

Syllabus 2008/9

Heritage Meetings held at **Coalburn One Stop Shop**
Doors open **7pm** for **7.30pm** start

ALL WELCOME Members, Guests & Non-Members
Tea / Coffee at end of evening

SEPTEMBER

3 **SPECIAL OPEN MEETING** at **COALBURN SCHOOL**
SCHOOL'S CENTENARY. *Slideshow plus*
Guest Speakers: Former Teachers **June FEARNS & Rae COOK**

17 **Robert THOMS** - Glasgow Trams

OCTOBER

1 **Tam WARD** - Archaeology In Clydesdale

15 **Alec BAIRD** - Childhood Poetry + **Billy ROUGH** - The Cameronians

NOVEMBER

5 **Robert McLEISH** of Lesmahagow Parish Historical Association

19 **George RUSSELL** - Clydesdale's Mills

DECEMBER

3 **Raymond CAMERON** - Researching Family History

19 **TBA**

JANUARY 2009

7 **TBA**

21 **John ZAWADZKI** - SLIDESHOWS, *Various Subjects*

Front Cover Photo: **Coalburn Gala Day 2008**

Gala Queen 12 year old Amy Burnside and her Champion Robert Hay

Photo: JZ



newsletter
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Summer
2008

THE JIM HAMILTON HERITAGE SOCIETY OF COALBURN

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk



Photo by
Jim Kirk

Above Saturday 12th April 2008
Demolition of Burnside House and Ritchie's Hall

Coalburn News

Below

SMG Productions filming scenes for their new Taggart series in Coalburn during the first week of June. Most of the action took place in and around Garden Street. The Taggart team were brought in to investigate the discovery of two skeletons in an abandoned coal mine. The film will be televised during the Autumn. Don't miss it ! **Photos: JZ**

Deaths

- John SPEEDIE**
- Robert LENNOX**
- Betty RENWICK**
- Milles MOWAT**
- Eddie McKNIGHT**
- John OVEREND**
- Willie (Winks) WEIR**
- Isabel McINTYRE (Pate)**
- Helen TWADDLE (Campbell)**
- Sam COWAN**
- Betty CAMERON (Paterson)**
- Annie STEWART (Donoghue)**
- Robert (Robin) CATHCART**



COALBURN CHURCH BELL

by Peter McLeish

One of my abiding memories as a youngster was hearing the church bells ring in the New Year as did the pit horns and the shipyard sirens as well. Nowadays that tradition appears to be all but dead. Mind you if the truth be told there are no longer any pits in this area and Coalburn Church Bell has long since ceased to ring.

Former Minister, Rev Brian Cross, sent me some information about the bell several years ago. Made by Mears and Stainbank, 34, Whitechapel Road, London at a cost of nineteen pounds ten shillings (£19.50p), it was erected in 1905 though not paid for until 4th December 1906.

It bore the inscription “Come ye to the House of God”. Whether it was part of the original Church, I do not know. The fire in January 1918 which totally destroyed the building may have been a factor in it being sited at the corner of the adjoining wall of the Silver Band Hall where it sat on a structure of bricks for many years until it was taken down for safety reasons due to the framework becoming unstable.

There it remained until on 14th December 1989, when Jimmy Stewart of 35, Bellfield Road reported it as missing to the local Constable. The loss was intimated to the Co-operative Insurance Company the following month who disclaimed any responsibility to replace it as it was a separate structure from the Church. Commercial Union were contacted as well and that company similarly responded.

The Bell was 23% tin and 77% copper with an approximate scrap value of £200 while the replacement cost was quoted as £2,000 in 1990. It was never replaced and I doubt if it ever will. It has been said that it was removed because it was disturbing neighbours on a Sunday morning and is buried under a Motorway in the area. Of course the scrap value may have been an attraction. Who knows? With this in mind I penned the following lines in 2004:

Ding Dong

I wonder where the bell went, so many years ago,
Could it now be far away, I guess we'll never know,
There must be someone somewhere, who can surely tell,
What happened all those years ago?
To Coalburn's old kirk bell.

It wasn't worth a fortune, so the story goes,
Has it found a resting place, someone out there knows,
So if you know its whereabouts, was it melted down and sold ?,
Please tell the congregation,
Because the bell, it can't be tolled.

The changing face of Coalburn

by Peter McLEISH

The Hamilton Advertiser dated 6th March 2008 carried an article on planning applications received by South Larnarkshire Council and among them was one regarding an address in Coalburn Road which had been a shop, in which the applicant wished to change the use of the building and make it into two flats.

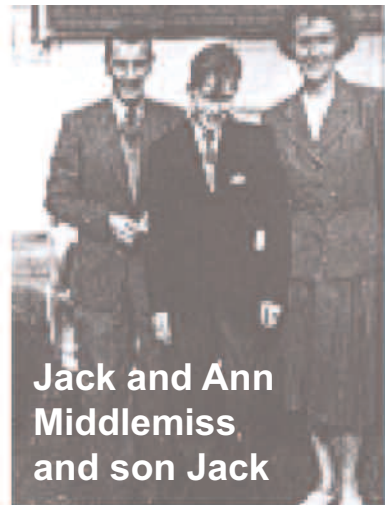
This is nothing new in the village as over the years several similar former commercial ventures have succumbed to the larger multiples and the housing market has taken over.

I remember well as a small boy going to the premises to which the new plan refers when it belonged to Mr Milligan, the chemist and purchasing ovaltine tablets which due to the rationing of sweeties during the Second World War, were purchased as a substitute.

I have heard it said that this particular building was erected to be used as the Police Station in Coalburn, but I have been unable to find confirmation of this story. It was also said to have been built by the Laird family who lived at Roselea at the top of the station brae.

There they had a confectionary shop and the new one was purpose built in the 1930's at what is now 69, Coalburn Road and later served as a fish and chip shop. (It has also been said that the shop was erected by the Thomson family).

John Laird and his wife Charlotte Weir were the first owners. Maggie named in the photo later married Willie Scanlon and they latterly lived in Beechmount Avenue with their two daughters, Charlotte and Ann. Willie was the Treasurer and an elder in Coalburn Church. Lizzie married John Hutchinson and they lived in Larkhall.



Jack and Ann
Middlemiss
and son Jack

Maggie (left) and Lizzie
Laird who worked in the
shop.
Photograph taken in front
of shop window



When the Laird's gave up the business it was then that Mr Sommerville took over as the village's chemist. Archie Milligan then took the shop over for use also as a chemists shop.

At that time the McKenzie family were selling newspapers and confectionary from a front room in their home, having previously had a Newsagent business in Middlemuir Road at what was previously the bus terminus.

Mr Milligan moved from Coalburn to Sanquhar and it is interesting that the name Milligan is still seen above the chemist's shop in Sanquhar. Back in Coalburn in the 1950's the new chemist was John Middlemiss who lived in Dunn Crescent.

John and his family were popular in the village and it was a bit of a shock when he decided to give up the business and take over another chemist's shop in Coatbridge.

This move gave Willie McKenzie the opportunity to move to premises for his newsagents business, he was also able to provide a much wider service to the Coalburn public and he and his wife, Phemie Smith, did indeed on build on their business over the next few years.

On Willie's death assisting her from then on was her son, Tom who on her death continued with the business. He extended the floor space and built a flat above the shop.

For a short time he used an area at the front of the shop as a tea room, as an additional revenue stream. Sadly this venture never really took off and he abandoned this idea.

About this time too it was becoming noticeable that he was having difficulty in filling the shelves and it was not all that much of a surprise when the shop was finally closed and Tom moved to live in Douglas where he died in 2007.

Now under new ownership the building is the subject of a planning application with two flats proposed. As the property has been in a run down state for some time due to vandalism, at least the building will be much pleasanter on the eye in future.

END

Message from the Chairman **Peter McLeish**

I must apologise for this issue being a little later than normal, this was due to the fact that we now print our own calendars and prior to the Gala Day, John and a number of volunteers were kept busy ensuring the calendars were available for the village's big day. Not only were we printing calendars for the Society but orders were completed for Lesmahagow Photographic Society as well as they had come to us to have their calendars printed.

That it not a complaint as the new printer was purchased with this type of thing in mind to ensure an additional income stream to enable us to purchase additional equipment as and when necessary. The producing of the calendars was a learning process which was soon mastered and thanks to all who assisted.

Over the past few weeks we have welcomed many visitors to the **Heritage Centre** and have been able to provide photos and other information in the vast majority of cases.

The **Gala Day Display** in the Leisure Centre proved to be as popular as ever and again we had in excess of 200 visitors, young and old. Since then we have had a number of new members joining which is very encouraging and with the variety of guests we have lined up from September to December I am sure there will be something of interest for everyone.

Our website has proved to be of benefit also with a number of "hits" being recorded.

May I remind you that articles for the newsletter from members are most welcome so feel free to contribute.

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk



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