

## A Short Visit To Moffat

The weekend of August 10<sup>th</sup> was my first visit to Moffat town (something on my bucket list!), but not my first visit to Scotland and the scenery doesn't disappoint. I travelled by train and arrived at Lockerbie and enjoyed the car journey to Moffat seeing the beautiful rolling hills in the distance.

My visit wasn't just to see the town of Moffat but also to join the Clan on their 'Annual Gathering' which I was unable to do last year, and importantly to take on the role of Clan Secretary from Bunty Davies who now has the role of Treasurer. Thankfully Bunty was there to give me a warm welcome (as did everybody) and a great induction into 'all things Moffat'. I had a lot to learn!

I stayed at the Moffat House Hotel and the staff were also very friendly and helpful. I was looking forward to exploring the town the next morning once I had gathered some local information.

A must for me was the Harthope House & Moffat Museum run by knowledgeable and friendly volunteers. A short fifteen minute video set the scene for me on the history of the town and significant events in the town over the centuries. You can also see artefacts donated by the current Clan Chief's family. The museum is well laid out with plenty of explanations. What I did come away with was some interesting leaflets (so many to choose from) at only 20p. My choice was 'The Origin of the Moffat Name', 'The Early Moffat's', 'The Knights Templar', 'The Moffat Well & Spa', 'Air Chief Marshall Dowding' and even a Tsar of Russia! There were of course more pamphlets on other notables to Moffat, too many to enumerate here. I can also recommend the booklet 'Moffat in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Century' together with 'Moffat Miscellany a Moffat Bedside Book Volume 3' by John Storrar. It contains short articles from newspapers, magazines, journals, books, local historians, archives, and as John says in his preface "Moffat's history is extraordinarily rich". The book is well worth reading (as well as picking up perhaps volumes 1 & 2!) and of course, well worth losing yourself in the Museum for a few hours!

The next visit for me, was to follow the leaflet that I had collected on 'Moffat High Street Architectural Trail'. If you have never been to Moffat it has a very wide High Street. You will be glad to know that the trail is restricted to just the high street and no further! Historic Scotland has listed 37 buildings in these streets, 2 category A, 19 B and 16C. Some buildings dating from 18<sup>th</sup> century. Well worth a look around as you shop the High Street and the leaflet does give explanations and details on the buildings. No hard work there!

Venturing down one of the side streets I managed a quick look inside the Lothlorien Emporium (Well Street), an antiques and collectables shop. Stacked full of everything. Also

just opposite the Lothlorien is 'Moffat Bookshop', plenty of places to lose yourself and investigate, as well as the usual individual shops in a busy and vibrant town, with many opportunities to eat and stay. The 'Visit Moffat Guide', will definitely help you. I was running out of time now as I had agreed to meet Bunty in the afternoon, lunch was in Brodies (it has a gin bar but no I didn't)... I needed a clear head!

I didn't get time to visit the lake and gardens in Moffat, but as I am travelling again to Moffat next year, I shall make sure that the gardens are my first place to visit. There is also a memorial and plaque dedicated to Air Chief Marshall Lord Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of RAF Fighter Command in WW2, a son of Moffat.

In the afternoon, after Bunty and I had discussed 'all things secretarial', Colin Moffat joined us and our conversation then changed of course to family history. In the evening more of the Clan joined us for an informal supper in the lounge of Moffat House Hotel, with lots to chat about and also to laugh about.

Saturday was taken up with a Clan Committee Meeting in the morning, and after lunch (coffee and cake at Café Ariete) the AGM was held in the afternoon, where discussions included: expanding membership, feedback from individual committee members on the work they undertake for the Clan, looking to host the American Clan next year and the future of the Clan. The evening saw a good gathering of the Clan for dinner in the Buccleuch Arms –lovely food (you need a good appetite to do justice to it!)

A brief few days in Moffat, but a longer stay planned for next July, and more exploration further afield, I hope.

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