

The Jim Hamilton
Heritage
Society
of
Coalburn

27



Summer
2011

Newsletter

Front cover

1986: Laying of wreath at memorial at Skellyhill Farm, Waterside where Covenanting martyr **David Steel** was murdered by Government troops in 1686. Wreath laid by Mrs Sheila Geddes, sister of Liberal MP David Steel who also attended. The MP's namesake and forbear, was an active Covenanting preacher and tenant farmer at Skellyhil , is buried in Lesmahagow's Old Parish kirkyard. The tercentenary memorial attracted a crowd of up to two hundred folk. *Photo by Jim Hamilton*
Coalburn Chronicles, Part 33, page 1039

Deaths

William McINTYRE
Letitia HAY (Davis)
Thomas WEIR
Jessie LENNOX (Reid)
Lee STEWART
George McILMOYLE
Janet GRAY (Muir)
Walter SHANKLEY

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st August
SCOTLAND'S FESTIVAL OF HISTORY
SPECTACULAR ANNUAL EVENT
THE RACECOURSE,
HYNDFORD ROAD, LANARK

Saturday 27th August
COALBURN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL SHOW at COALBURN SCHOOL
Starts 2pm

Office Bearers **2011/12**

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Coalburn

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OPEN
TUESDAYS
& THURSDAYS
10am – 3pm

Chairman's Remarks

The weeks are flying past what with the Gala Day being behind us again. Though the numbers attending the display in the Leisure Centre were slightly down on last year, nevertheless it was busy. It was a lovely day and maybe BBQ's were in use as well as the sports being held on the same day as the Crowning may have had an effect on the numbers. John's slideshows were very popular and that is maybe something to expand on. Thanks to all who so willingly helped to make the day a success.

Prior to the Gala Day several volunteers made themselves available to assist at Tesco at Lesmahagow where 400 leaflets were distributed to members of the public advising them of the Gala Day and also details of the syllabus from September to December. Several people showed an interest and we are hopeful that they will come along whenever a speaker is of interest. In addition an invite was received from Douglas Museum Trust to an "Open Day" and I went along with a couple of members and spent an interesting afternoon browsing through items of interest. I would recommend any of our members who have not paid the Museum a visit to consider doing so. It is open on a Saturday and Sunday afternoon during the summer months.

I was invited to attend the School Awards Ceremony in the Miners' Welfare last month where I presented the Society's Trophy to Ezra Foley. He was among the pupils from Primary 7 when a visit was made to the Heritage Centre earlier in the year and he was very interested and enthusiastic in his questions while there.

As in the past items of interest continue to be handed in and they are very much appreciated and our thanks to those thoughtful people who have done so.

The syllabus for the coming session has its usual varied themes and I am sure will be of interest to members and non members alike. For those who are able, why not bring a friend along with you when you can.

Finally, I would like to welcome publicly Howard Johnstone and Hamish Gilchrist both of whom were elected to the Committee at the AGM in May.

Peter McLeish, 6th July 2010

History of Education in the Coalburn district prior to the opening of Coalburn School in 1908

Part One

After the passing of the Education Act of 1872, the first School Board of the Parish of Lesmahagow was elected on Saturday, 12th April 1873. It consisted of seven members, as follows – **Mr. John Hamilton** (Bank Agent, Abbeygreen); **Mr. James Duff**, Factor, Blackwood); **Mr. Archibald Stein** (Kirkfieldbank); **Mr. John B. Greenshields** (Kerse); **Mr. James Brown** (Orchard, Carluke); **Mr James Lancaster** (Colliery Manager, Heathfield) and **Rev. James A. Gray** (Free Church Manse, Abbeygreen). At the election, **Mr. John Hamilton** topped the poll. At the first meeting however, which was held in the vestry of the Parish Church of Lesmahagow on 21st April, **Mr. J. B Greenshields** was elected Chairman.

On 19th June 1873, the Board decided to build a new school at Bellfield near to the Brick Row, to accommodate 250 pupils, on three roods of ground belonging to **Mrs. Davidson**, offered at the rate of £3 per acre. Local Coalmasters Colin Dunlop and Company had informed them they had 58 houses in the Bellfield area and intended to build more. Provision would also be made at the new school for pupils attending Bankend and Nethertown schools. The one at Bankend was private, belonging to the proprietor of Bankend and was leased from him by the Monkland Iron Company. There was no written title to the school property at Nethertown.

Further to the last sentence above, on 3rd August 1876, **Mr. Hamilton** of the Board was requested to interview **Mr. Dunn**, Factor on the Auchlochan Estate, with the object of selling Nethertown School to **Mr. Cunningham**. On 7th December, 1876, a letter from **Mr Dunn** intimated that **Mr. Cunningham** was willing to give £5 for the building if the Board would show to his satisfaction that they were the proper parties to receive the same. The Board resolved to retain the property. However, fully three years later, a letter dated 22nd December 1879 from Caprington Colliery was received by **Mr. John Hamilton**, Banker, Lesmahagow, as follows;

Dear Sir,

I have spoken with Mr. Cunningham regarding Nethertown School and he is willing to abide by his offer of £5 for the property. On hearing from you I will get the matter put in shape and get the money paid over.

Yours truly, *Hugh S. Dunn*

The Board agreed to accept the offer and instructed the Clerk accordingly, and to indicate to Mr. Dunn that a receipt for that sum is all the title that the Board can give to the property.

Another interesting letter of this period, this time from Messrs. Colin Dunlop and Company, Auchlochan Collieries, contained the following:

“Bellfield School Fees.

Your note received. In reply we beg to offer the Board the sum of Thirty Pounds Sterling (£30) per annum, payable quarterly, on condition that all children (of our workmen) attending or who may attend will be admitted free, the agreement to be terminated at any time by either party.”

Offer accepted by the Board.

(The above information was collected by the late John Hamilton at a display held to commemorate the Centenary of the Education Act.)



Famous local Covenanters

Jim Hamilton Coalburn Chronicles No. 23, page 586D: [Extract from 'Gleanings Among Mountains' by the Rev. R Simpson, published c1830.](#)

LESMAHAGOW is a name familiar to all who are in any measure versant in the times and scenes of Prelatic violence. Few sections of the country, perhaps furnished a richer harvest of godly persons, among whom to thrust the bloody sickle – persecution; and nobly did these honoured persons maintain their fidelity; and the credit of that cause to which they were attached.

The moorlands of Lesmahagow, if they could speak, could tell many a tale of suffering now unknown, and could also recount many a blessed hour of sacred intercourse with God, enjoyed by his people in the day of privation and of peril.

The inhabitants of this district seem, in the days of Zion's affliction, to have been favoured with large communications of divine influence, and with much spiritual fortitude in the hour of temptation.

DAVID STEEL of Skellyhill, Lesmahagow

The Steels of Lesmahagow were men of renown, and faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ. The death of David Steel, who was shot at Skellyhill in 1686, in the thirty-third year of his age, is, in all its circumstances, equally affecting with the death of John Brown of Priesthill.

He was, after promise of quarter, murdered before his own door; and **Mary Weir**, his youthful and truly Christian wife, who, it is said, cherished an uncommon attachment to her husband, having bound up his shattered head with a napkin, and closed down his eyelids with her own hand, looked on the manly and honest countenance that was now pale in death, and said, with a sweet and heavenly composure: *"The archers have shot at thee, my husband, but, they could not reach thy soul. It has escaped like a dove, far away, and is at rest."*

THOMAS BROWN of Auchlochan, Lesmahagow

Thomas Brown of Auchlochan, was a good man and a steady Covenanter. He was present at Drumclog, where the fierce Claverhouse sustained a signal defeat by a handful of worshippers, who had been holding a conventicler near the place, on Sabbath the 1st of June 1679. He fought also at Bothwell Bridge, where the power of the Covenanters was lamentably broken, and their army scattered.

If prior to the rising at Bothwell, the furnace of persecution glowed with an intolerable heat, it was now kindled seven times; and the cloud that lowered over the afflicted Church grew darker and more portentous, and, threatened to discharge its ominous contents in one full and vengeful tempest on the defenceless heads of those who had hitherto outbraved the fury of the storm, in the support of their civil and religious privileges.

At this period, **Claverhouse** was ravaging the west, and, like a beast of prey, was tearing and devouring on all sides; for that reckless and infatuated Cavalier would not have scrupled to ride, even to the bridle reins, in the blood of the populace, to serve the vindictive purposes of his military employers; and much and precious was the blood which, with unsparing hand, he shed in the fields and moorlands, and loud was the cry which his oppression made to ascend from many a cottage in the land.

Two of the troopers under the command of this blood-thirsty adventurer, came suddenly upon **Thomas Brown**, on the banks of the Nethan, a few yards above the house of Auchlochan. Brown stood on his defence, and, with his sword drawn, warded off for some time the blows of his antagonists. At length, however, he was overpowered, and falling under the heavy strokes of the two powerful troopers, he was left for dead on the field.

At this juncture, the appearance of another Covenanter on the opposite side of the stream attracted their notice, and, leaving their victim bleeding on the ground, they crossed the river in pursuit. This man, whose name is not mentioned, was speedily overtaken and killed on the spot. Thomas Brown, however, though severely wounded, was not dead. He was stupefied by the loss of blood, and, stunned by the blows he had received; but, by the kind attention of his friends, he gradually recovered. He was at this time in the flower of his age, and he lived till he became an old man. The present proprietor of Auchlochan (in 1830) is his lineal descendant.

Syllabus 2011

Admission is FREE

ALL WELCOME – BRING A FRIEND – Tea/Coffee at 9pm
Wednesday, 7.30pm start. Access from 7pm

Coalburn Bowling Club

7 September Terry WOODS & Paul McGOWAN

Lanark Philatelic Society – History of the Post in Clydesdale

21 September Dane LOVE, Scottish author - The Covenanters

5 October Ed ARCHER, Lanark archaeologist/historian

19 October Paul ARCHIBALD, Lanark historian – Mauchline Ware

2 November John VEITCH, History of Pharmacy in Lesmahagow

16 November Dr ADDISON of Douglas

7 December Robbie ALLAN, My life with motor-cycles

16 December ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

WEBSITE

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk