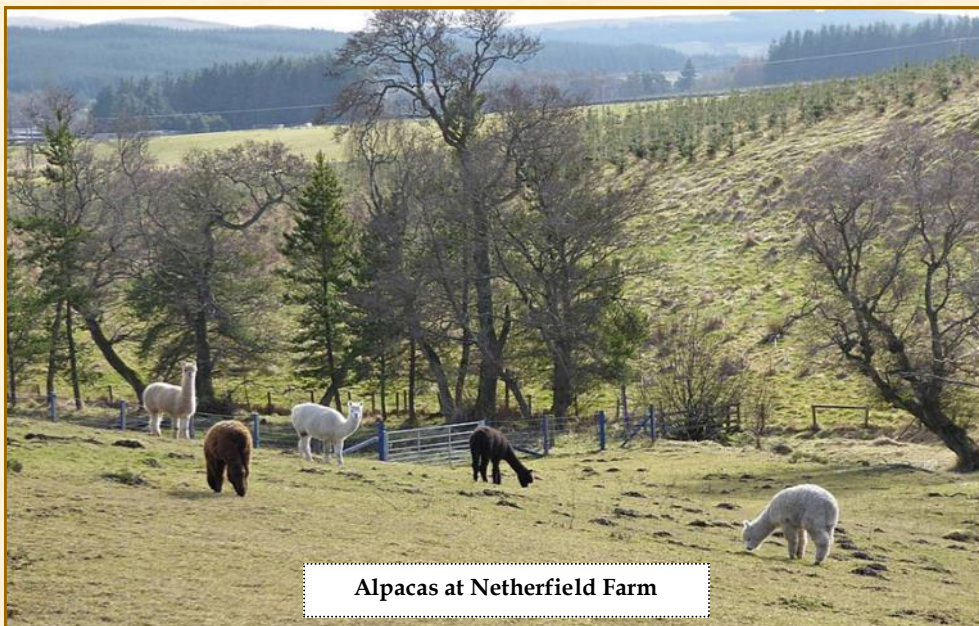


The Jim Hamilton
Heritage Society of Coalburn
Newsletter 56
Autumn 2019



Calendar 2020

ALL PHOTOS BY KIND PERMISSION OF DAVID HALLS



Chairman's Remarks

Once again we had a very successful display in the Leisure Centre at the Gala Day with another good number in attendance on Saturday July 6th. A special thanks to all who helped in any way.

The 2020 calendar has proved to be popular and more than usual were purchased at the Gala Day and this continues to be so. You'll see some examples of David Halls' excellent work for the calendar on the cover of this newsletter

The syllabus until the end of the year has been arranged and new names can be seen on the list as well as others whom we have heard previously. If there are any others that you can suggest please let me know as the session from January to April will soon be upon us.

As you may know, my brother, Robert, died recently and as he was very helpful when we received requests from people looking for information I have included an article about him.

Finally I would like to say a sincere thank you to Helen Brownlie who has offered her services regarding the production of the Newsletter. Her help is very much appreciated.

Peter McLeish

11th August 2019

In deepest sympathy - Coalburn related deaths

May McLean (Cook)

Joe Cameron

Fred Goodyear

Archie Martin

Robert Shaw McLeish

Andy Banks

Eileen Cuthill (Shand)

Jim Steele

Sandy McClurg



COALBURN DRAMA GROUP



Part 1: *Setting the Scene*

John L. Sorbie was from Stonehouse and came to Coalburn as a travelling salesman in the 1930s. He also entertained as an elocutionist. He was aware of groups in the village who put on plays, such as the Boy Scouts. There was a Young Operetta organisation in Coalburn at the time as well. Against this background Mr Sorbie was of a mind to start a Drama Group in the village - and thanks to his efforts this came about.

The Drama Group's early meetings were convened in the Shepherds' Hall, which is now the doctor's surgery. The first entry in the minute book is dated October 17th 1938 and records that each member paid 3d per week to raise funds. On that night 2/6d was collected which equates to 10 members being present. The minute of the second meeting, held a week later on October 24th, shows that serious fundraising efforts were already underway. Prize draw tickets had been sold to the value of £2-0-5d. Meanwhile John Sorbie had travelled to Glasgow and purchased books and other items for the group. These included a tea-set at a cost of 6/-6d: the prize for the draw?

A fortnight later, at what was just the fourth meeting, it was agreed that the Drama Group should take part in the Elementary Class at Lanark Festival. Two teams were to be entered: Team 'A' with "*The Wee Comic*", while Team 'B' would perform "*Martha*". Application was made to become Members of the Scottish Community Drama Association, and a Postal Order value £1-11-6d was sent to the appropriate organisation. It was also agreed to write to C. K. Wells to apply for a grant from The Carnegie Trustees in respect of an instructor

or adviser. Meanwhile John Sorbie, John Hamilton and James Smith each gave the club a loan of 4/-.

By 3rd April 1939 the group had been running for just over six months. There were now fifteen members: Lily Steele, Betty McLean, Margaret Hamilton, John Hamilton, Barbara Reid, George Clark, John Clark, James Smith, George Bryson, Gavin Shaw, George Scanlon, Helen McClymont, Jack Lundie, Kate Baxter, and John Sorbie.

The thrupenny weekly member contributions had mounted up, with a total of £2-13-9d contributed. However it was always important that funds were available to meet the costs of keeping the Drama Group going. It was agreed that a dance be held to mark New Year 1940 and to raise funds. George Bryson was to be M.C. and John Clark and Guy Shaw Floor Masters. There were to be Novelties, Monte Carlo and a Spot Dance. Initially Hay's Band was booked, the fee being £2-10/-. However two days later Hay's Band was cancelled in favour of Jackson's Band as the cost would be £1 less - a considerable difference in price at that time. This was good news for gentlemen wishing to attend. Their entry fee to the dance was to have been 1/-3d but this was reduced to 1/- due to the saving made on the cost of the band. Ladies were to be charged 9d.

The dance was held on the 1st of January 1940. Despite it being a rather snowy evening the event was well attended and a financial success with a handsome profit of £8-19-5d being generated. This included 11/-2d from the sale of penny raffle tickets on the night, a cake having been donated by William Morrison, a Coalburn baker, as prize. Due to the difference in the price for gents and ladies we can't be sure of the attendance, but - assuming an equal number of both - the dance was attended by about 140 people.

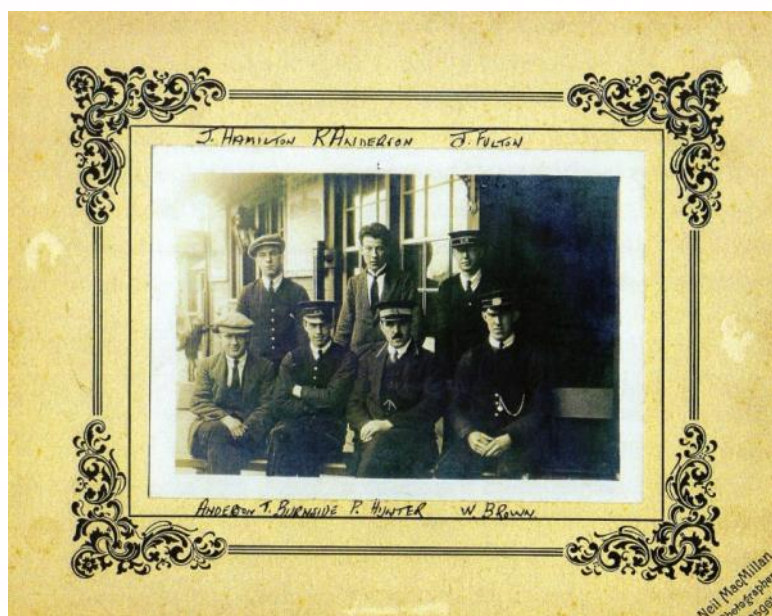
With the outbreak of war in September 1939 the Group also directed fundraising efforts to supporting various charities. During the war years contributions were made to organisations such as the Navy League, the Red Cross and Glasgow Royal Infirmary, which was then a charitable organisation.

....to be continued

Did you know?... Coalburn Station & Hotel

In 1891 a public meeting was held in Bellfield School to discuss the possibility of the Caledonian Railway opening a station in the village for passengers. Although the railway line had been operating for almost 40 years (since 1854) this was as a mineral line only, built for the purpose of taking coal from the local pits to foundries in Motherwell and beyond. As a result of the meeting a station was opened and passenger services began.

The success of the railway can perhaps be judged from a report from the Upperward Licensing Court from 1897, when the Inn Keeper at the Commercial Hotel in Lesmahagow applied for an Inn and Hotel licence at Coalburn. It was stated to the Court that she had erected this new hotel at Coalburn because there was no place there for travellers and people wishing to hold meetings, and that the premises were first class and had cost nearly £4,000. The case was made that having expended this large sum showed that she believed there was a necessity for such a hotel at Coalburn. The vote was carried, with 22 for and 9 against.



The picture shows station staff from the 1920s.

In the back row, left to right: J Hamilton; R Anderson; J Fulton

In the front row, second left to right: T Burnside; station master Peter Hunter; W Brown

The name of the man on the left in the front row is illegible but begins 'Ande' - another Mr Anderson? **Can anyone confirm who this person is?**

Motor Transport

1897 also saw the early days of motor transport in the area. Stirling of Hamilton, than a well known carriage and motor car builders, ran a car for 100 miles from Hamilton to Moffat and back on the Carlisle Road. The first stop after Hamilton was at Abington for a fresh supply of cooling water.

The travel time was seven hours, exclusive of stoppages, making an average speed of just over 14 miles per hour. Five gallons of petrol were used on the journey, at a cost of 4/-7d (11d a gallon). Three passengers were conveyed, at a charge of 1/-3d each. So the venture, while impressive, did not run at a profit!

Coalburn District Pipe Band

The present pipe band started life as the Bellfield Home Tent Independent Order of Rechabites Pipe Band in 1896.

However at one time there was another pipe band in the village: Coalburn District Pipe Band. This band may have started up around 1915. There is no record of exactly when it ceased: the latest known date of is around 1935. **Does anyone have information about this earlier band - such as photographs, newscuttings etc.?** (Contact details are on the back page.)

Diamond Jubilee Gift

September 1897 saw the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, being 60 years since she ascended the throne. To mark the occasion a Diamond Jubilee gift to the poor was made. The Lesmahagow Parish Council arranged the distribution of 315 lbs of meat from Australia. On unloading, the meat was held in chill rooms at Yorkhill Wharf. Glasgow and the railway company agreed to transport the meat to Lesmahagow free.

Many thanks to Billy Dempster for providing the 1897 news items here

Robert McLeish



Robert McLeish was the first speaker following the setting up of the Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn in 2004 and also came to speak to us on other occasions. Sadly due to his health he was not able to come to visit or speak at meetings over the last few years.

On his initial visit Robert presented us with a copy of the 1901 Census which has been well used ever since. Not only for local use but it has also been a helpful document for visitors seeking information about descendants who had lived locally. In addition he produced a typed version of the 1924 School Census which has been equally valuable.

He was also very helpful as archivist of Lesmahagow Parish Historical Association and was ever willing to share information when it was possible to do so.

Robert lived in the village for several years and was well aware of its history - so much so that a few years ago he made a much admired model of Bankend. This can be seen in the Heritage Centre. For those who haven't seen this we thought it would be timely to include some information about the model and the former village of Bankend.

Presented to us in 2010, the model shows the mining village of Bankend as it was in 1912. Locally known as 'The Brockley', Bankend was located approximately a mile south west of Coalburn and at this time was the larger of the two settlements.



Included as part of the model is this verse from the poem 'Auld Bankend Raw', by Alex Hay:

Frae Coalburn's auld station, there winds a long road,
It's peopled by memories of those that hae trod,
Frae the Inn tae auld Brockley in hail, rain or snaw,
Tae their cosy wee en', in the auld Bankend Raw.

The site of the former village can be accessed by travelling down the road / track from the former Coalburn Inn along the burn - *i.e.* carrying straight on instead of following the road to where bends sharply to the left and goes over the burn (if heading through Coalburn in direction of Bellfield).

Poetry Corner

~~~~~

### A VISIT TO THE DENTIST

Will ye really buy me a doll, Mam,  
If I sit in the dentist's chair,  
But whit if he takes ma teeth oot, Mam,  
Will it no' be awfy sair?

Could ye mebbe go as far as a pram, Mam,  
Or mebbe a brand new bike,  
Or mebbe a big doll's hoose, Mam,  
Or something else a'd like?

A'll settle for a doll, Mam,  
If that'll make ye happy,  
When a get back tae school, Mam,  
Ma pals'll ca' me gappy.

Bein ca'd names can hurt, Mam,  
Ma front teethly a' be missin'  
The lassies they'll torment me, Mam,  
An' say a' the boys, a wis kissin'.

Right, a'll settle for the doll, Mam,  
An' helping wae the bakin?  
The dentist's is roon the corner, Mam,  
See ma legs? They're shakin'.

There's a notice on his door, Mam,  
Whit's that? He's gone away,  
Will a still get the doll, Mam,  
Kin a? What dae ye say?

*Sandra Cook*



# Annual Flower Show

The Coalburn Horticultural Society has been in existence for over 100 years, with the first ever Flower Show taking place on 30th August 1890.



The Coalburn Annual Flower Show 2019 was held in the school on Saturday, 31st August.

There was the usual high standard of entries.

Pictured here is our own Jim Hamilton, father of the present president, admiring some of this year's prizewinning veg.

The event was opened by Bill Scott, formerly Head Teacher at the school.

Here we have Jimmy Porter, another gentlemen who has carried out this role - in his case it was while he was the local Postmaster. The picture is from 1988 and alongside him is May McNeil, who was then Coalburn Horticultural Society secretary .





*The Jim Hamilton*

# Heritage Society of Coalburn

## Office Bearers 2019-20

**Chair: Peter McLeish**

**Vice-Chair: Gilbert Dobbie**

**Secretary: Geoff Brown**

**Membership Secretary: Betty Nicol**

**Treasurer: Marion McBain**

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

The Heritage Society can be contacted by [e-mail](#) via the contact page on the website and by [telephone](#) via the One Stop Shop on: 01555 820060 (Mon-Fri, 9 am - 5 pm)

[Postal address](#) : Heritage Centre, One Stop Shop, 42 Coalburn Road ML11 0LH

Heritage Society Meetings are held in Coalburn Bowling Club on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, from September to April, starting at 7.30 pm

The Heritage Centre is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-3pm in the Miners' Welfare Building, One Stop Shop, and may be opened at other times by appointment.

~~~~~

Can anyone put names to the people in these photos?



The above was taken at a Gala Day in 1987.
The one on the right has 'An Auchenheath Family'
written on the back. (No date.)

