

Autumn
2008



Coalburn
Primary
School

celebrates
100 years

16
newsletter

THE JIM HAMILTON HERITAGE SOCIETY OF COALBURN

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk

Message from the Chairman **Peter McLeish**

It seems no time since the Society was set up and yet here we are in our fifth year. In that time we have grown as a group not only in numbers but in experience.

The decision to take our opening meeting of the new session to the school as part of the Centenary celebrations turned out to be a huge success as the numbers attending proved. The choice of guests was very appropriate and popular. I was sorry to miss it.

As usual our syllabus for the remainder of the session until the end of the year is varied and even now we are looking to arrange speakers from January until May next year.

We continue to receive memorabilia from time to time and we are grateful for such items. Mainly photos are given to us but we also have been given personal documents of local interest. Among the photos are some taken on the last day at Number 9 in July 1968.

Once again John did us proud with the Gala Day calendar and this can still be purchased as well as the “normal” one which is already selling well.

The web site has been attracting hits and several e-mails have been received seeking local information particularly regarding family history.

The Gala Day Display was again well attended and over 100 new photographs were on show as we endeavoured to add more themes to the day. It was good to see so many young people showing an interest and that augers well for the future if we can encourage them to join us.

On behalf of the Committee may I thank you for your valued support.

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk



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OPENING OF NEW SCHOOL AT COALBURN

Hamilton Advertiser, September 1908

THE HANDSOME new school which has been erected at Coalburn by Lesmahagow School Board was opened on Wednesday with appropriate ceremonial.

The building occupies a site adjoining the Railway Station and has been built to plans prepared by Mr Jas. N. Gilmore, architect, who is also the able and obliging clerk and treasurer of the Board.

There are presently six class rooms each to accommodate 60 pupils and there are also teachers' rooms, cloak rooms, together with all other modern appointments.

The school, which has been erected at an estimated cost of about £4,500, is so arranged that at any future time it can be duplicated with large-central hall.

The contractors were - **mason**, John Aiton, Strathaven; **joiner**, John Baxter & Sons, Blackwood; **plasterer**, James Rowatt, Larkhall; **plumber**, John Crosbie & Co., Lesmahagow; **painter**, James Barrie, Strathaven; **slater**, John Lithgow, Lanark; and **furnishings**, Bennett & Co., Glasgow.



To witness the opening ceremony, about 290 pupils belonging to the district, were marshalled outside the school under the charge of the Board officer, Mr Thorburn. They received the members of the Board with a cheer. The members attending were - Mr C.W. Sleigh, chairman, Dr C. Douglas, Rev. Father Cody, Messrs G. Hamilton, J. Struthers, R. Pate, and J. Young, with Mr Jas. N. Gilmore, clerk. There was also present - Mr A.T. Blackwood, the headmaster of the new school. He was formerly headmaster at Bent School, where he has been succeeded by Mr Wardrop, M.A., assistant at Lesmahagow. The other members of the new Coalburn staff were Mr A.B. Ross and Misses Hamilton, Nell, Pirrie and May Neil. The contractors present included Messrs Aiton, Baxter, Rowatt and Lithgow.

Mr John Aiton, speaking, on behalf of the different tradesmen, said they had considered it their duty and privilege to present Mr Sleigh, the chairman of the Board, with a small memento of their respect on the occasion of the opening of the new school at Coalburn. He then asked Mr Sleigh's acceptance of a silver key, which he trusted would be found to do its duty satisfactorily, and be long afterwards retained by him as a souvenir of the day's interesting proceedings. (*Applause*).

Mr Sleigh having thanked the contractors for their very handsome and unexpected gift which he regarded not so much as a personal gift, but given out of respect to the Board of which he presently happened to be chairman, opened the school house door, the young folk the while cheering lustily. The company being assembled inside the school.

Mr Sleigh thanked his fellow members of the Board for asking him to declare the school open. They had erected an excellent building finely situated and so well planned that they could most heartily congratulate Mr Gilmore on the success that had attended his efforts. *Hear, hear !*

An excellent teaching staff had also been provided, the Board having only selected teachers whose abilities were known thoroughly.

Mr Blackwood would not have been appointed headmaster had they not been satisfied he was the right man for the place. They had had experience of him for many years and his work speaks for itself.

The reports by H.M. Inspectors were always satisfactory and the Board were satisfied Mr Blackwood would show the same success in his new appointment that he done at Bent. (*Applause*).

It only remained for the pupils to complete this success. He counselled them to attend regularly and to do their work in a systematic manner, adding that they would never regret doing all they could to promote their education.

He reminded them that no less a sum than £3,000,000 was spent on education in Scotland every year, and that of that large sum over £2,000,000 was provided by the State, while the remaining £1,000,000 was contributed by the ratepayers.

Scotchmen never grudged money spent on good education, and they as members of the Board, while they might and did make mistakes, always tried to spend the money of the Lesmahagow ratepayers carefully, and with as good results as possible.

They hoped to establish in Coalburn supplementary classes. These classes had not yet been the success that was anticipated by the Department.

It was expected that something like ten per cent of the pupils attending would take advantage of the supplementary, but so far, according to the latest returns, the percentage was only four and a half, although he believed they were a good deal better than that in Lesmahagow parish.

The Board intended having three supplementary centres - Lesmahagow, Blackwood and Coalburn - and as qualified teachers would be appointed, the Board hoped to hear no more of the complaints on the part of the parents that their children were merely marking time after they had reached a certain stage of their studies.

Proceeding, Mr Sleigh pointed out that the ideas about education were changing rapidly, and he expressed the opinion that the Education Department in the past had studied too much the needs only of the large city classes and had not given sufficient attention to the work of the country school.

The teaching of a country school must necessarily be different from that of a city school. In Coalburn prominence ought to be given to mining and agricultural subjects, while in Clydeside generally fruit classes should be taught.

That had not been the case in the past, but he was hopeful that a large amount of attention would yet be given to country schools.

They might live to see each country school being instructed in the subject in which it was most interested, but meanwhile they would hope for the best. he concluded by declaring the school open. (Applause).

Part 2 in next issue

2009 HERITAGE CALENDAR

NOW ON
SALE AT
COALBURN
POST
OFFICE.

Price £5



School turns back the clock for centenary

PUPILS and staff stepped back in time to mark the centenary of Coalburn Primary School. They marked the big day in style by donning period dress and hearing about life at the turn of the 20th century. Children also took part in a playground dance, face-painting, peg doll making and a range of traditional games. Parents turned up to lend their support and guests on the day included local MP David Mundell and former pupils of the school, councillors Danny Meikle and Alex McInnes, who later joined the MP in handing out centenary medals to pupils.

Centenary celebrations continue....

The celebrations continued at Coalburn Primary School. A **staff reunion** was held on **Friday 12th September** from 7pm in the school hall attended by almost 60 former members of staff. The present staff prepared a buffet and welcomed their former colleagues to view the photo exhibition and to share memories of working in Coalburn. Everyone who attended enjoyed the opportunity to visit the school again and to meet former colleagues.

The **school photographer** visited on **Wednesday 17th September** to take individual and family photographs and also class photographs.

Future events include a **Centenary Show** at Coalburn Miners Welfare on **Wednesday 26th November** and **Thursday 27th November** from 7pm. A **Ceilidh** on **Friday 12th December** at Coalburn Miners Welfare with Richard Smith and his Band. On **Wednesday 17th December** the school will hold a **Carol Service** with Coalburn Silver Band in attendance.

The Centenary year was successfully launched earlier in the year on Wednesday 23rd January with the Centenary Burns Competition. Children from each stage recited their poems and the large audience were also entertained as the children danced a number of Scottish Country dances and sang a range of Scottish songs.

3 September 2008



Left to right
Former Coalburn
Primary School
teacher and head
teacher, sisters June
Fearn and Rae Cook.

September Heritage Meetings

New member & guest speakers

17 September
2008

Left to right
New member
Jamie Turley, ex-
Glasgow tram
driver Robert
Thoms and
Robert's grandson
Mark



Gala in doubt after 70 years

THE FUTURE of Coalburn Gala Day is in serious jeopardy - as no new faces turned up to the gala committee's AGM.

Organisers had hoped for a respectable turnout after the success of this year's event. However, with several committee members resigning for personal reasons and no-one coming forward to offer their services, it is now likely that the gala day will not take place in 2009.

Ann Burnside, gala committee president for the past eight years said: *"We will give the community one more chance to get involved, but unfortunately we seem to face the same problem every year."*

The next meeting, on September 30th, is 'judgement day' for Coalburn Gala.

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 teaching staff **June FEARNES & 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
Sun 21 **Annual XMAS DINNER** at **Hollandbush Golf Club**

JANUARY 2009

- 7** **TBA**
21 **John ZAWADZKI** - AV SLIDESHOWS, *Various Subjects*

Front Cover Photo: Coalburn Primary School Head Teacher Bill Scott, *with stained glass pennant made and kindly donated to the school by Walter Shankley of Coalburn*, at Heritage Society's September meeting. Held in the school, over 60 folk were present to hear guest speakers June Fearn and Rae Cook reminisce with much humour and affection. *Photo: JZ*