

The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn



*The prefabs at Park Street.
See the article inside.*

NEWSLETTER NO. 43

June 2016

www.coalburnheritage.org.uk

Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

Meetings twice monthly in Coalburn Bowling Club at 7.30pm on the first and third Wednesdays – September to April.

Guest speakers at every meeting.

Office-Bearers

Chairman – Peter McLeish

Vice- Chairman – Gilbert Dobbie

Secretary – Geoff Brown

Tel No 01555 820379

Treasurer – Gillian Farrell

Membership Secretary – Betty Nicol

Archivist/Newsletter – John Zawadzki

**The Heritage Centre is within the One Stop Shop,
42, Coalburn Road, Coalburn, Lanark ML11 0LH.
Open on Tuesdays and Thursday -10am to 3pm.**

COALBURN GALA DAY

Saturday, 2nd July 2016.

Society's Annual Display

Doors Open at 11am

In

Coalburn Leisure Centre.

See you there!

Chairman's Remarks

We have reached the time of year when lots are going on, overseas visitors, the annual display in the Leisure Centre on the Gala Day. The production of the calendar for 2017 and the syllabus for the new session will be put together.

John has always been a driving force in ensuring that all of the above are completed, however due to his illness he is not available at this time. We look forward to having him back with us before too long.

Former Secretary, Betty Bell, has also been in hospital recently and we wish her a speedy recovery.

Sadly another of our members, Frances Kelly passed away recently. A quiet unassuming lady, Frances was a regular at our meetings. She will be missed.

Following the AGM two members, Kathleen Purdie and Anna McLachlan have resigned from the committee. I would like to thank them for their support over many years and look forward to their continued presence at our meetings.

Due to John's absence a new Vice Chairman has had to be elected to fill the post and I am pleased to tell you that Gilbert Dobbie has agreed to accept the role.

Peter McLeish.

Britain's Oldest P. C. Retires

Nearly 48 years on the beat



CONSTABLE JAMES SPALDING, Britain's oldest serving P.C., retired from the Lanarkshire Police Force yesterday after nearly 48 years' service. "I'm 67 and in the best of health," he told an "Advertiser" reporter this week.

Stationed at Whiterigg, near Airdrie, for the past thirty two and a half years, he was on duty at the Stanrigg Pit disaster in 1918, when 19 men were entombed.

A native of Forfar, Angus, Constable Spalding joined the County Force in February 1900, and was first stationed at Tollcross, where the old horse trams were still in use. His next post was at Morningside, where he married, and thereafter he was for varying periods at Shotts, Clydesdale, Coalburn and Motherwell before his transfer to Whiterigg in 1915.

Constable Spalding has served under three Chief Constables and 13 superintendents. An all - round athlete in his younger days, he won the quarter and half-mile events at Lanarkshire Police sports in 1906, and in the following year he won the 220 yards open and was third in the confined mile.

But for the war and the acute shortage of houses, Constable Spalding would have retired fully 10 years ago. In the past 30 years of his service he has only been off duty two weeks through illness. He and his wife-they have a family of six-are approaching the 45th year of their marriage.

The following reminiscences were sent from Canada by a descendant of Walter Ferguson who lived at Wee Coalburn. The name of the person is unknown.

Burnside Cottage

I have been thinking about what I can tell you about Coalburn. 1907 was the year when I started in the Training College in Glasgow – when I was a youngster I spent many holidays with dad's sister, my aunt Agnes at Burnside Cottage, Coalburn. My dad used to put me on the train at Cambuslang and the guard would see that I got off at Coalburn. That was the railway terminus; the train went on for a few miles then turned. My Aunt Agnes's first husband was a Mackenzie and her family was: James, William, Walter, Tom, Gavin, Agnes, Bella, Grace and Nettie, all Mackenzies. I never knew that uncle – she married Andrew Ritchie later.

Burnside Cottage was enlarged and the new portion, 2 storeys and a grocery store, which they ran. The larger house was the home of both the minister, Rev. Peter Walker, a bachelor, and the doctor, also a bachelor. They had bedrooms and sitting rooms and cloakrooms upstairs and the doctor's consulting room was downstairs. My cousins had to do for them and take calls for the doctor when he was out. My first visit when I went had to be to see the Rev Peter. (*Note-The doctor was a Dr Bathgate*).

Their grocery shop, a public house and a hotel around the corner were the main part of the village. The Post Office was farther off on the way to the Church. There were very few houses except those near the station and on the road to the Church. Another of dad's sisters lived near the Church. She was Auntie Bell Smart. She lived with her son Tom and another son lived next door. These houses had no indoor plumbing or electric lighting in these days.

Dad's birthplace was a small cottage we used to pass on the railway some miles from Coalburn. The name of our house, Birkwood was from Birkwood Castle in that neighbourhood. My cousins, all of them except James and Willie and Uncle Andrew were coal miners. Tom, at the time of the grouse shooting was the overseer for an Englishman who came every year for the shooting.



The 50th Anniversary of the Darby and Joan Club held in the Miners' Welfare on Monday 11th April 2016.

The cake was cut by Mrs Agnes Brodie and Mrs Gladys Macfarlane.

There were over 70 present including members of the Blackwood and Carnwath Darby and Joan Clubs.

From 12.30pm entertainment was provided by Dave Marshall, formerly a DJ with Radio Clyde who presented a slideshow with many items from the 1950s onwards. Following that an excellent meal was served by Cruets'. Johnny Weir brought the afternoon to a close with his usual brand of music for dancing to or singing to. The event was over at 4pm and a good time was had by all.

On 17th December 1965, under the Coalburn news, the following notice appeared in the Hamilton Advertiser.

For Darby and Joan Club *A WVS Centre has been formed in Coalburn to run a Darby and Joan Club in the village. Mrs McKenzie, 63, Coalburn Road, is the Centre organiser. All folk over 60 years of age will be very welcome at the opening of the Club on Tuesday, early afternoon, in the Scout Hall.'*

The following week's edition updated the situation as follows.

Darby and Joan Club Starts

'Two new organisations, closely linked, have been created in the village. A band of enthusiastic ladies have formed a branch of the WVS. The organiser is Mrs Euphemia McKenzie; Mrs Agnes Kearney is leader; Mrs S. Hackson, 12, Midfield Road is secretary and Mrs M. Meikle is treasurer. The ladies first venture was the introduction of a Darby and Joan Club and they met with immediate success.

Over 70 people attended the function, with Mrs Myerscough, Blackwood, presiding. She introduced Mrs McIndoe, from Salsburgh, assistant county organiser for the WVS., who complimented all concerned in arranging the function and expressed her pleasure at the large attendance.

An enjoyable tea provided and served by the ladies put the company in good heart for the entertainment. Songs and music were provided by Ann Campbell, May Bryson, William Brodie and Jim Brown: Beth Bryson gave readings and Marilyn Buchanan and Janice Gillies also contributed.

The Scout and Guide Hall was festively decorated. The votes of thanks were proposed by Mrs McKenzie.

Preview of the 2017 Calendar

The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn



COALBURN DISTRICT WORKS'
EXCURSION COMMITTEE.
1898

2017
CALENDAR

Get your copy at the Gala Day

Priced £5



An unusual photo of the station gates taken by Jim Hamilton in 1955.

From Slater's Directory 1867-Listed under Lesmahagow

Among the names under the Gentry and Clergy section were James W. Alston Esq. J.P. Stockbriggs: James T. Brown Esq. Auchlochan and John Smith Esq. Birkhill.

The Schools section lists: Bankend-James Campbell, Master and Nethertown-James Bond, Master.

Deaths

Jean Smith (Munro), Robert Steele, Jimmy Lang, Frances Kelly, Kenneth Tait, Richard McLean, Diane Graham (Carlin), Isabella Bernard, Agnes Gray (Clark), June Barelli (Kerr), Morton Logan, George Lundie and Jim Logan (*Reek*).

Notes from John Hamilton's writings-History of the Prefabs.

May 16th 1947 At last operations have commenced at the Bellfield Road site of the new aluminium houses. Several local men started making the roads on Monday, and 'sair backs' and blisters are vexing subjects from stopping time till bedtime.

October 25th The new housing scheme out Bellfield Road way is now in course of construction – building of brick foundations commenced this week.

January 15th 1948 Started erecting prefabs today, look very funny in sections.

January 16th Still putting up prefabs.

January 17th Finished putting up prefabs, very wet.

February 21st The laying-on of power and water at the pre-fabs should soon be completed, and no doubt, the new tenants should move in at no great distant date. There will be some 'sair backs' before the gardens are put in order.

May 8th Phew! The prefabs have been allocated, and the usual outcry has followed in the wake. The powers-that-be have made 16 friends and a horde of enemies. Another 50 houses would go far to solving the problems of accommodation in the village.

May 22nd It has been a 'moving' week in the village, as every day saw loaded lorries proceeding 'prefabwards'. The whole of the sixteen tenants can now render "Ma ain wee hoose" with full possessive power.

The first tenants were listed as follows:

John Prentice, Tommy Meikle, Jimmy McGonnigall, Geordie Callan, Bobby Greenshields, Bill Allan, Jimmy Muncie, Jack Gray, Jimmy Twaddle, John Hogg, Bobby Payne, Bobby Carmichael, Alex McCormack, Jack Imrie, John Brown and Jimmy Reid.

Billy Dempster Looks Back

1874

Bellfield School Excursion

On Tuesday, 25th August the teachers of Bellfield Sabbath School accompanied by Mr William Brown, piper, enjoyed a picnic at Tinto. The company drove to the foot of the hill and afterwards climbed to the top where they had an excellent tea provided by the ladies. Having spent a large part of the day in viewing the surrounding country they again repaired to the foot of the hill, when having received another refreshment, they drove back to their homes all delighted with the days enjoyment.

Mr Frank Wills

A native of Balquidder, Perthshire, he attended McLaren High School in Callander then graduated from Edinburgh University and his first assistantship at Craigie was interrupted by the outbreak of the first world war. He served in the Black Watch and was severely wounded and then discharged in 1917. He resumed teaching in Perth before being appointed Headmaster at Bellfield School in 1918.

He was an ardent student of Robert Burns and was much requested as a lecturer on the poet and his works.

After a period of twenty years Mr Wills left Bellfield and stayed in the village by his appointment at Coalburn School. He was a very popular teacher at both schools. His health deteriorated and he retired in 1947. Not long afterwards he sadly died.

1959

MRS JUDITH HART, A 30 YEAR OLD EAST KILBRIDE HOUSEWIFE WITH TWO CHILDREN WAS SELECTED AS PROSPECTIVE SOCIALIST CANDIDATE FOR LANARK. MRS HART IS THE CONSTITUENCY'S FIRST WOMAN CANDIDATE.

Birkhill in the 1960s



Badly damaged by fire in March 2016.