



WINTER
2008

17

newsletter

THE JIM HAMILTON HERITAGE SOCIETY OF COALBURN

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk

Message from the Chairman **Peter McLeish**

During the last few weeks John has been busy printing off more calendars, the Gala Day publication continues to be much in demand and several additional print runs have had to be made. The Village calendar has been equally successful and is also in demand. With this in mind I must thank Rae Miller and Jessie Prentice in the Post Office who have willingly put both publications on display and have very readily sold them for us over the counter.

Again it never ceases to amaze me regarding the number of items which continue to be handed in to us at the Heritage Centre.

For example we have had mementos of the First World War, paintings which have been done by local artists and a football “cap” gained by a local man in 1916. Not only that but we continue to welcome visitors from near and far on a regular basis.

Attendances at our meetings are, as ever, extremely encouraging and we will continue to do our best to vary the guests we invite to share their knowledge and experiences with us.

As the year draws to its close I look forward to our Annual Christmas Dinner, once again to be held at Hollandbush Golf Course, (Coalburn), which has been a popular venue. Members and friends meet to share in the evening’s festivities and I am certain that this year’s event will be as sociable as those previous.

My sincere thanks as always, to everyone for their valued support and I wish all of you wherever you are, a very Happy Christmas and a successful 2009.

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk



Office Bearers 2008/09

Chairman **Peter McLeish**

Tel. **01555 820287**

Vice Chairman **James Hamilton**

Secretary **Betty Bell**

Tel. **01555 820276**

Treasurer **Jean Savage**

Membership Secretary

Anna McLachlan

Tel. **01555 820750**

Archivist / Newsletter

John Zawadzki

Newsletter published by

The Jim Hamilton

Heritage Society of Coalburn

Coalburn Heritage Centre

Coalburn One Stop Shop

42 Coalburn Rd

Tel. **01555 820060**

email info@coalburnmw.org.uk



1st October 2008

Left to right

Guest speaker Tam Ward, Biggar Museum Trust and member Calum Smith. Tam gave an excellent talk on the many well known and the not so well known buildings in Clydesdale. He also covered the arrival of the Romans.

Heritage Meetings

Members & guest speakers

5th November 2008

Left to right Member Billy Rough and guest speaker Robert McLeish, Archivist, Lesmahagow Parish Historical Society. Robert spoke in humorous terms of his early childhood at Ferniegair and of his time in Coalburn from 1955 with particular reference to his thespian career with Coalburn Drama Group.



15th October 2008: There was a double bill on the second Wednesday of October. First up was Alex Baird from Motherwell. His theme was the Scots language and its significant role in poetry. Alex was followed by member Billy Rough who gave a powerpoint presentation on the Cameronians, from their beginnings until disbandment in 1968 at Douglas.

Gala reprieve

The future of Coalburn Gala, in existence for over 70 years, has been saved after villagers rallied round and offered their active support. Gala committee President Ann Burnside said: "The meeting went very well and we now have nine people definitely assisting on the committee with another three who weren't able to attend. I'm absolutely delighted that the gala day will be going ahead on Saturday 4th July 2009. It's a day that's really for the kids and that's the most important thing."

OPENING OF NEW SCHOOL AT COALBURN *Part 2*

Hamilton Advertiser, September 1908

DR DOUGLAS thought they would all agree with every word that Mr Sleigh had said. He went on to say the scholars of Coalburn were having a good chance, and he congratulated them upon beginning under such promising auspices.

Although the Board had not a member who was actually resident in Coalburn, he thought they were bound to admit Coalburn had received very fair play. It is easily the best school in the parish, and with the excellent staff that had been provided, he hoped the children would rise to the opportunity. (*Applause*).

In the final settlement of the educational affairs of the parish, he only asked for the exercising of a little patience, one with another. He assured them that the Board had only one object, viz, the providing of the best education possible for the children of the parish, and that too without any extravagance.

(*Applause*).

They wished to make education in this and the other schools of the parish as useful and practical as they could.

They had all a feeling that under the guidance

of the Education Department, the work had been made too bookish. What they wanted was to see the practical side more developed. Education was a preparation for life, and at school it had to be remembered what kind of life they intended to lead.

They hoped before the Board's time of office came to an end to take steps for the providing of practical education according to the needs of the district. They would watch with interest the progress of the new school, which he hoped had a long and successful series of sessions before it. (*Applause*)



“All education was not in books, maps or canes”

Rev. Father Cody said that today’s ceremony marked a very great advance in the educational history of Coalburn. With such a grand new school, the children had now something to live up to. He was sure that the material help of spacious rooms and fine furniture would be considerable. All education was not in books, maps or canes. *(Laughter)*

There was a great deal on one’s environment, and he hoped that this beautiful school would train them up in habits of self-respect. If education meant anything, it meant the training in self respect was intended to effect for good their habits and behaviour. *(Applause)*

He had been struck by the fact that while they had not been able to bring Coalburn to Blackwood, they had successfully brought (Mr) Blackwood to Coalburn. *(Laughter and renewed applause)*

He took that opportunity of wishing the new headmaster and his staff every success in their new appointments. As a Board, he trusted both teachers and scholars would regard them, not as bogles, but friends. *(Applause)*

Mr Blackwood, briefly, but felicitously, expressed his gratitude to the School Board of Lesmahagow for erecting such a magnificent school, and also for the presence of the members that day at the opening ceremony. He hoped they might have the pleasure of meeting together on many occasions in

Teachers, so far as he knew them, would like to see the School Board members visiting the schools a little more frequently than they presently did. He trusted the scholars would take advantage of the good advice they had received, and that they would prove themselves worthy of their new building.

He called upon the young people to give the members of the Board three hearty cheers, which they did with both vigour and volume, calling forth the compliment from **Mr Sleigh** that their lungs seemed all right.

This concluded the ceremony in the school, and the children were dismissed. After making a tour of inspection through the varied rooms, the members of the Board, accompanied by the contractors and the members of the teaching staff, adjourned to the Station Hotel where tea was provided.

Mr Sleigh again presided, and intimated apologies for absence from Messrs JL Crosbie, Lesmahagow and J Barrie, Strathaven, two of the contractors. After tea and the the pledging of ‘The King’ in loyal terms, **Mr Gavin Hamilton**, in happy terms, proposed ‘*The teaching staff of the new school*’.

The School Board had, he said, regarded with pleasure the success that had attended Mr Blackwood’s work at Bent School and he was sure in his new headmastership, and with the co-operation of his able teaching staff, Mr Blackwood would bring the same success to bear upon his work at Coalburn. *(Applause)*

Mr Blackwood suitably replied. He craved the kindly sympathy of the Board with himself and staff, especially at the beginning. If there was only extended to them the same long-sufferingness that was extended to the contractors in the building of the school (*Laughter*) he was sure satisfactory results would be produced. (*Applause*)

Dr Douglas who proposed 'The Contractors' humorously remarked that sometimes, more particularly when they received the bills, they were inclined to drink, to the confusion of the contractors, in this connection he was reminded that the late Dr Wallace, MP, had said he did not object to capitalists -- they were the dray horses of civilisation, and no doubt they required a great deal of corn. (*Laughter and applause*)

Contractors also were expensive and the same could be said of education generally. New requirements were being forced upon them by a benevolent despotism which ruled in London, and by the needs likewise of the districts in which they lived.

They had a continually increasing expense to be met if education was to be made at all suitable to the needs of a place, and to his mind it would be far better not to meddle with education at all than to scrimp the learning time of the children. (*Applause*)

Redundant as Lesmahagow School Board had been to enter an extravagant course, and ever mindful as they had been of the ratepayers, he hoped they would always be still more reluctant to scrimp on education.

This new school had been forced upon the Board, and they had no reason to be ashamed, but rather to rejoice at the erection. (*Applause*)

Mr Baxter, whose name was coupled with the toast, made an appropriate reply.

Mr Pate, who proposed "The Architects", paid a well-deserved compliment to Mr Gilmore, who had given invaluable service to the Board on many previous occasions when new buildings or alterations were required.

Mr Gilmore replied. He hoped the new school would have the effect of lessening the number of exemptions from the Coalburn district.

Replying to the toast of "The Chairman", **Mr Sleight** said he did not think the ratepayers would grudge any expenditure on education so long as it was wisely spent.

The School Board had done its best to keep down unnecessary expenditure, but he was afraid they would have to face a considerable increase in rates this year.

This was inevitable. They had lately provided a new school at Auchenheath, then there was this new building, and in addition every existing school building, with one exception, had been practically transformed. (*Applause*)

Father Cody in a humorous speech proposed "The Ladies" and **Mr Pate** replied.

This concluded the interesting proceedings of the day.

END

Coalburn Chronicle No. 4, page 95

“The story behind the writing of the poem by Erchie Hay was told to me by his son Alex. Each Hogmanay Jimmy Morris (owner of the Coalburn Store, c1900) gave his customers a calendar and one year the painting on it was of an old couple sitting by the fireside. The good woman was knitting and her husband was relaxing and smoking his pipe, with a collie dog lying between them on the rug. The family scene appeared so homely that Erchie Hay dreaming the thoughts of the old couple, composed the following song as if they were telling their own story. It is a minor masterpiece”.

- Jim Hamilton.

THE CALENDAR

by Erchie HAY

Far away up in the Highlands
In the corner of a glen,
Lived a dear old Highland couple
In a cosy but and ben.
The auld man said “Dear Maggie,
The years are slippin’ by,
It’s fifty yeras this very nicht
Since, lassie you and I
Were joined in happy wedlock;
Now the years have passed away
It’s the last day on the calendar
And this is Hogmanay.

**So, bring the bottle Maggie,
Fill the gless up tae the brim,
The auld year’s slippin’ oot
And the new yin’s comin’ in.
We’ve stood the trials o’ life together,
And aye kept in good cheer
So drink a health for we nicht no see
Anither guid New Year.**

As they sat by the fireside,
That dear old lovin’ pair,
A toil-worn hand was lifted
And he stroked her silvery hair.
The tears of gratitude
Shone out her tear-dimmed eyes,
The collie dug, upon the rug,
Looked up in dumb surprise
“Oh, oor big graw son Donald,
I hope that he’s a’ richt,
For I would be a good, prood man
Gin he were here the nicht.”

As the hour of twelve was strikin’
On the old grandfather clock,
A footstep then was heard outside
And then a gentle knock.
The latch was slowly lifted
And the door flew open wide,
And their big, braw son Donald,
Stood smiling by their side.
“Oh, Lord preserve us, laddie,
Where did you come frae
To see your faither and mither
On this auld Hogmanay.”

**“Oh, bring the bottle, mither,
Fill the glasses tae the brim,
The auld year’s Slippit oot
And the new yin’s jist come in.
I’m awfu prood tae see ye
And glad I’ve landed here
Tae wish you, faither and mither,
A HAPPY, GUID NEW YEAR.”**





From the archive...

Coalburn Cricket Team pre 1900

Pictured in front row with suit and tie is Dickie McLean

COALBURN CHRONICLE No. 15

“It may come as a surprise to readers, as it was to me, to learn that a cricket team existed in Coalburn nearly 90 years ago and it was not a sport I would think of associating with a mining village in Scotland. At the annual general meeting of the Auchlochan Cricket Club held in March 1894 the following office-bearers were elected: Honorary Presidents - The Earl of Home, JHC Hozier MP and TDS Cunningham. President, RS Dunn; Vice-President, Dr Harrison; Captain, Matthew Love; Vice-Captain, T Whitehouse; Secretary, M Thomson; Committee, James Abbott, John Little, John Miller and Robert Nicol. The club played on the park which is now part of Coalburn Football Club’s pitch.”

- Jim Hamilton, November 1982

SHEPHERDENE

by PETER McLEISH

Shepherdene is one of the oldest buildings in the village and is currently used on the ground floor, as the local Surgery, while the upper part of the building houses two families.

Situated across from the school, the lower part which is now the waiting room for those in need of medical attention, was the Shepherd's Hall initially. The Ancient Order of Shepherds was founded in England in 1826 as a "sickness and burial club". The first move into Scotland came in 1868. The first lodge, "The Pride of Leven Lodge" was formed in Dumbarton that year closely followed by Lodges in Glasgow in 1870 and Edinburgh in 1876.

By 1910 there were 39 lodges in the Edinburgh district with 6,000 full members and 2,000 juvenile members. The Order was particularly strong in Fife and the Berwickshire at that time.

As the century progressed the numbers lessened mainly due to the formation of the Trade Unions. The basis of the movement was the concern with shepherds and their families, particularly in cases of sickness and death. As with most like bodies of the time, the Order had an underlying Biblical and moral code. While on official business members carried crooks and wore woollen cloaks with a black and white check pattern, which was fastened with an official brooch. In Scotland grey or white wool bonnets were worn, often with a feather.

In 1960 there were still 11 working lodges in the east of Scotland. By the 1990s the Society changed its name to the Shepherds Friendly Society and the Edinburgh and Leith District was still in place into the 21st century.

Sanny Stewart was Secretary of the lodge in Coalburn which had the name "Bellfield Star Lodge of the Loyal Order of Shepherds". He held the position from at least 1905 to 1945. Unfortunately very little information has so far come to light about the local Lodge.

The newly formed Drama Group on 1938 held their early meetings there and Willie Richardson was the hallkeeper at that time. I remember my grandfather, Bob Shaw, who lived next door to Shepherdene, having a black and white plaid and seeing a brooch similar to that mentioned above as he was a member of the Order. I wonder where they went.

Syllabus 2009

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

JANUARY

- 7** Jim **COOK** - BIRTH OF THE RAILWAY IN LANARKSHIRE
- 21** John **ZAWADZKI** - SLIDESHOWS, *Various Subjects*
+ *BURNS THEME, Haggis Pies with tea/coffee*

FEBRUARY

- 4** Julie **CURRIE**, Editor, LANARK GAZETTE
- 18** Campbell **THOMSON** - LANARKSHIRE YEOMANRY

MARCH

- 4** Douglas **LOCKHART** of Carluke - COALBURN MEMORIES
- 18** Helen **MOIR** - Author & Member of LARKHALL HERITAGE SOCIETY

APRIL

- 1** Sandy **GILCHRIST**, Biggar - SCHOOLS in Upperward
- 15** Dr **FLOWERDEW**, Douglas

MAY

- 6** Dan **SMART** - COALBURN DURING THE WAR YEARS
- 20** **AGM** + Jess **GRAHAM's** Introduction To Family History
+ **JZ Slideshow**

Front Cover Photo: Miner's tackety boot found near Poniel Pit and kindly donated to Coalburn Heritage Centre by John Munro of Coalburn. **Photo:** JZ