

# The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

Newsletter 44

September 2016



## CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

I am sure you will have noticed a change in the presentation of this Newsletter. In John's absence Billy Rough offered to take over job of putting it together and as he is more competent than I am in these matters, I was pleased to accept and I would like to thank him for doing so.

Speaking of John I have not been able to visit him as often recently, however Shona keeps me up to date by email and she is pleased with how he is doing thus far, I think slow progress is the way she put it.

Here we are back at the commencement of another session and as you will find elsewhere we will have a mixture of subjects on the syllabus and as in the past several speakers making their first appearance.

The Gala Day was one of the wettest for many years which was a great pity for the children in the court and also for the many others of all ages who worked tirelessly to provide a spectacle worthy of the day. Despite the weather and, in some cases, maybe because of it over one hundred and fifty people were at the display in the Leisure Centre and I would like to thank all the volunteers who came along to assist.

As in past years we continue to have visitors at the Heritage Centre from far afield such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, while today we had a lady from Wales along with her son and daughter. She was a cousin of Jim Hamilton. Her father, David Reid, was brought up in Helenslea, one of the houses behind the Masonic Hall overlooking the former railway line. As a matter of interest the winner of our school award, Rachel Struthers now lives there.

Peter McLeish,  
16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

## Previous winners of the Jim Hamilton Heritage Award



2010 Ellis Burnside

2011 Ezra Foley

2012 Eathen Shankley

2013 Jack Hickie

2014 Luke Brown

2015 Lauren Lauriston

2016 Rachel Struthers



Sadly, people who have died since our last newsletter,  
our condolences to the families

Angela Douglas (Aikman)

Robert (Bert) Brown

Walter Brown

Jim Buchanan

Douglas Hickie

Mary Young (McCaskie)

Willie (Scotty) Marshall

Janet Lindsay (Blackwood)

Jimmy Cosgrove

Gordon William Lindsay.



A (probably very welcomed) war time  
Christmas Card sent to,  
Mr and Mrs J. Brownlie  
Railway Road  
Coalburn

## The Front Cover



This photo more or less shows Coalburn as it first was in the 1890s. The rows on the left were always known as Coalburn Rows. The tall building of the left was the only shop. There was another row which you can't see for the shop.

My Great Grandmother, Jane Shaw, lived there and one of the houses which was only a single end was the Reading Room the forerunner to the Miners' Welfare. The small row on the right was known as the Beef Row, I've never been able to find out why. When I came to Coalburn in January 1955, the rows on left were inhabited and the shop was still being used, in fact it was still in use in the 1970s. The Beef Row was still there but not occupied while the row where the Reading Room was had been demolished

*Peter McLeish*

## Schools

In 1816 there was a school house noted at Netherton and a further school at Buchtknowes, these schools would serve the farms in the area They continued to exist until 1876.

At Bankend the school was operated by the local colliery owners, the Monkland Iron Company, for the children of their employees. The school at Auchinbegg would also serve the same purpose.

After the Education Act of 1872 the school board decided to build a new school at Bellfield to accommodate 250 pupils, replacing all the schools.

This was opened in 1876

## Railway

In 1866 the line opened for passenger traffic between Ferniegair (just outside Hamilton) and Brocketsbrae.

On the first of November 1891 a single platform was provided at Coalburn for passengers, providing direct travel between the village and Glasgow.

In 1883 a line opened between Alton Heights junction and Poneil junction to link up with the Lanark—Muirkirk line

In 1889 the Bankend line had been extended for 4 miles to Spireslack, the coalfield in East Ayrshire.

## Coalburn P.S.A.

One of the many clubs and activities that's been in Coalburn over the years the P.S.A must be one of the most unusual one's.

It was a movement which spread throughout Lanarkshire and tried to live up to its title—Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.

The columns of the "Hamilton Advertiser" for the period up to 1920, reveal that some of these groups met regularly and hearing the address of an invited speaker, would take part in the discussion which the talk initiated.

Any evidence about the Coalburn P.S.A. Is from two poems written by Erchie Hay. From the content, it would seem that the Coalburn P.S.A. had a character and procedure of its own.

*Every Sunday we're always on the dot  
To meet and gither on the same old spot  
While the pistols are getting drawn  
And the pipe reek stairts tae blaw  
We has the minutes o' the meeting  
Read by brither Andraw Shaw  
There's Guy Callan and Wattie Graham  
Masel and Mick Mulgrw  
Bobby Pirrie and Andrew Shaw  
They're a' familiar tae you  
Sandy Hamilton and Josie Cairns  
And also Johnny Broon*

## Billy Dempster Looks Back

Sept 1950

One hundred and twenty nine miners were trapped underground in a landslide at Knockshinnoch Colliery, New Cumnock.

Thirteen men died and one hundred and sixteen rescued.

Dec 25<sup>th</sup> 1950

Four Scottish students removed the Stone of Scone from Westminster Abbey. The stone was taken to Westminster in 1296 by Edward the First.



In the treaty of 1328 England agreed to return the stone but the London populace rioted and it stayed there till 1950.

The stone was hidden in the basement of the American Embassy in Edinburgh, but, when it was removed from the Abbey it had been damaged, it was repaired by a Glasgow Stone Mason.

In 1951 a quiet word was sent through the church of Scotland and the stone was found in the ruins of Arbroath Abbey. Two years later in June 1953 the Queen was crowned on it, or was she?



# Billy Dempster Looks Back

1950

The first mass produced computer Univac 1 ( Universal Automatic Computer) was built by the Eckert and Mauchly computer company in Philadelphia, USA

1947

The Rev Thomas Hawthorn M.C. former minister of Coalburn Church was called to Mowbray Presbyterian Church, Capetown, South Africa.

A native of Cambuslang Mr Hawthorn was minister at Coalburn Church when war broke out in 1939. He enlisted as a private and eventually commissioned to the York's and Lancs. regiment. In 1944 having joined the Army Chaplains Department he was posted as a padre to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Cameronians, part of the famous Burma Chindit force. Mr Hawthorn was awarded the M.C. for conspicuous bravery at the "Blackpool" road block near Magong. He was later stationed at the Gordon barracks Aberdeen.

20 March 1947

Worst winter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with snow drifts over 20 feet deep in the Highlands

August First 1947

Edinburgh International Festival opens

November 20<sup>th</sup> 1947

The young Princess Elizabeth marries the Duke of Edinburgh

## Nell's Story a Jim Hamilton Interview

"We lived in a miners raw" at Haywood and oor hoose wis a typical but and ben. There wur two built-in beds in the living room and one in the ither room. The hoose had wooden flairs and it was comfortable and snug. However, we had a big faimly so there wis an awfi' shortage of space and we had to keep the coal under the bed."

Nell continued "Next to the midden wis a dry-closet and this was shared wi' ither families. There wis nae running water in the hoose. I remember yin job I dinnae like - cairryin the water. We had galluses, a wooden spar fitting ower oor shouthers from which hung two chains and on the end of each we fixed two pails. We had to go to the Den Well, dip in oor pails and fill them, then cairry them up the den Brae, it wis some cairry!

Nell continued "Efter we came hame from the schule, we got tae play till half past six but we had to make shair and be in on time fur oor tea. Efter that the small bath was filled wi' hot water and we were washed. The whole family had to be in bed for eight o' clock. Of coorse we should remember that faither had to be up at five in the mornin' tae walk miles to be at his wurk at the pit oan time.

Nell recalled that while the family were living in Haywood, her father's father died at Douglas Water. Nell went with her father by train to Lanark and hence to Douglas Water. As Nell termed it - it was a "waulkin funeral" the hearse was pulled by two horses and all the mourners walked from Douglas Water to the cemetery at Douglas and back, a return journey of about ten miles.

School days were happy, "although we never had much, I don't remember us being unhappy. Everybody wis jist as poor as ourselves. We went to schule wi' oor bare feet in the summer and, in the winter, we had tackety bits.

Nell talked about her early years of work "Ma furst place wis wurkin' for the faimly o' Bob Hamilton at Pill farm, near Auchengray railway station. I worked every day o' the week and only occasional-ly got a' Sunday aff and never more than once a month.

I wis up wi' the rest of the faimly at six in the morning, and I looked after the weans, feeding, cleaning and putting them to bed. When they were to be washed every evening, oot came the big tin bath on to the flair heid and I filled it wi' kettles o' hot water.

When I got my furst pay o' £1.10s for ma six months wurk, I made for hame as fast as I could go and proudly handed over the money intact to my mither. I had been allooed 3d a week pocket money. I was jist making a little more than one shilling a week but I had my food and board as well. I think ye wid agree I wasna exactly over-paid.

After two and a half years at the Pill farm, Nell moved to work as a house kitchen maid at Cleugh farm when big Sannie Sommerville was the farmer. She left that employment when her father and family moved to Douglas West in 1914 at the time of the opening of the colliery there.

*Nell was born at Wurrit Raw, Cobbinshaw 1898. Her father was Jock Welsh and her mother Jenny Stark.*

# Syllabus

September 2016

Wed 7th *Gala Day Slideshow*  
Geoff Brown

Wed 21st *Mining*  
Bob McDonald/ Colin Findlay

**October**

Wed 5th *SLC Leisure Services*  
Colin McKendrick

Wed 19th *The Story of Coalburn*  
Peter McLeish

**November**

Wed 2nd *Covenanters*  
Ethyl Smith

Wed 16th *Pits, Ponies, People and Stories*  
Films

**December**

Wed 7th *African Visit*  
Anna Aitken/Howard Johnstone

Fri 16th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER