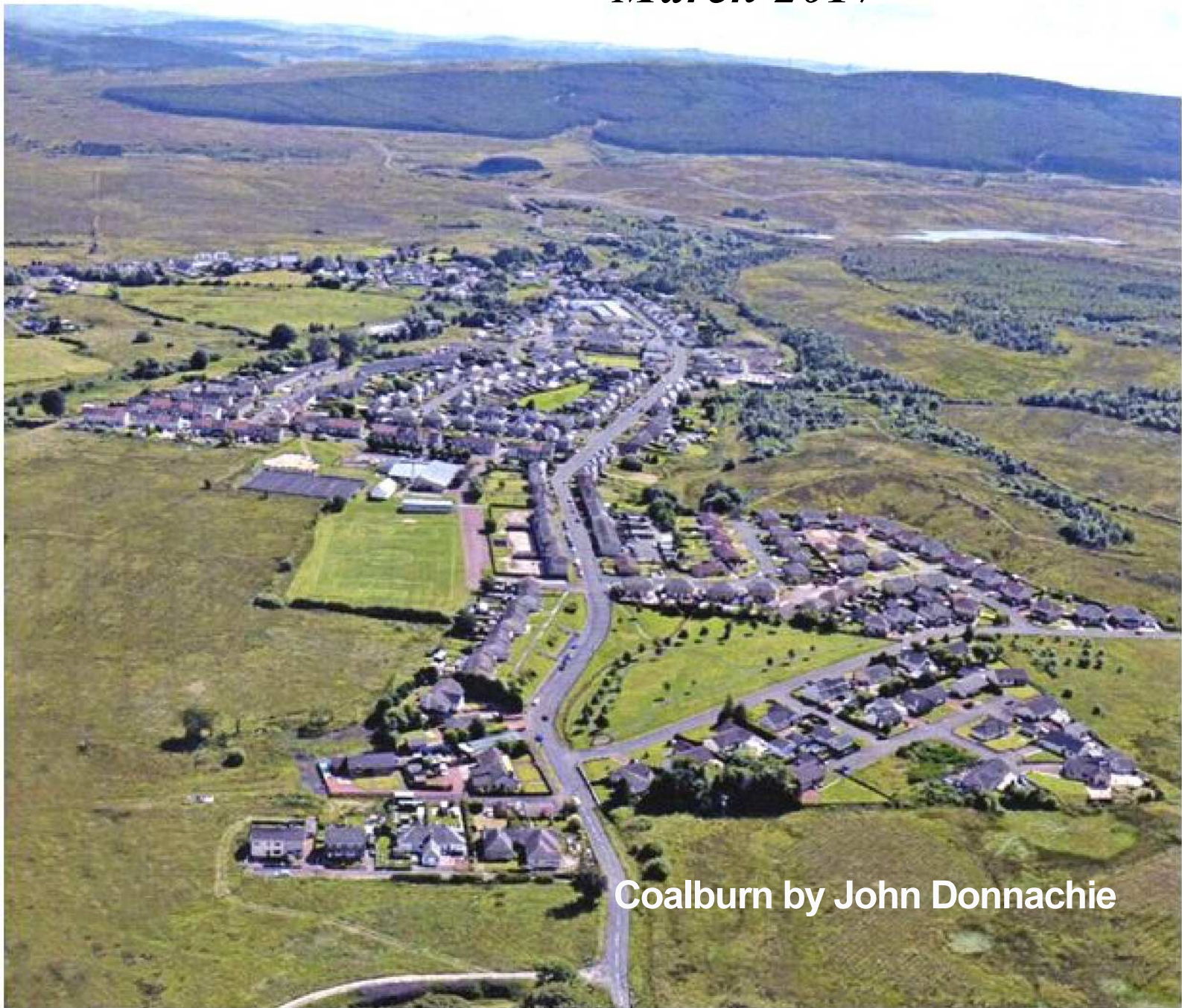


The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn

Newsletter 46

March 2017



Coalburn by John Donnachie



CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

First of all may I say thanks to everyone who was present at Hollandbush for the annual Christmas Dinner. It was yet another sociable evening.

Here we are at the commencement of another year and we look forward to another successful twelve months. We have had a number of emails from folk wishing to visit the Centre to search for information about relatives who have lived and worked in the village. This we are only too pleased to do as we have usually found information which they seek.

I have been delighted to see Jim Hamilton back among us at the meetings. Betty Bell is back at her own home and we may see her one of these nights. I have been to visit John Zawadzki at Lower Johnshill. He had a setback a few weeks ago and was taken to Wishaw General, however he has been able to return to Auchlochan. Sadly Jim McLean's wife Annette, died recently after a very short illness and I would like to thank Jim for his support at this time.

As I mentioned recently we are working on a theme for this year's calendar as well as ideas about what we should do for annual display at the Gala Day at the Leisure Centre on the 1st July. In addition suggestions are being put forward as to whom we should approach as guest speakers from September onwards.

Peter McLeish,
13th February 2017.

In deepest sympathy Coalburn related deaths:

Famie Brown (Smith);
Jim Wilson (*Todlaw*);
Jim Wilson (*Bankhouse*);
Annette McLean (Saunders);
Jim Allan;
Alec Johnstone;
Margaret Aitken (Walker);
Dick Campbell;
Margaret Harrison (Greenshields).
Jean McNeish (Menzies)



From the writings of John Hamilton
Coalburn District Ambulance Wagon



The committee comprising of the managers of the various collieries and lime works in the district feel deeply gratified at the very generous response which everybody has made to the appeals for funds to secure a first class ambulance wagon and also to erect a suitable house. They expect after paying everything they will have a small balance to the good which will be used for the upkeep of the machine and other incidental expenses. W.C. Cunningham of Caprington Castle provided a fee for the house at a nominal rent of 1/- per annum.

Drs. Kelly, Harrison and Lindsay have kindly signified their intention of supplying the necessary furnishings in the shape of cordials, splints, rugs etc.. Some lessons in stretcher drill will be given by the doctors.

A list of the contributors include:

John Lancaster of Heathfield	£30
W.C. Cunningham of Caprington Castle	£12
J. Waddell Stockbriggs	£12
j. Waddell Employees	£12
Wm. Barr Bellfield Colliery	£10
Wm. Barr Employees	£10
J. B. Greenshields Kerse	£10
Trustees of Mrs Twaddle	£10
James Hozier Mauldslie Castle	£5
A.H. Stein Kirkfield	£5
Mrs Wilson & Family Netherfield	£5
Proprietors of Nether Poniel	£5
Proprietors of Bellfield	£5
Arneil Bros. and employees	£2 12/-
W.R. Waddell Auldton Limeworks	£2 10/-
W,R,Waddell Employees	£2 10/-
Joseph Paterson Coalburn Inn	£1 1/-
Andrew Smith Birkhill	£1 1/-
Jas. Adam Braehead House	£1
Alex Miller Coalburn	£1
Jas Simpson Porterhall	10/-
John Weir Bellfield Schoolhouse	10/-
John Woodburn Grocer Coalburn	10/-
Sums of 5/- and under	£11 4/-

This information was reported in the Hamilton Advertiser dated 2nd February 1895.

The house referred to may be what was later known as the Ambulance Shed which also was where Dr MacFarlane garaged his car. The building is now used by the Coalburn Homing Society.

In 1948 Coalburn was quoted in a newspaper in as being a musical community. It had the Coalburn Amateur Orchestra, Pipe Band, three dance bands, Silver Band, Class A Choir and a few excellent soloists.



Coalburn Amateur Orchestra

Nurses Car Fund 1948

The committee which was formed to raise funds to provide a car for the local nurse has been dissolved.

£380 was collected in the comparatively short period of three months

Times Remembered Past

by *BD*

Drama Group Feb 1948

Coalburn Drama Group won 1st place at the Lanark Festival with "Straigly" During the trying war years with so many groups disbanded the group kept going despite the many changes to personnel and assisted in raising hundreds of pounds for charitable purposes. The Divisional Finals will take place in Glasgow Lyric Theatre next month.

War Memorial

At a special meeting on September 1948 of all the local organisations, it was agreed to that the names of Coalburn men who fell in the late war to be added to the existing memorial and that the money be handed over to the parent body, Lemahagow Parish War Memorial Committee, for the purpose of affixing the names to the Lesmahagow Parish Memorial.



The Coalburn "Raws"

Extracted from "The Housing Condition of Miners" Report by the Medical Officer of Health, Dr John T. Wilson, 1910

Bankend - one row of five blocks - 20 houses - 4 one apartment, rental £5 4s; 16 two apartments, rental £6 10s. Row of three houses of two apartments, rental £7 3s; row of 12 one apartment houses, rental £5 4s; 1 house of two apartments; row of 7 houses of two apartments, rental £6 10s. The last row was re-roofed 17 years ago, and is in good repair.

These houses were erected at least 80 years ago - stone built - no damp-proof course - plastered on solid walls - wood ceilings - wood floors, not ventilated - some houses are damp. With the exception of four houses, where felt had been placed below the slates a number of years ago, the roofs are not watertight.

No gardens - washhouse for each house - coal cellars

Pail privy for each house

No sinks - surface channels

Gravitation water supply, standpipe in front of row.

Scavenged at owners' expense. Ashpit in a broken down condition

Sawdust Row - 4 houses of two apartments, rental £6 10 s

These are constructed outside and inside with wood, and sawdust packed between - slate roof - brick fireplace and chimney.

Garden for each house - washhouses - coal cellars

Pail closet for each house

No sinks - surface channels leading to underground drainage system Gravitation water supply, standpipe in front of the row

Scavenged at owners' expense

Bellfield Mine

The mine-owners' houses, 75 in number, may be described in groups as follows:-

Bellfield Terrace - 18 two apartments, rental £7 16s to £8 9s, 6 of these are charged 19s 6d extra for electric light; 6 four apartments, rental £10 8s, with an extra charge of £1 1s 8d for electric light.

The houses were built under the Building Bye-laws - brick built - one row of 12 houses of one storey, and one row of 12 houses of two storeys.

No overcrowding - apartments good size

No gardens - five washhouses with boiler - coal cellar for each house

Six privies - one ashpit

Sinks in scullery - underground drainage system

Gravitation waters supply in each house

Scavenged once a week at the owners' expense

Shoulderigg - 7 houses - 6 two apartments, rental £8 2s 6d; 1 three apartments, occupied by overseer, rent free

The houses were erected two years ago under the Building Bye-laws - one storey, brick built

No overcrowding - apartments good size

Garden for each house, cultivated - wash house - coal cellar

Privy for each house - two ashpits

No sinks - surface channels connected with underground drainage system

Gravitation water supply, standpipe

Scavenged at owners' expense

The Jim Hamilton Interview

Wull Steele

On leaving school it was "the pits" "I staitit at the coal face fillin' hutches for ma faither. Efter I feenished the furst day, I felt as if I had been nearly "murdered"

There was very little mechanisation as we now understand it in the pits and coal was got oot by sheer, hard graft. My faither had a "rickety" machine, that was what we called the hand borer. Even in his old age, he still had it in his garden hut.

Wull can remember his dislike of the working conditions from the first day he went down the pit. He had no alternative as it was expected that the sons of miners would follow their fathers into the pits.

Wull transferred to work at the Doosie pit after Bellfield collieries closed. His first job there was to drive a mine, in preparation for the extraction of coal and this entailed digging through the surface and the earths upper layers of dirt and stone until the coal seams were reached. The gradient at that mine was one in four and this was considered steep. The purpose of management was to reach the coal as quickly as possible and long, sloping gradients were not encouraged. Such steep gradients involved higher risk to the men working underground from the greater speed reached by the hutches travelling downwards and the increasing danger of breakaways of laden hutches coming up the slope and running out of control backwards.

Wull Steele

Wull talked about his workmates on that job. There were eight of us, four pairs of brothers—Hugh and Tam Findlay, Donald and Sannie Mathieson, Bob and Jimmy Wilson and my brother Jim and me. That was the mine that Tam the Tosh lost his eyesight in an explosion.

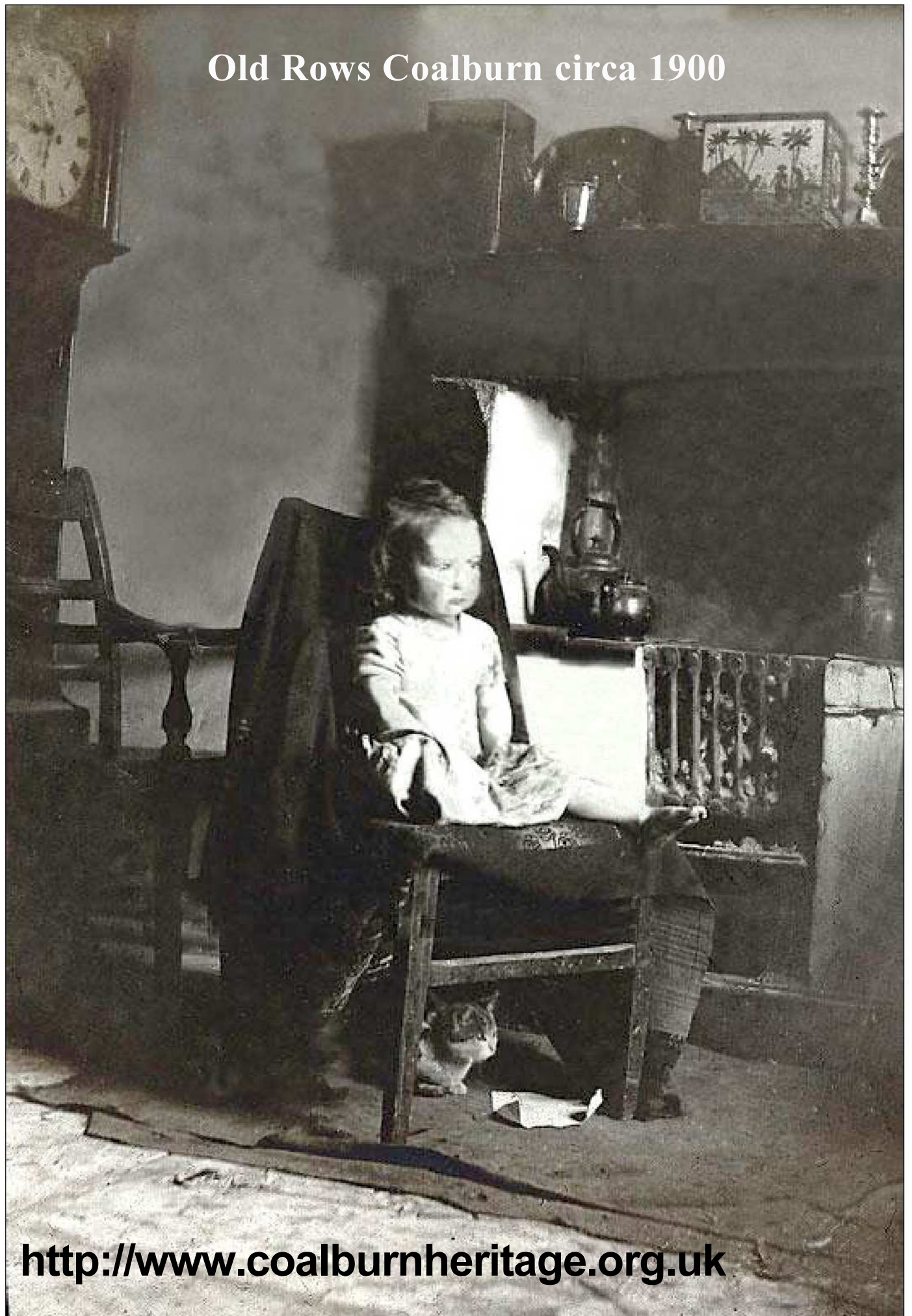
Up until 1939 Wull was an "oncost" worker doing various jobs underground. Unfortunately The Doosie pit and the mines surrounding were subject to continuous flooding so he was accustomed to working in wet conditions, often in water up to his knees. However it was arranged for Wull to take his Fireman's Papers and he became a Fireman later renamed "Deputy" This was the job he had for the next twenty years until the Doosie closed in 1959.

Wull was constant nightshift for most of these years this involved him being alone in all parts of the pit, checking the pumps and other preventative measurers, were operating soundly. I asked him if he did not find it rather frightening.

It was a rather eerie job with the "trees" holding up the roofs of the underground tunnels, cracking around you and anyone unused to would be worrying about possible falls. Men who work in the pits are in constant danger and have many frights in a working week, but you get so accustomed to the hazards that you forget about them.



Old Rows Coalburn circa 1900



<http://www.coalburnheritage.org.uk>