

Newsletter 30

The Jim
Hamilton
Heritage
Society
of
Coalburn



SPRING 2012

Front cover

The Late **Bruce Shaw** of Coalburn.
*Photographed by John Zawadzki
at Auchlochan Summer Fete on
Saturday 9th July 2011.
See obituary on page 6.*

News in brief...

Saturday 4 February 2012

Coalburn Homing Club members once again held their well-supported annual presentation of prizes and social night at Hollandbush Golf Club. Of the 20 titles played for last season, four were won by the Club's youngest member, 18 year old Gary Steele, a grandson of former club secretary, the late John Harrison.

Tuesday 14 February 2012

Members and supporters of **Coalburn Community Greenways Trust** braved the elements on St Valentine's Day for the inaugural walk of the soon to open Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Walk, a name given by the Trust to the five mile long Dalquhandy Opencast Mine Walk which Scottish Coal will return access to the local community this Spring. For further information about the Trust, please contact Coalburn Community Council's Matt Sommerville on 01555 820864.

Deaths

William COOK (*School Road*)
Bruce SHAW
Lynn MENZIES (Coutts)
Mary AITKEN (Graham)
Isa MUIR (Freeland)
Janie BROWN (Lundie)
Janet LOGAN (Hunter)

Office Bearers 2011/12

Chairman

Peter McLEISH
Tel. 01555 820287

Vice-Chairman

John ZAWADZKI

Secretary

Betty BELL
Tel. 01555 820276

Treasurer

Jean SAVAGE

Membership

Secretary

Anna McLACHLAN
Tel. 01555 820750

Archivist / Newsletter

John ZAWADZKI

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Heritage Society of
Coalburn**

**COALBURN
HERITAGE CENTRE**
Coalburn One Stop Shop
42 Coalburn Road
COALBURN
Tel. 01555 820060

OPEN
**TUESDAYS
& THURSDAYS**
10am – 3pm

Chairman's Remarks

As some of you will know by now, the village is about to lose one of its oldest landmarks, the school. In its place will be a single storey, all inclusive building. The present school will close its doors at the end of the term and the children will be bussed to Woodpark Primary in Lesmahagow. No doubt the thoughts of many former pupils would be worth recording, though some have already done that over the years, it may be worth considering producing some form of publication relating to the history of the old building.

Currently an application has been forwarded to the Awards for All in respect of funding for new equipment to help preserve and enhance our expanding archive based in the village's heritage centre.

During the last few months we have concentrated on putting together the syllabus for a full year and we are almost there, as you will soon be advised. We are always seeking to introduce new speakers, so, if anyone has any special speaker they might have heard or know of, let us know for the future.

The Gala Day Committee members have asked us to give assistance in putting on additional displays this year to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the first Gala Queen and we are looking at ways to help. The Horticultural Society has also invited the Society to have a presence at its Annual Show in August.

Again, my thanks to the committee and members who have supported us. It has been encouraging to see that the numbers are keeping at a good level at our meetings. Considering all of the above, I look forward to a busy summer season.

Peter McLeish, 16th March 2012.

DIARY DATE

LESMAHAGOW FARMERS' SOCIETY **ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL SHOW**

Saturday 26th MAY 2012, from 9am

Brocketsbrae Showfield, Brocketsbrae, Lesmahagow

Willie Fotheringham

Born in Larkhall, his family moved to Bankend, near Coalburn, in 1913, then to Coalburn village. He was a goalkeeper and was signed by Larkhall Thistle. He played for Airdrieonians, Dundee, Morton, St Mirren and Queen of the South. He was Manager with Airdrieonians and St Mirren. Married to May Hamilton of Laurelbank, Coalburn and they had one daughter, Jessie, who married Alisdair McFarlane.



He played with a local side, Coalburn Rising Star, before being signed by Larkhall Thistle. He then joined Airdrieonians and made his debut for them in 1919 and while there he played 81 matches over two seasons. His next move took him to Dundee where his first match was on 17th August 1921 in front of a 15,000 crowd in a 1-1 draw against Airdrieonians. Later that season he played against Royal Albert in his place of birth in the Second Round of the Scottish Cup. The visitors won 1-0 before a good

attendance of 7,000 who had paid £600 in takings.

During his time at Dens Park, which spanned three years he only missed 3 games out of 118. His next employers were Morton and again he was there for three years from 1924 and while at Cappielow his appearances totalled 105. For his next move he remained in Renfrewshire when St Mirren parted with £275 to get his services. The Buddies had him on their books for six campaigns with 163 outings to his name. His last club was Queen of the South whom he joined in 1933 and there he remained until season 1936-37.

While in Dumfries he was in the group of players who achieved Queens highest ever place in the First Division, 4th. They also knocked Rangers out of the Cup that term. He also travelled to Algiers where the club took part in an invitation tournament in which included 11 teams and Queen of the South won the trophy beating Racing De Santander in the Final. In a game away to Arbroath he left his false teeth in the goalmouth in error. They were returned to him via a fish delivery lorry from Arbroath.

He retired in 1937 and acted as a scout for Queens, one of the players he introduced was Charlie Dickson. In 1942 he returned to Paisley to manage St Mirren and he steered them to winning the Summer Cup the following year against Rangers. While at Love Street he introduced Jimmy Cowan and Willie Telfer into the senior grade. Cowan of course moved to Morton. Due to health he left Saints 1945. Five years later he was back in management when he took over the reins at another of his former clubs, Airdrieonians. His stewardship at Broomfield terminated in 1954 following the club being relegated. In his senior career he made 580 appearances.

Peter McLEISH

The following article was compiled as a result of a visit to Coalburn to recall events during the Second World War by one of the many children of school age and under who arrived in the district at that time.

Aikmanhill - An Evacuee's Story



Photo of David and his sister, Margaret, taken at Aikmanhill.

My name is David Gwynne. I was born on the 17th November 1938 at No. 6 Collins Land in the village of Milton, on the north bank of the River Clyde between Clydebank and Dumbarton and where I lived until I was 30. I have a sister Margaret, born three years earlier. At the time my Dad was working as a toolmaker in the Blackburn Aircraft factory in Dumbarton.

The Clydebank blitz took place in March 1941 and later that year my dad apparently decided that it would be safer for my mother, sister and myself to move to the country. Aikmanhill Farm was evidently known to a relation of my aunt, who came to the farm when pregnant with her first daughter, born in the Cottage Hospital in Douglas, also in 1941. The fact that it came about in

this way and not through a more formal evacuation process may have had something to do with the fact that it was so successful, which it undoubtedly was. I may as well say at the outset that the time spent at Aikmanhill was without doubt one of the happiest of my life.

We apparently stayed there almost till the end of the war, though my sister tells me she went home somewhat earlier to go to school and I do remember myself going to primary school in Milton as a small boy. However, what is not in doubt is that we returned to Aikmanhill for a number of years afterwards, probably until the early 1950s usually, but not exclusively during the summer holidays. My last visit was in about 1958 or 1959, after which we seemed to have lost contact.

Getting there

We always went to Aikmanhill by train from Glasgow Central underground, then a dark mysterious place shrouded in foul-smelling yellow smoke. Then out past the engine sheds at Polmadie, where there was a chance to see some of the big mainline steam engines, and which I knew from shed visits with my dad, who was a great steam enthusiast.

Most of the stations on the way and indeed the line itself are long since closed, including Stonehouse, which was the junction for the Strathaven line, Blackwood, where we used to for the strawberries and Lesmahagow, where the train from Coalburn once ran through the station – which my mother put down to drink!! Then, once past the junction with the line from Brocketsbrae, the long-awaited moment when you saw the green hill of Aikmanhill away over the moss and moments later you were in Coalburn.

Johnny Young or Chalmers, whom I never knew as anything else but Jockie, (pronounced Jokey), would be waiting on the platform to welcome us in his bunnet and blue farmer's jacket and off we would go in the car, a novel experience in itself. Through Timbertown, past Middlefield Farm, down the hill past Netherfield Farm to the sharp corner at the junction to Westoun, along the switchback past Crowhill and finally to Lintfieldbank and up the steep little hill and the dirt road to Aikmanhill – the promised land!

OBITUARY: Bruce Shaw

The village lost one of its best known sons on 17th February, 2012 with the passing of Bruce Shaw at the age of 81. Born and raised at Pretoria Terrace, he spent all of his life in Coalburn other than when he undertook National Service from 1951 to 1953. As a youngster he was admitted to the Cubs and from there he moved to the Scouts and further advancement came when he joined the Rover Scouts.

While at school he enjoyed working with his hands and this no doubt would be of benefit to him in the many tasks which these organisations put to the boys. He left school at the age of 14 and was initially unemployed and then he was offered two jobs on the same day, one working in the pit at Bankend, the other as an apprentice joiner with Bobby Simpson. He chose the latter and his decision proved to be a major influence in his later working life.

On the death of his employer he continued in his chosen trade with Jimmy Forsyth in Lesmahagow and when that business came under new ownership, Bruce decided to take the plunge into self-employment and made a name for himself as an excellent craftsman.

Over the years he built up a very sound business and such was his success that at no time did he find the need to advertise his services and to this day the business is still to the fore with his son, Niven, at the helm. Bruce junior is also involved in the business. During this period Bruce had his wife, Chrissie, by his side to encourage and assist in running the administrative side of the firm.

It wasn't all work though as Bruce had been associated with Coalburn IOR Pipe and Drum Band since the age of 11 and his commitment never waned. In addition he also played for several years in a local dance band and he also graced the stage at the Box and Fiddle Club in the village. In 1992 he was accorded the honour of being Chieftain at Lesmahagow Highland Games of which he extremely proud.

Throughout his life he made very many friends, not that it was hard to do, to be friendly with Bruce. He was a very sincere individual with a fund of stories which he was only too happy to share. One of his best known social activities was when he acted as Santa Claus with daughter Shirley or grand-daughter, Lesley, as his co-pilot as he travelled round the village visiting young and old alike.

The large gatherings at the church for his funeral service and at Lesmahagow cemetery bore witness to his popularity and the esteem in which he was held by all who were fortunate enough to have known and appreciated a true gentleman who will be long remembered throughout the district and beyond.

Peter McLEISH

Syllabus 2012

Admission is FREE

ALL WELCOME – BRING A FRIEND – Tea/Coffee at 9pm

Wednesday, 7.30pm start. Access from 7pm

Coalburn Bowling Club

4 APRIL Return of Derek Phillips. *Subject: American Civil War*

18 APRIL Robert McLeish, Lesmahagow Parish Historical Association

2 MAY Gilbert Dobbie, Coalburn Primary School Janitor (retires 2012)

16 MAY Annual General Meeting

Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

ANNUAL

HERITAGE EXHIBITION

COALBURN GALA DAY

Saturday **7th JULY** 2012

11am – 3pm

Admission FREE

WEBSITE

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk



GUEST SPEAKER

DEREK PHILLIPS

Wednesday 4th April 2012, 7.30pm

Coalburn Bowling Club

VISITORS WELCOME – ADMISSION FREE