is set to become a tourist attraction. The old Dornoch Jail was bought in February by Andy Johnston, of the Mullardoch Hotel, near Beauly. He said the old, listed building was now completely refurbished to make it an upmarket tourist attraction, due to open on April 20.

Press and Journal, Friday, April 14, 2000

Jail Dornoch

Now open in Dornoch Square
 Johnstons of Elgin . Pringle . Barbour . Island Heritage . Ortak . Ola Gorie . Highland Stoneware
 . Disteramics . Arran Aromatics . Country Images . Hume Sweet Hume .and many more...
 Highland Art and Crafts in Gallery
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Press and Journal, Monday June 26, 2000

2001

Jail Dornoch

John Laing . Arran Aromatics . Johnstons of Elgin . Hume Sweet Hume . Barbour . Island
 Heritage . Pringle Golf . Ola Gorie . Ortak . Disteramics . Highland Stoneware and many more...
 Highland Art and Crafts in Gallery
 Welcome . Tel. 01862 *****
[www.jail-dornoch .com](http://www.jail-dornoch.com)

Press and Journal, Monday June 11, 2001

Old jail to stage traditional Highland acts

By Andrea Elderfield

Traditional storytellers and musicians are attempting to shed a little light on Scottish folklore at **Dornoch Jail art gallery** this summer.

Every Wednesday in July, August and September, between 3pm and 4pm, the newly established art gallery will invite performers such as Young Scottish Musician of the Year, Gilliam Frame; finalists in the Young Folk awards and Royal School of Music and Drama graduates Hamish and Finlay Napier and Simon MacKerral to entertain and educate.

Storytellers Bob Pegg and George MacPherson will complete the education of visitors and locals alike by regaling them with tales of traditional folklore.

Jamie Conner, assistant manager at the gallery, said; "We are very excited about this and the calibre of people we have coming up here. We are very lucky to get them."

He went on to explain the reasons for the programme.

"Every Saturday the Dornoch Pipe Band play in the town.

There is nothing wrong with this vision of Scots culture, but there is so much more to it than that, especially storytelling and traditional music.

"So I wanted to show the visitors and the locals that there is a lot more to Scotland than bagpipes, ginger hair and hey jimmy hats."

The musicians rounded up by Mr Conner for three months of free concerts in the upstairs gallery will play among painting of Scottish landscapes.

Gillian Frame, who recently returned from one of the biggest Celtic festivals in the world - Celtic Colours in Canada - will play the fiddle and sing traditional Scots songs.

Jennifer Port, who played Clarsach for Madonna's wedding party at Skibo Castle and a group of students from North Highland College will play solos, duets and traditional music.

Storyteller George MacPherson of Skye will use traditional instruments made from the jaw bones of sheep to illustrate his folk tales.

On the final date, September 26, Gilliam Frame, Hamish and Finlay Napier and Simon MacKerral will play as their band Back of the Moon, and Bob Pegg will come back with more of his stories from around the world.

Press and Journal, Thursday, July 12, 2001