

newsletter

20



AUTUMN  
2009



The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

# Message from the Chairman

## Peter McLeish

Sadly, since our last Newsletter one of our members has passed away, Ian Haddock, from Auchlochan. He died on Thursday 17th September following a protracted illness. He was of a quiet disposition and when he was able to come to our meetings he displayed a keen interest in whichever subject was being presented. Our thoughts are with his wife, Annette, at this time.

The Centre has been popular with a good number of visitors over the past few weeks, the furthest afield being Australia. Closer to home we have had Sam Dyet from Kelso, formerly of Bellfield Road, as well as Derek Camp from England, the grandson of Harold Brook, who was well known as the barber in the village.

Thanks to Betty, Anna and Jean for their assistance during the Open Days at Auchlochan on Friday and Saturday, 18th and 19th September. It was a valuable exercise as we had quite a few enquiries, particularly on the first day, the busier of the two.

John has been away in Australia and his presence was missed during the period, no doubt we will see some of his many photos taken during his visit at a later date.

Since we have re-convened we have had two speakers, **Stewart Houston** and **Julie Currie**, both of whom were well received by those assembled on each of the occasions.

The remainder of the programme till the end of the year is again varied and we look forward to each speaker. There will also be a special **WW2 remembrance evening on Wednesday 11th November at Coalburn Primary School.**

We have been able to attract additional funding from South Lanarkshire Rural Communities Trust which will enable us to continue to produce good quality literature. I would therefore like to record my thanks on your behalf for their support.

A number of new members have joined the Society and I would like to welcome them and trust that they will enjoy the camaraderie engendered each evening.

**To each and every one of you thanks for your support.**

**Peter McLeish**



### Office Bearers 2009/10

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

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# Guest speakers & members...



Wednesday  
16th  
September

Guest  
speaker  
**Julie  
Currie**  
and  
Lanark  
Gazette's  
Coalburn  
contact  
**Jim  
MacLean**

**NB 70th Anniversary of start of WW2....**  
**11th November - Remembrance Night**  
+ Slideshow by John Zawadzki  
at **COALBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
7pm start. ALL WELCOME  
Doors open 6.30pm



Wednesday 2nd September

Left to right, vice-chairman **James Hamilton**,  
guest speaker **Stewart Houston** and secretary **Betty Bell**

*Extracts from* **COALBURN CHRONICLES** Part 52

**SECOND WORLD WAR**, First Instalment

*Compiled & Written by Jim Hamilton. Issued October 1989*

**“On the evening of 3rd September 1939, the day war was declared, a German submarine torpedoed, without any warning, the liner Athenia in the Atlantic. Of the 1418 passengers and crew, there was a death roll of 128. 1290 had been rescued and 580 returned to the Clyde, 510 to Galway and 220 were saved by the vessel City of Flint which continued on its way across the Atlantic.” - JH**

‘John Sorbie Jnr of Hillview Place, Coalburn, a steward on the Athenia, arrived back in the village on Tuesday evening. His many friends will be glad to know that apart from a severe cold and several cuts which are rapidly healing, John is remarkably well after his terrifying experience. Seen at his home at Hillview Place, he gave a very clear account of what happened when tragedy came upon the ill-fated ship.’

*From Hamilton Advertiser, 9th September 1939.*

‘Coalburn Drama Group and friends held a party in the Victoria Lesser Hall on Saturday, Mr John Sorbie Snr, the club producer, presiding. A feature of the evening was the presence of three young men who were all stewards on the TSS Athenia when it was torpedoed. Two of them were visiting John Sorbie Jnr. After a few vocal numbers and parlour games, a welcome tea was provided by Willie Morrison in his efficient style. Thus replenished, the company spent an hour in dancing to the strains of the accordion of John Sorbie Jnr. The remainder of the evening was devoted to song and recitation submitted by Mrs Steele, Misses Reid and Baxter, Messrs Lundie, J Clark, Bryson, G Clark, Hamilton, Cullen, Smith, Shaw and J Sorbie Snr. ‘

*From Hamilton Advertiser, 14th October 1939*

**COALBURN HERITAGE CENTRE**

42 COALBURN ROAD

**AUTUMN / WINTER OPENING TIMES**

**TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS, 10am - 3pm**

All Enquiries **Tel. 01555 820060**

or contact via website **[www.coalburnheritage.org.uk](http://www.coalburnheritage.org.uk)**



*Left to right, Betty Bell, Pam Rhodes, Anna McLachlan and Jean Savage*

## **Auchlochan** *Open Days*

18th and 19th September 2009

Following an invitation from MHA, the new owners of Auchlochan, to provide a stand at their two day “**Independent Living Show**”, as above, several of our members were present to assist at the display of photos of Coalburn and Lesmahagow from many years ago.

These proved of great interest each day as did John’s Power Point presentation with regard to former Auchlochan owners Dr and Mrs Charles Douglas (1900-1956).

Friday was particularly busy while the weather on Saturday was probably a factor in the numbers appearing to be less on that day. Our stand was at the entrance to the marquee and that was an advantage to us as we were almost the first area to catch the eye.

One of our members, Jess Graham, held workshops on improving photos and she too used John’s work on Auchlochan during the two days.

**Pam Rhodes**, the well known writer and TV presenter, opened the proceedings at 11am on the Friday and, as can be seen, she was one of the many who viewed our display, as did the MHA Chairman, Mr **Peter Mortlock**, and he too very kindly agreed to have his photo taken with Betty, Anna and Jean.

There were a variety of exhibitors, the fruit and home baking stands were popular with the three ladies mentioned, while Mrs Tilly’s tablet was only available on the Friday, similarly Tunnock’s well known fare. - P Mc.

Article in the **Hamilton Herald** dated **19th January 1900**

## **COALBURN**

### **LETTER FROM AN OLD SCHOOL TEACHER**

As many, no doubt, in the Coalburn and Bellfield districts, will be wondering how Mr Campbell, their late school teacher, will be getting on in his new sphere of labour, it will be interesting to not a few to read the following letter, as Mr Campbell was a great favourite in the district where he laboured for many years.

#### **Dear Mr Young**

As I promised, I herewith send you an account of my new land of habitation. I must first say that I reached here on 22nd November, and have taken till now to form something of an opinion about the place. North Ronaldsy is the most northerly of the Orkney Islands, and is separated from Sanday by North Ronaldsy Firth, which, where narrowest, is about three miles broad.

The island is about five miles long N.E to S.W., and is a very irregular shape. On the S. and E. the beach is very low, shelving, and sandy; while on the N. and N.W. there are cliffs, which, though very elevated, are rocks and precipitous. The interior is flat, with a gentle rise towards the centre, and, with the exception and a small strip round the shore pastured by sheep, is all in a state of cultivation.

There is no pier, and passengers and goods are taken ashore in small boats and landed on a wharf at the northern extremity. Here stands the lighthouse, which is indeed a very fine building. There are two churches on the island-a F.C. and E.C.-and they, as well as the school, stand almost in the centre of the island.

The school, which is of modern structure, consists of two rooms, separated by a sliding glass partition. It is well furnished with maps, etc., also with dumb bells, bar-bells, and hoops for drill. A pupil-teacher teaches infants, Standard 1. and Standard 11. I teach from Standard 11. to VI inclusive. Mrs C. teaches the sewing.

As far as I can judge, the people are generally very clean, tidy, kind and obliging; and the scholars seem as bright and intelligent as their more highly-favoured cousins in the South. The great drawback about the place is its inaccessibility. In stormy weather we are quite cut off from the outer world, as the ferryboat postmen would not then dare to ply their boat between here and Sanday.

In normal weather, however, there is a weekly communication, besides which there is from Kirkwall a monthly service of provision steamer. The population is about 500. Number of children attending school over 60.

**COLIN CAMPBELL**

**Schoolhouse, North Ronaldsy,, Orkney,**

**December, 1899**

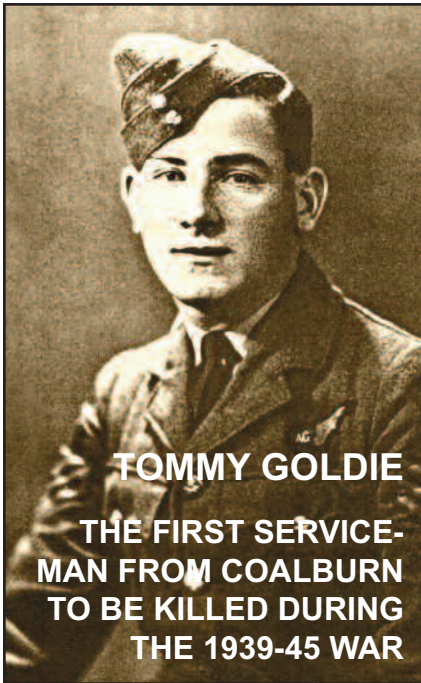
*Extracts from* **COALBURN CHRONICLES Part 52**  
**SECOND WORLD WAR, First Instalment**

*Compiled & Written by Jim Hamilton. Issued October 1989*

“There has been a great deal of interest in the 50th Anniversary of the outbreak of the 1939-45 War on 3 September 1939. This is not surprising as the Second World War touched everyone’s life whether he or she be on active service, or in one of the organisations such as the Home Guard, or Civil Defence, or an evacuee, or a family providing accommodation to the unfortunate rendered homeless by the enemy bombing.

It was my intention to write a booklet about Coalburn and the 1939-45 War but as I started typing the pages, I soon realised that I had already accumulated so much material that it would require to be in two parts. This booklet, being the first part, covers, more or less, the period 1939 to 1941.” - JH

All 80 volumes of the late Jim Hamilton’s **COALBURN CHRONICLES** can be viewed at the Coalburn Heritage Centre.



**“I can remember the date** *(Sunday 3rd September 1939)* **quite clearly. The declaration of war seemed inevitable.**

**Our wireless - it was in the days before we called it a radio - was tuned in for the speech by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain and he explained that, because Germany had not given certain assurances about withdrawing from its invasion of Poland, Britain was at war from 11am with Germany.**

**I was 17 years of age, so knew that it would no doubt affect me.**

**My parents showed their anxiety for they had experienced the hardships and known the sadness of lost friends and relatives during the 1914-18 War.” - JH**

The JHHS of Coalburn **SYLLABUS 2009**  
**NEW VENUE - Coalburn Bowling Club**  
**WEDNESDAYS** - Doors open **7pm** for **7.30pm** start  
**ALL WELCOME** Members, Guests & Non-Members  
Tea / Coffee at end of evening

**2nd September** - Stewart HOUSTON, Past Procurator Fiscal of Lanark

**16th September** - Julie CURRIE, Editor of Lanark & Carluke Gazette

**7th October** - LOCAL POETRY - Various Speakers

**21st October** - Gilbert R. COX, HM Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire

**4th November** - George WYCHERLEY of Auchlochan - CHINA

**Wednesday 11th November** - **7pm Start** - Doors Open 6.30pm  
**Remembrance Night** + Slideshow by John Zawadzki  
at **COALBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL** - **ALL WELCOME**

**18th November** - Dr Iain KANE - Mount Kilimanjaro

**2nd December** - John ZAWADZKI - Slideshows

**Friday 18th December**  
**ANNUAL XMAS DINNER** at Coalburn Miners' Welfare Club

### **2010 Heritage calendars**

Heritage calendars 2010 on sale, priced £5, at Coalburn Post Office and at the Heritage Centre. Also a limited number of 2010 Gala Souvenir Calendars and Auchlochan Scenes Calendars.

### **Deaths**

Mary COWAN (Kelly)  
Annie SAVAGE (Rae)  
Dorothy-Anne WOODS (Gray)  
Sadie LAIRD (Lightbody)  
Jim ADAM  
Ian HADDOCK  
Betty PHILLIPS (Bryce)

Front Cover Photo: **Coalburn War Memorial inside Coalburn Miners' Welfare Club**

Photo: JZ