



# News letter

Autumn  
2013

Number

# 36

## Chairman's Report

**N**ow that November is upon us, we are well into our list of guests and I think we have had a good selection of speakers. In addition the society has been represented at the recent display in The Fountain at Lesmahagow and it is likely that it will be repeated later in November.

I was asked to go to Auchloch with a slideshow in August and along with Gilbert Dobbie, Douglas Church Guild welcomed us as well a week ago. Gilbert himself has been talking at both Blackwood and Coalburn Darby and Joan Clubs, so publicity about our group is being achieved.

Jean Savage has been indisposed for some time now following an accident in her home. We look forward to her return on a Tuesday and Thursday morning as well as our meetings.

Thoughts are turning to our Christmas Dinner on 13<sup>th</sup> December and names will be accepted from now on. It has, so far, been a popular event and I am sure that the trend will continue.

An above average number of enquiries via email have been received in the last few months and so far we have been able to help the enquirers. Visitors too, have been prominent at the Centre. Only last week we had a family of four from Germany. I think that is the first from that country. They are friends of Hamish Gilchrist, sadly their visit was marred with the death two days later of Hamish's mother in Lady Home Hospital.

It goes without saying, I suppose, that we have been busy as usual with the annual publication of our calendar and thanks must go to John once again for his excellent work in producing it.

I look forward to seeing as many as possible of our members in December at our annual bash. Thanks to everyone for their assistance during the last few months, it is very much appreciated. **Peter McLeish, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013.**

**COALBURN HERITAGE CENTRE, Coalburn One Stop Shop, 42 Coalburn Road.  
Tel. 01555 820060. OPEN TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS, 10am – 3pm**

*Always Wanted...Items, documents, books, etc relating to the history of coalmining, and social history of Coalburn in general, required for display at Coalburn Heritage Centre. If you have a suitable item you would like to donate to the Heritage Centre, please call in any Tuesday or Thursday, 10am – 3pm.*

## Deaths

Ian Reid, Guy Mitchell, Robbie Allan, Sandra Simpson (Archibald),  
Hugh Knox, James Stevenson, William Cowan (husband of Nettie Davidson)

*Front Cover: Bellfield School Bell (Bellfield School, 1874 – 1958)*

*Photo by the late Jim Hamilton.*

## A few examples of emails received via our website....

My Dad (Frederick Spanton)'s older brother, Ernest Spanton lived in Coalburn with his wife Margaret Shaw. I stayed with them for a couple of weeks in 1976. I wonder if you have any info on them ? I don't know if my Grandfather, Ernest John Spanton, married to Alice Chandler, ever lived there. Many thanks. **Glynis Rensch.**

[glyn.rensch@btinternet.com](mailto:glyn.rensch@btinternet.com)

Hi, I was born in Coalburn in 1949 but I live in Sydney now. I have just retired and am hoping to come home some day for a visit. Can you tell me if there is still a house called Ingleneuk. I was born there in the home of my grandfather who ran a doctor's surgery there.

**David McFarlane.** [davemacinoz@icloud.com](mailto:davemacinoz@icloud.com)

Hello, I just took a wander around your website. Excellent, congratulations. Isn't it strange how wee towns are able to build an interesting website with family history interest but most of the bigger burgh towns seem completely incapable of getting anything beyond a town council page and static content? Best regards, Ron Cairns  
Manager CPHS Website [carlukehistory.co.uk](http://carlukehistory.co.uk)

p.s. I will put a link to your site on our Links page.

**Ron Cairns.** [cairns\\_ron@yahoo.com](mailto:cairns_ron@yahoo.com)

Hi, I have just seen a copy of Issue 9 which is an extensive look at my Great Great grandparents "The Clarks" and their families. I then noticed a family photo on your Winter 2010 newsletter which refers to further information about the family in Issue 61 pages 3296 - 3305. Is there any chance that these few pages could be scanned to me to complete the "Clark Chronicle" as I live in New Zealand. Many thanks.

**Elspie Mitchell.** [elspie@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:elspie@vodafone.co.nz)

Does anyone have photos of Coalburn gala day and gala queen Jane Dobbie back in the early/mid 60's ? and earlier gala photos.

**David Lockens.** [david.lockens@oilstates.com](mailto:david.lockens@oilstates.com)

Hi, I'm trying to research the history of the mill at West Toun standing on the edge of Coalburn and was hoping that you may hold some information in your archives or at least have some advice on how to finding information. In particular, I'm keen to know its year of build and an architectural drawing or early photograph(s). Regards, **Graham.**

[grahamsew@gmail.com](mailto:grahamsew@gmail.com)



# Frank Alistair Beaton Wills M.A.

**F**rank Wills was unique in that he was Headmaster of both of the schools in the village. He was at Bellfield from 1918 until 1938 before being promoted to Coalburn where he remained until he retired in 1946 due to failing health.

He was born in Balquidder, north of The Trossachs where his grandfather was a crofter. He served in the Forces during the 1914-18 war at which time he sustained injuries which were to trouble him throughout his life. His tenure in the area was of great benefit not only to his many pupils but also to the community in general as he played an active part in many of the local organisations. He was the Chief Warden in the A.R.P. unit during the Second World War, a prominent Freemason, and a Church elder. He had the honour of acting as Lord-in-Waiting at the Gala Day in 1937 when the first Gala Queen was crowned by his wife. A keen sportsman, he was adept with a billiard cue and a worthy opponent in “The Better ’Ole” on many occasions as a carpet bowler.

The works of Robert Burns was one of his great passions and he was a regular participant in local Burns Suppers. It is recorded that he proposed “The Immortal Memory” on at least 49 occasions. He was also adept at putting pen to paper himself in the manner of the bard.

His fondness for all concerned within the village can be discerned from the following entry in the Bellfield School Log Book dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 1938.

*This day I ended my occupation of the post of headmaster at Bellfield P. School. I cannot demit office without recording;*

*(1) The excellent work and pleasant co-operation of my colleagues, Miss Harvie and Miss Watt.*

*(2) The cordial relations that have existed between the staff of this school on the one hand, and the children and their parents on the other.*

*I was the recipient of a gift of books from my colleagues, and a dressing case and reading lamp from the pupils, from whom Mrs. Wills received a handsome handbag and scarf. I can assure both teachers and pupils that we both appreciate their gifts very much.*

*I conclude this log by remarking that the 20 years spent as headmaster of Bellfield School have been full of happiness, both in work, and socially, and hope that my successor will find his lines cast in equally pleasant places.*

*Frank Wills M. A.*

*(1918 - 1938).*

His passing in May 1947 brought tributes from many quarters. Bob Rae, who was a former local correspondent for the Hamilton Advertiser, concluded his report as follows;

I think we can all echo the words of Tennyson when he writes:

*“We shall find no place that does not breathe some gracious memory of our friend”.*

**Peter McLeish, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013.**

# Lesmahagow: Past & Present

## 2nd MAJOR EXHIBITION

**F**ollowing the great success of the first event back in September, the **Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn** will once again have a promotional stand and display at a second major exhibition being staged by Lesmahagow's Clydesdale Camera Club on **Friday 22nd November** and **Saturday 23rd November**, at The Fountain, Abbeygreen, Lesmahagow.

The exhibition, titled **Lesmahagow: Past & Present**, will feature over 150 quality prints, including, for the first time, a set of 18 A4-size colour prints of photographs, taken by the late Jim Hamilton in 1993, of Lesmahagow shop fronts and 22 A4-size colour prints of Lesmahagow village views taken from the top of the church steeple by John Zawadzki, also in 1993. **Admission is FREE.** **Lesmahagow Parish Historical Association** and the **Lanarkshire Family History Society** will again be supporting the event with a display and stand.

*Local souvenirs & copies of many of the prints will also be available for purchase.*

Lesmahagow: Past & Present EXHIBITION

Friday **22nd** November. 7pm – 9pm.

Saturday **23rd** November. 10am - 3pm.

**NB** FRIDAY 22nd NOVEMBER, from 7pm - 9pm, will be a **DIGITAL SLIDESHOW Evening**, featuring hundreds of projected digital images of Lesmahagow Parish Scenes, Yesterday & Today, presented by **John Zawadzki**. ADMISSION is FREE but seating capacity is limited so please be early to avoid disappointment. The previous occasion was a full house. For further details visit **Clydesdale Camera Club's** website [www.clydesdalecameraclub.co.uk](http://www.clydesdalecameraclub.co.uk)

# HAMILTON HERITAGE SOCIETY OF COALBURN

**MEETINGS HELD TWICE MONTHLY** *Featuring Guest Speakers*  
1st & 3rd Wednesdays, SEPTEMBER – APRIL

Admission is FREE. Non Members Welcome.

ALL WELCOME – BRING A FRIEND – Tea/Coffee at 8.45pm

**Wednesday, 7.30pm start.** Access from 7pm. Coalburn Bowling Club.

## SYLLABUS 2013

### NOVEMBER

**20th** – Max Flemmich, Darvel Telephone Museum.

### DECEMBER

**4th** – Jimmy Clarkson, Douglas Museum.

The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

**10th Annual Christmas Dinner**

**Friday 13th December 2013**

7pm

Coalburn Miners Welfare Social Club

Menu now available.

To book, please contact Secretary Mrs Betty Bell or Chairman Peter McLeish.

### **Office Bearers 2013/14**

**Chairman** Peter McLEISH, Tel. 01555 820287

**Vice-Chairman** John ZAWADZKI

**Secretary** Betty BELL, Tel. 01555 820276

**Treasurer** Jean SAVAGE

**Archivist / Newsletter** John ZAWADZKI

The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

[www.coalburnheritage.org.uk](http://www.coalburnheritage.org.uk)