

*The Jim Hamilton*  
**Heritage Society of Coalburn**



**Newsletter**

**50**



## *Chairman's Remark's*

As most of you will know by now, since our last publication we have lost one of our most important members, John Zawadzki and as a mark of respect to the hours he spent during his time with us we are dedicating this Newsletter, our 50<sup>th</sup>, to the memory of John. This includes a supplement with photos which he produced over the years. Elsewhere in this edition I have put into print my own thoughts on John.

I was sorry to miss the Christmas Dinner and I was told that it was another good evening. Thanks to all who were present and to the members who run the raffle.

In the last few weeks we have received a number of enquiries mainly through emails and as a result we are expecting some visitors during the summer months.

Once again it the time of year when we turn our thoughts to the theme for the Gala Day display so we would like to hear from you all as to what we should consider.

We are looking for new speakers to give us a variety of subjects to consider. That's not to say the we will not consider folk who have previously visited, so if there is anyone who comes into that category let us know as you are aware some speakers cover can speak on various items.

*Peter McLeish*

*2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.*



In deepest sympathy Coalburn related deaths:

John Zawadzki

John Purdie

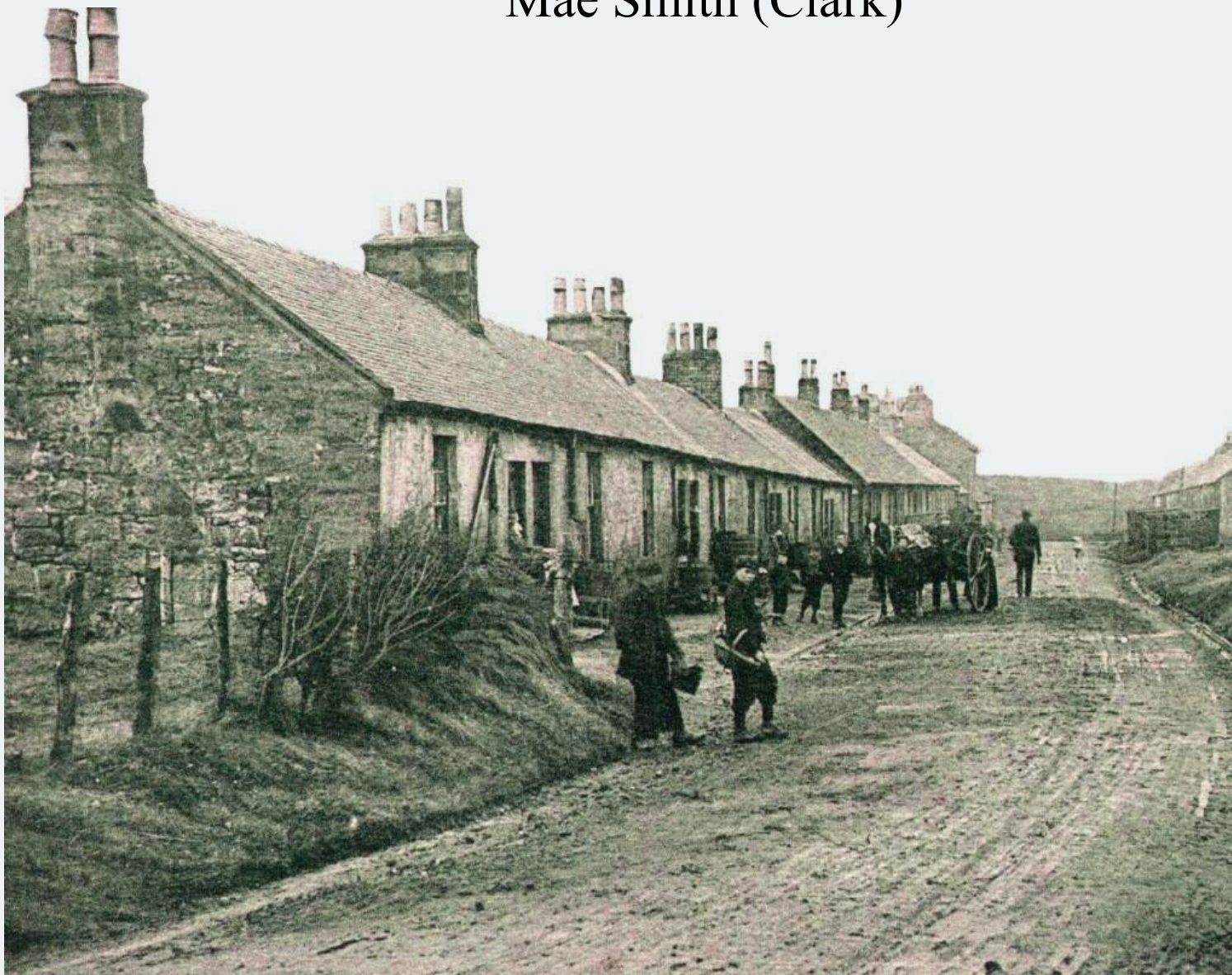
Jean Rae (McFarlane)

David Lockens

Mary Mitchell (Brown)

Emily McLaren (Convoy)

Mae Smith (Clark)



## Lassies at the Pithead Maggie Spence

**D**uring the 1914-18 War, because of the shortage of men to work at the pits in Coalburn due to so many going to the armed forces, woman began to be taken on for jobs at the pithead. Rachel Black, a daughter of oor next door neighbour at Myrtle Cottage, spoke for me and got me a job. Some of the lassies from Coalburn wur Minnie Tait, Jenny Meikle, Sarah Hamilton, Kate McLure, Jessie Robertson, Ann Hunter, Mary Porter and the three sisters, Annie, Lizzie and Maggie Frame.

**T**here wur a squatter o, girls who waukit to Auchlochan pit frae Lesmahagow includin' Susie Law, Bab Mitchell, Liz Simpson, Ina Mansfield, Ann Menzies and Jean Mikle I min' Jean could whustle like a lintie. Despite it being such durty work, we were a cheery lot.



**T**he working garb of the women on the pithead was a coat and shawl going to work and when ready to start, they took these off and put a sack apron over their "piny". We wore tackety bits that were so well polished that ye could see yur face in them

## Life at Auchenbegg     Jenny Summers

**T**here were two miners raws. Oor hoose was a but and ben, you opened the front door -there was nae back door- and you were in the living room and it had set in beds. We had dry closets next to the midden. The men folk seldom used the toilets—they went for a walk. We had an outside pump which meant we had to carry all the water in and all the waste water out.

**W**ith such a large family, mither had to be an organiser—she was adept at delegating work. We had to help with the washing of the piles of clothes for our large family. Nae washing machines and spin dryers then. It was lighting a fire to heat the water in the boiler of the washhouse and filling bins and cawing the mangle.



**W**e walked to Waterside school. My father kept hens so we often had egg sandwiches for oor piece. We carried a tin flask o' tea and when we got to the school, we put it, wi .the cork off, in front of the fire to heat. They werena any services o' school meals or bottles of milk during ma years at school.

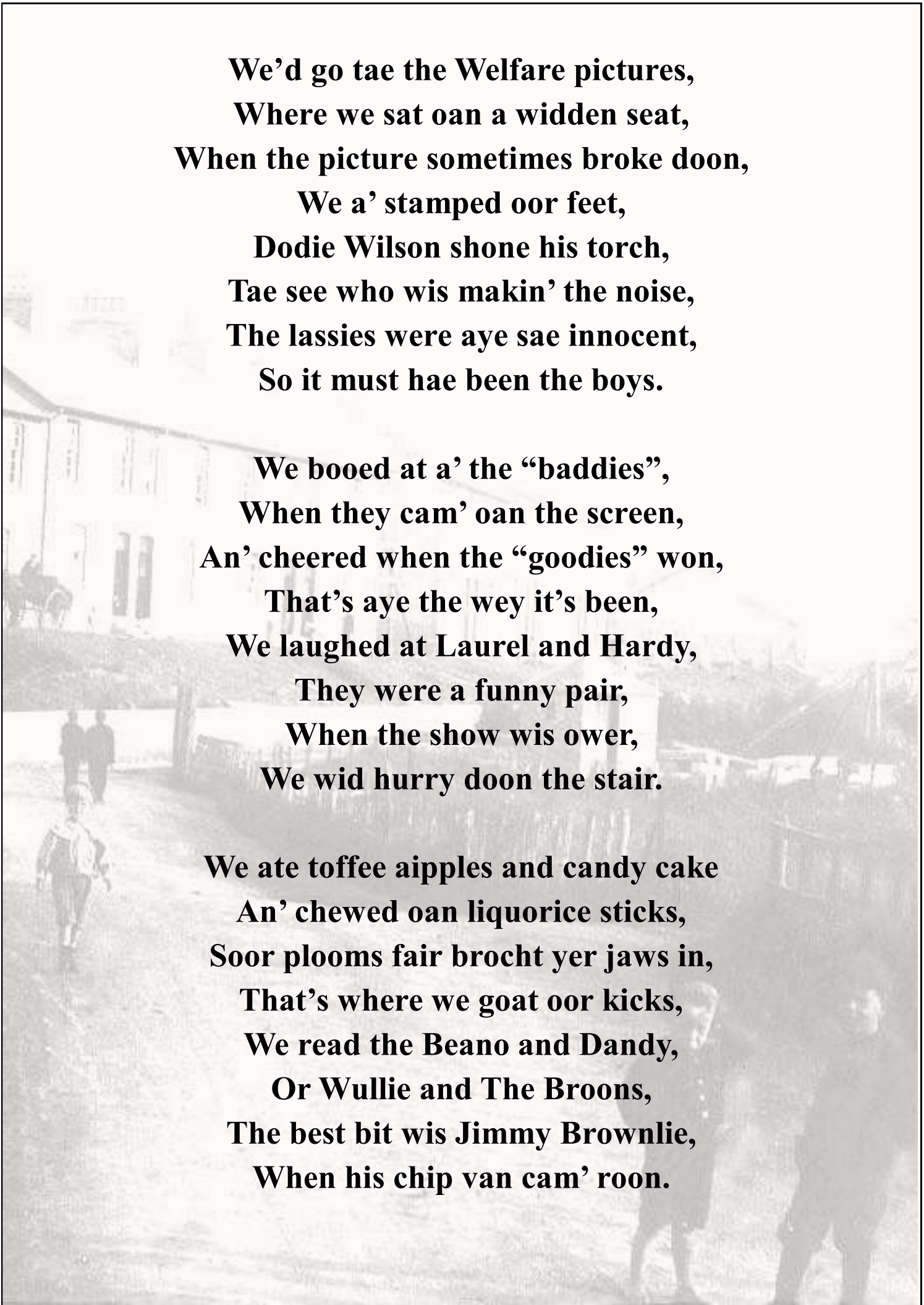


## **Coalburn Weans**

**A wis born an' bred in Coalburn,  
Aye, Coalburn is ma hame,  
Bein' brocht up in the country,  
Made me as typical wean,  
We didnae hae much money,  
So ma mither went oot tae work,  
An' when ah had oan ma Sunday claes,  
Ah didnae play in the dirt.**

**Ah didnae hae very many toys,  
Like the weans a' hae the day,  
Ma pals were happy girls an' boys,  
Wi' lots o' gemmes tae play,  
We played at cowboys and indians,  
We played at hide and seek,  
When we counted up tae a hunner,  
Ye wernae allood tae peek.**

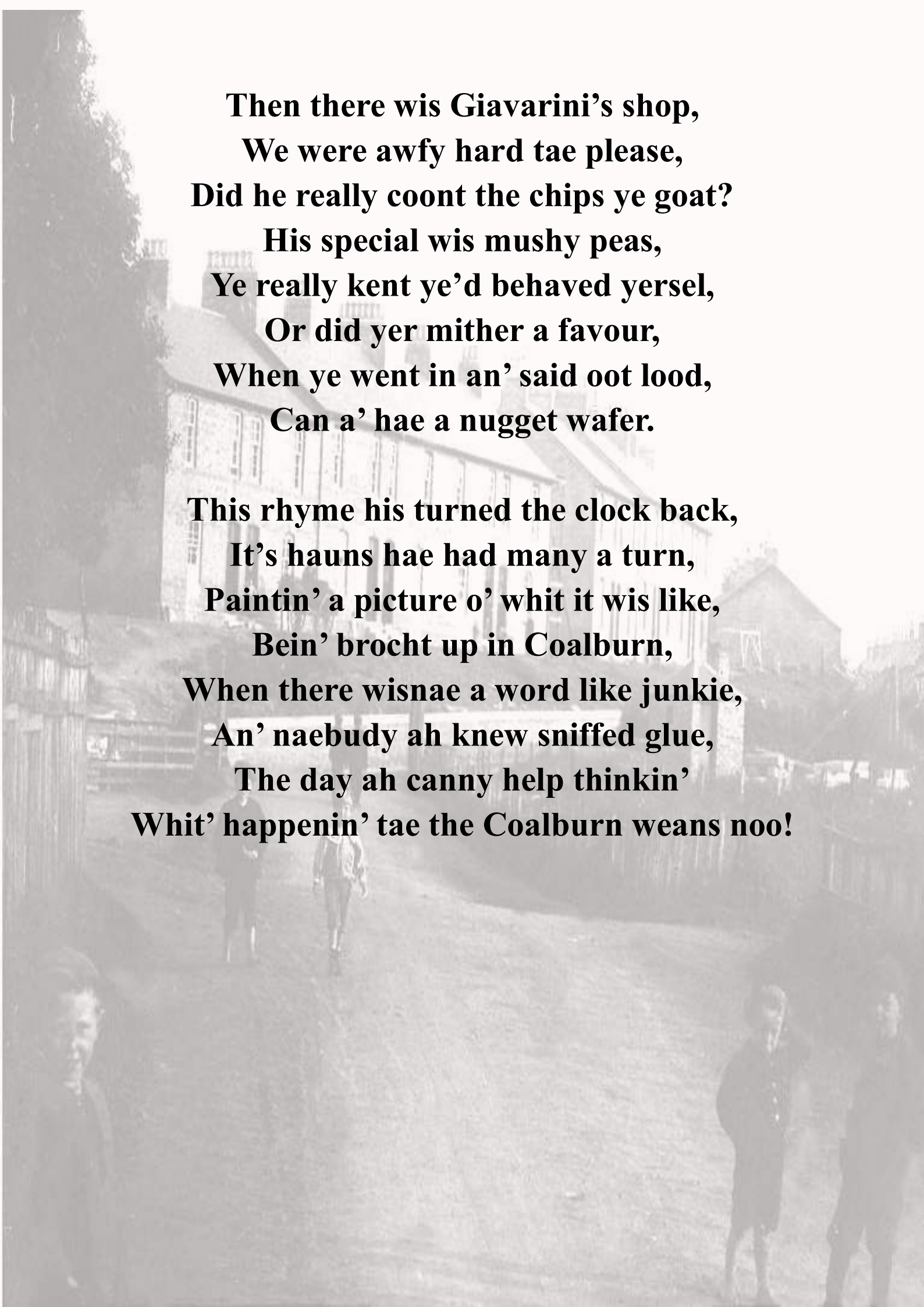
**We'd tie some string through twa tin cans,  
An' we'd pit them oan oor feet,  
An stomp like something frae ooter space,  
Richt up an' doon oor street,  
There wis fitba', ropes an' kick the can,  
We played rounders in the park,  
Then we wid sit aroon the doorsteps,  
Tellin' stories till it goat dark.**



**We'd go tae the Welfare pictures,  
Where we sat oan a widden seat,  
When the picture sometimes broke doon,  
We a' stamped oor feet,  
Dodie Wilson shone his torch,  
Tae see who wis makin' the noise,  
The lassies were aye sae innocent,  
So it must hae been the boys.**

**We booed at a' the "baddies",  
When they cam' oan the screen,  
An' cheered when the "goodies" won,  
That's aye the wey it's been,  
We laughed at Laurel and Hardy,  
They were a funny pair,  
When the show wis ower,  
We wid hurry doon the stair.**

**We ate toffee aipples and candy cake  
An' chewed oan liquorice sticks,  
Soor plooms fair brocht yer jaws in,  
That's where we goat oor kicks,  
We read the Beano and Dandy,  
Or Wullie and The Broons,  
The best bit wis Jimmy Brownlie,  
When his chip van cam' roon.**



**Then there wis Giavarini's shop,  
We were awfy hard tae please,  
Did he really coont the chips ye goat?  
His special wis mushy peas,  
Ye really kent ye'd behaved yersel,  
Or did yer mither a favour,  
When ye went in an' said oot lood,  
Can a' hae a nugget wafer.**

**This rhyme his turned the clock back,  
It's hauns hae had many a turn,  
Paintin' a picture o' whit it wis like,  
Bein' brocht up in Coalburn,  
When there wisnae a word like junkie,  
An' naebudy ah knew sniffed glue,  
The day ah canny help thinkin'  
Whit' happenin' tae the Coalburn weans noo!**



*From The Hamilton Advertiser*

## **COALBURN UNDER THE WEATHER**

**February 1940**

Snowploughs were out in many country roads and the bus companies faced their second major problem in a week and many lent willing aid to the Council Roads Department's efforts to clear a passage through the snow banks. A few days later sufficient progress had been made to open Shotts, Lesmahagow, Strathaven and Coalburn roads where the buses travelled through a gully of snow reaching higher than the rooftop of the vehicles on both sides.

**13<sup>th</sup> January 1963**

The Ice Age in Scotland looks like longest cold snap on record. The temperature dropped to below freezing for the 22<sup>nd</sup> day in succession. After a shivering night 29 degrees of frost were recorded at Coalburn, Lanarkshire. In 1947 it froze every day for two months. It could happen again.

**15<sup>th</sup> February 1963**

Heavy drifts near New Trows and at Acrertophead Brae caused a complete dislocation of traffic last Wednesday and Thursday. Getting to work was a big problem, especially for the miners. The factory workers and tradesmen travelled by train. Most of the teaching staff at Coalburn School were unable to get beyond Lesmahagow.

*Billy Dempster.*

## JOHN ZAWADZKI

John passed away on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017 after a prolonged illness.

I first met John when I was a volunteer at Lesmahagow Resource Centre over twenty years ago when he would come in to use the photocopier. It was obvious that he was a talented individual as he would show us photos, posters and the like which he had produced.

Jim Hamilton, prior to his death in April 2004, had made it known that his wish was that his collection of photos, books, maps etc. should come to Coalburn. An application for funding was granted by Heritage Lottery, part of which was for a sessional worker to collate, file and put systems in place when the collection was available. Several people were interviewed for the post and John was successful.

By this time Jim's widow, Maureen had been in touch with us and John and I went to her home in Hamilton to uplift the items, and there were many. John was first class in what he did at that time and I was grateful that he continued as a volunteer after the funding ceased.

He was an extremely talented individual with a camera and computer as many over the years have witnessed, not only our members but also the other groups which he and I visited on behalf of the Heritage Society over the years.

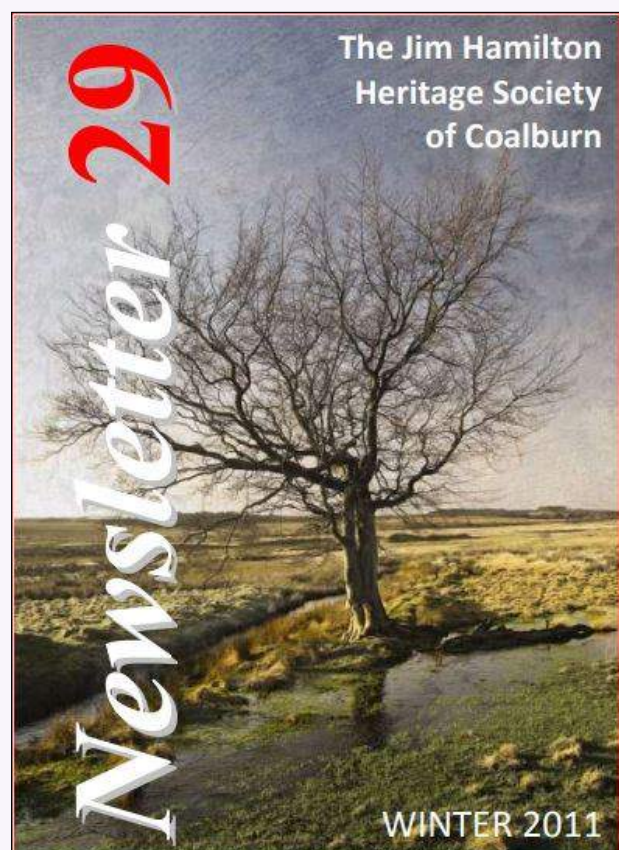
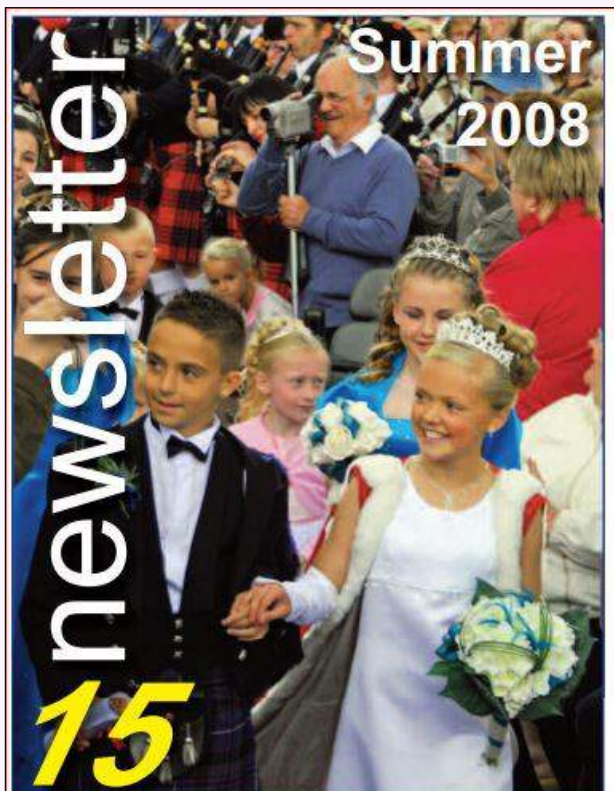
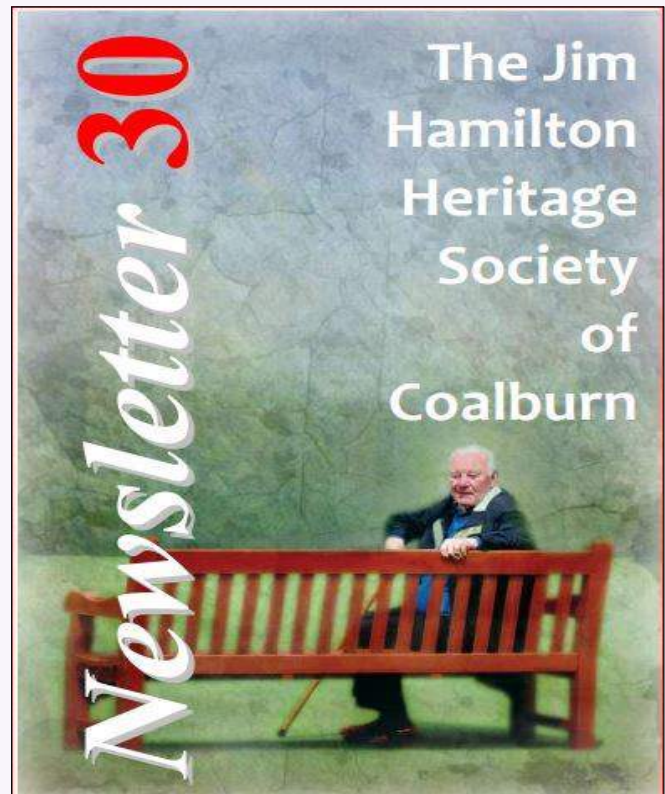
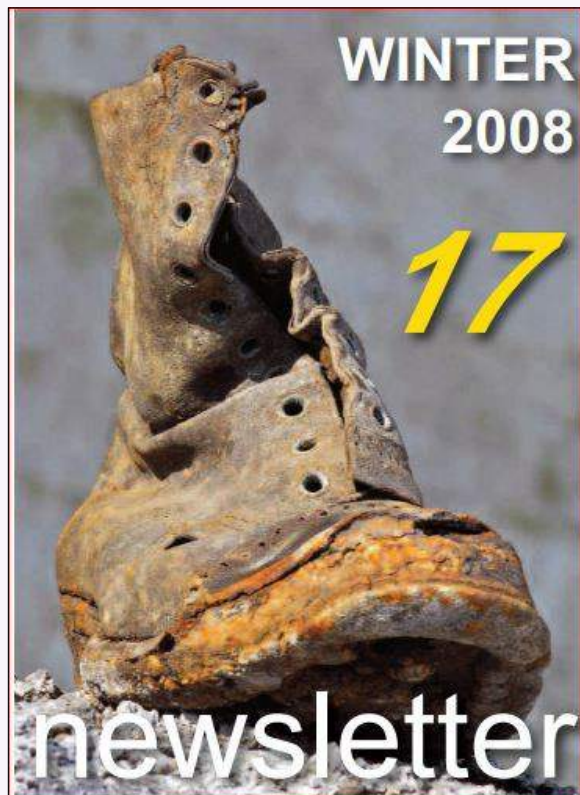
John had many other interests, photography, Clydesdale horses, Liverpool football club being amongst them.

His passing has been a huge miss to us, not only as our archivist also as a sincere friend to all within our group and indeed beyond. This was obvious by the numbers present on the day of his funeral.

Thanks John!

*Peter McLeish.*

*Some of John's iconic front covers featuring his own photographs*





Some of John's Gala  
Day  
photographs







## Jock Shaw

I got my first bicycle when I was thirteen years of age. I got an exemption from the schule to stairt work. I got 2/6 per week pocket money and put a shilling past, saving up for a bike. I saw an advert in the window at the post office, offering a bicycle for sale for £1. It wis being sellt by a lad Stewart whose faither was a ploo'man at Stockbriggs ferm. I went and bought it.

When I got the excemption frae attending the schule, I worked doon the pit, "drawing" frae my faither. The manager Willie Smart told my faither yin day that I could no longer be employed, but gave no reason for this. Faither went to Davie Todd, the general manager to seek the reason, Todd explained that the law had been changed and no person under the age of fourteen could work underground. He got me transferred to work at the brickwork but there was still new conditions effecting the hours I could work.



I was not allowed to stairt before nine in the morning. I was at the brickwork till I was fourteen and then back doon the pit I went.

*By the time Jock was eighteen, his father had to give up heavy work in the pit and Jock became "the drawer" for Davie (Daddler) Aitken, an association which was to continue for the next twenty years*



Jock recalls his football days playing for Coalburn.

The Fourth round of the Scottish Cup entailed another away game and a long journey to Aberdeen.

Playing at Pittodrie did not attract the large crowd hoped for and a hard game ended in a one all draw. Parkvale had a goal hungry centre forward named Brand, who signed later for Arbroath and for whom he scored a lot of goals. Tom Logan of Saddlerhead, who had been drafted into the Coalburn team, kept him tightly in check that day. John Shaw, another local lad, played the game of his life that afternoon.



To give an example of the devotion to the game of the players and of the inconvenience they were willing to put up with, Jock Hamilton still remembers the journey home. He got off the train in the wee sma' hours and had to walk the three miles from Coatbridge station to Glenboig, dragging an injured leg. In the replay two of John Hamilton's inswingers direct from corner kicks, aided by a gale force wind, produced the goals and the Aberdonians were soundly beaten by four goals to one.

It is worth remembering that football was a way of life for players and supporters in the early 1920's and the village of Coalburn had five Juvenile teams—Coalburn Thistle, Westoun Rangers, Bellfield Rangers, Rising Star and Bellfield Violet

*Celebrating 50 Newsletter's with some  
more of John's front covers*

