

Exploring the effects of the past on the present and future of our community

Bonnyseen

The magazine from Greenhill Historical Society

Issue Number 11 November 2015

*Defensive Ditch at Rough Castle Fort,
World Heritage Site, Bonnybridge.*





Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of Bonnyseen. Thanks to members of the community, we are still able to fill our magazine with memories, anecdotes and photographs of the rich heritage of our town. Keep up the good work and the information flowing. It is only your contributions which ensure the continued success of the magazine. Once again the generosity of individuals and organisations ensure sufficient funds are available to meet the costs of Bonnyseen.

Greenhill Historical Society has been out and about exploring historical sites outwith the area. So far this year we have visited Rosslyn Chapel in Midlothian, People's Palace in Glasgow, Summerlee Museum in Coatbridge, South Queensferry (to view the juxtaposition of the Victorian and modern bridges), the Lady Haig poppy factory in Edinburgh and Callendar House in Falkirk and three members joined Real Roman Tours for a memorable day trip to Vindolanda Fort on Hadrian's Wall.

Bonnybridge Library staff has just completed an informative and fun filled Big Roman Week (*photographs are featured on the back cover*). The events are held from Bo'ness to Bonnybridge to commemorate the birthday of Antoninus Pius who was responsible for building the Antonine Wall across Scotland which is now a World Heritage site. Historic Scotland have completed the installation of new information boards at Rough Castle Fort in Bonnybridge and these have greatly enhanced the value of a visit to the site.

New members are always welcome to join us and if you put photographs and stories on Bonny Banter facebook page please copy us in to these with your permission to use them in future editions of Bonnyseen.

We hope you all enjoy this latest edition of Bonnyseen!

Phil Swierczek

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Greenhill Historical Society

CONTENTS

Page

Defensive Ditch at Rough Castle Fort, Word Heritage Site, Bonnybridge	Front Cover
Introduction	2
Broomside Foundry	3
Edinburgh & Glasgow Improvement Programme	4
The Scout Movement in Bonnybridge	5
An Adventure of a Lifetime	6 & 7
High Bonnybridge lady evacuated from Singapore prior to Japanese Invasion	8
Cissie Kelly (<i>Photograph</i>)	8
Microwave Tablet Recipe	8
A Model Citizen: Duncan Ferguson	9
Greenhill Origins	10
Quiz on The History of Bonnybridge	10
The Infamous Dr Grindlay	11
"Dirty Bonnybridge"- Football - Really!!!	12
Bonnybridge Golf Club is Ninety	13
Andrew Muirhead: The Happy Gardener	14
Broomhill Primary School	15
Quiz Answers	15
Big Roman Week in Bonnybridge Library	Back Cover

WHERE TO FIND US



GREENHILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.greenhillhistoricalsociety.org.uk or greenhillhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Meetings The Society meets every Friday in the Bonnybridge Library from 2pm till 4pm and all are welcome to join us.

Broomside Foundry

By P Swierczek Courtesy of Andrew Duncan



When Andrew Duncan was clearing his Uncle John's house he came across a record that John had made of Broomside Foundry, known locally as the Puzzle, where John worked from 1931 to 1982. The company was established by Robert Anderson and Andrew Auld in 1922 and located in High Bonnybridge opposite the railway station. The foundry had its own railway siding which was used to import raw materials and export the finished products.

John's description of the layout of the site and the construction of the buildings explains the name 'Puzzle' as it seems that there was no particular plan and the buildings were a hotch potch of sizes shapes and colours. For example, the office was brick built with a slated roof and the fitting shop was two low roofed buildings with four foot high wooden walls and a red tiled roof with heavy beamed rafters and an earthen floor. The grinding mill was added onto the fitting shop but was much higher and built of corrugated iron with skylights in the roof. Unfortunately, the roof leaked like a sieve and the first job in the morning, after a night of rain, was to empty out the buckets used to catch the water. The warehouse was a forty foot long hut floored with railway sleepers and parallel to this was the pattern shop which was a thirty foot long hut. The moulding shop consisted of two low bays with brick end walls, wooden sides and red roof tiles and the furnace was located at the west side of the building and accessed by ramps. In the thirties and forties there were many other buildings erected as the business expanded and these added to the quirky nature of the whole site.

John tells a story of the dispatch and time keeping office. There was a sliding wooden panel fitted instead of one pane of glass. Behind this there was a shelf with a slot similar to a penny bank beneath which was a box with three compartments which could slide along. Every employee had a disc with their number on it hung on a board beside this window and they had to drop the disc through the slot into the box which was slid along, usually by the watch man. If you were on time the disc went to the first box, if you were fifteen minutes late it went into the second box, half an hour late and it dropped into the third box. The reason being of course, that your pay would be docked according to how late you were! If for some reason the watchman was out of sight the workers would put their hand through the panel and push the box back to a record an earlier arrival. As often as not though, Charlie Quinn, the watchman, was just under the desk and would rap the offending knuckles with a heavy ruler. Just like being in school then!

The main products of the Puzzle were portable kitchen ranges, The Yorkshire and The Kitchener ranges, bedroom mantles, till registers and a series of independent fires; Rosy, Clutha, Duke and Rellim. The Puzzle also manufactured chair legs for the likes of Greens Playhouse in Glasgow and Cardiff Arms Park in Wales.

John was promoted to foreman in 1937 but was called up in 1940 and spent the next six and a half years in the army. After the war the demand for solid fuel ranges diminished as gas and electric cookers became more popular and the company had to diversify to survive. It did this by producing manhole covers and frames; gas cooker mouldings; Post Office cabinets; pillar box and telephone castings; electrical joint boxes, iron garden furniture and engineering castings for Rollo Engineering. The company continued trading until its closure in 1995.



Edinburgh & Glasgow Improvement Programme

By Thomas Rintoul

In April 2015, work started at the old Greenhill railway yard in preparation for the demolition of the two road bridges (bridges OB55) over the railway at Greenhill. The main contractors were a consortium and were known as the Edinburgh and Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) and they were preparing the railway route for the installation of the overhead electrification between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The work started the night of Saturday/Sunday 15/16th February 2015, with the erection of a temporary footbridge on the east side of the bridges and the closure of the road. Structure and other works continued over the next few months until the two bridges were demolished on the night of Saturday/Sunday 6/7th April 2015. The site was completely cleared of debris by the morning of Monday, 8th April 2015. A new concrete railway bridge was erected on Greenhill Road and was opened 6 weeks ahead of schedule and below budget by the contractors.

Three members of the Greenhill Historical Society were involved with the main contractors in photographing the complete sequence of events from start to finish; and in fact completed the project by being the first car to drive over the new bridge after it was opened. As a result the G.H.S. now has a complete record in the archives of the event and they received a cheque for £500 from EGIP for the photographing and videoing work which was undertaken by the members.

The GHS are indebted to the EGIP for this donation which has now been used to fund the majority of the cost of the printing of this issue.



Chair & Vice Chair of GHS visiting EGIP Site Office



Official Opening of Greenhill Bridge



Presentation of Bridge Number Plate to GHS



The Scout Movement in Bonnybridge

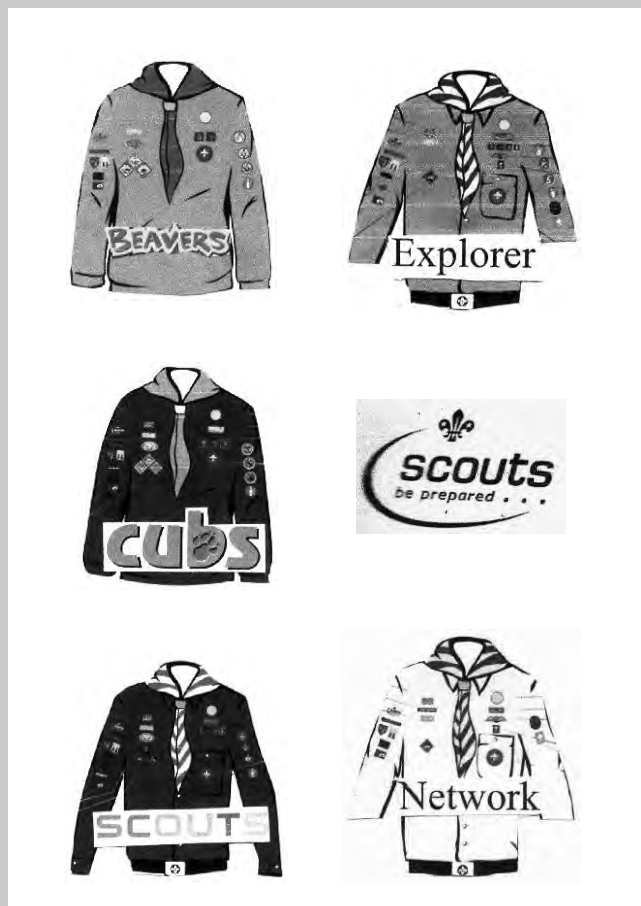
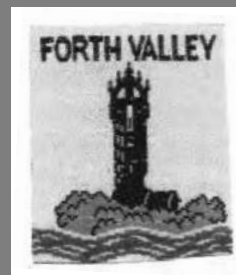
By Jim Stevenson



The Boy Scout movement was started in 1907 by Lord Baden Powell. Initially, it catered for boys from 11 to 18 years but it was so popular that the Wolf Cubs opened for boys aged 8 to 11 years in 1916 and the Rover Scouts for the 18 to 25 age group in 1925. Some of the groups were allied to certain churches but others welcomed members of all faiths or none.

There have been many changes over the years to uniforms, badge work and names as the movement evolved with the times to meet the needs of each new generation. Many of these changes in the twentieth century were the result of regionalisation as 'Stirlingshire' was replaced by 'Forth Valley' in the group names. The local emblem was also changed from Stirling Castle to the Wallace Monument which the scouts promptly named 'The Wellie Boot'! There is an interesting emblem depicting the River Forth with three Fleur de Lis on one side of the river and one on the other side to indicate the location of the scout groups in the Central area.

By the millennium year the prefix 'boy' had been dropped and everyone became known as Scouts, including the girls who were able to join all sections of the movement.



27th Bonnybridge Scout Group was formed on 21st October 1911 and is still going strong after 104 years! Some of the early leaders were T Wardrope; W Dow; J Lennie; D Holmes; Miss H Lapsley and J Fleming. Meetings have taken place in various locations over the years including Bonnybridge Band Hall, Bonnybridge Public School, Drill Hall, Territorial Army Hall, Scout Hall Bonnybank, old Wellstood Club House and finally in 1973 in their own premises in the Scout Hall at the new Community Centre. They currently meet in the Denny Scout Centre with the Cubs and Beaver Scouts still meeting in the Community Centre Scout Hall.

Other groups in the Bonnybridge area were 55th Greenhill (1928), 27th Allandale (1929), 69th High Bonnybridge (1949) and 69th High Bonnybridge/Greenhill (1984)

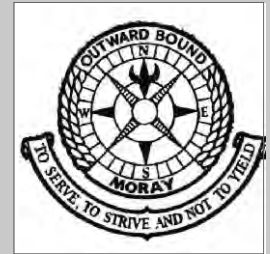
The scout movement encourages team work, care for others, an appreciation of the environment and outdoor activities. Some of the most enjoyable learning activities involved camping, water sports and hill walking with many lasting friendships being formed through the scout movement. There is a simple but laudable motto:

'On my honour, I promise to do my best'



An Adventure of a Lifetime

By Ronald G Mochrie



My story begins in August 1955 when, as an 18 year old trainee at Smith & Wellstood Ltd, I was selected to attend a one month course at the Outward Bound Moray Sea School in Burghead.

The Outward Bound Moray Sea School, founded by Dr Kurt Hahn, who also founded Gordonstoun School. It was established so that boys, mostly sponsored by industry and education, could take a course of training during which their character would be challenged and developed in sea and mountain adventures. Outward Bound Training has become widely recognised as a valuable exercise in, living by and striving for, accepted ideas. Its purpose is to develop courage, a sense of responsibility and obligation, self-discipline and self-reliance.



Moray Sea School



Seamanship Room at Burghead

A large part of the course was on all aspects of seamanship, including a voyage on a three masted schooner, Prince Louis, which can have a crew of twenty four boys in addition to The Master Bosun, Cook, and an Engineer.

On land, the Outward Bound Moray Sea School at Burghead had over one hundred boys on each course. Athletics, including a Commando style Assault Course, tested courage and stamina. Hikes into the surrounding countryside, camping and climbing in Cairngorms, Scotland's rugged mountains, tested map reading and teamwork.

Log of Adventure Course. No 51 August 12th to August 26th 1955.

Week 1. 1st to 7th August

Travelled by train from Larbert Station to Aberdeen then to Elgin, where buses took us to the Outward Bound Moray Sea School at Burghead. The school was modern and our accommodation was in large dormitories. On arrival we were divided into eight watches. My watch was Duncan Watch and it had thirteen boys in it. We were an international group comprising of a Malayan, an Irishman, a Dutchman, 3 Englishmen and 7 Scotsmen.

We were shown round the school and taught how to make a bed and received our uniform of navy blue trousers and jersey. We had a medical and an interview. The days began at 0700 with a cold shower, inspection, flag break, prayers and breakfast. At the Athletics ground we were shown how to do the long jump and high jump. After marching to the harbour seamanship room we put on life jackets for our first sail in a 32 foot clinker built naval cutter. After much trial and error we slowly got better at handling the 16 foot oars and steering the boat. Our second session in a dipping lug cutter was much easier to handle.

At the athletics field we had another attempt on the assault course and unfortunately a member of Granville watch dislocated his shoulder. We were shown how to throw the weight and javelin.

During this week we were shown how to set a map using a compass and how to operate fire extinguishers. On Sunday morning we attended Church. After lunch we were split into small groups and given a map reference and two grid references, a map and three compasses.

With some good luck we found our locations and returned to base, completing our first expedition. After busy days it was lights out at 2200 hours.

Ronald in centre of Back Row





Prince Louis

Week 2. 8th to 14th August.

Marched to Burghead Harbour where we boarded the three masted schooner, the Prince Louis, and cleaned and prepared the ship to set sail for Buckie at 1500 hours. We set the sails and it was not long before 26 boys were very sea sick, as, although it was a sunny day, the ship bucked and tossed all the way. We were all glad to see Buckie Harbour!

Next day at 1600 hours we set sail for Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands. As we were sailing through the night, we split into three shifts of two, each doing 20 minutes at helm

and 20 minutes as messengers between helm and wheelhouse. While at the helm we saw a shark and porpoises which escorted the ship all the way to Kirkwall. Also, while in the wheelhouse, we were given a shot at steering the ship. We reached Kirkwall Harbour at 0800 hours on 10th August, a birthday to remember. Next day we sailed for Wick and part of the trip was under sail and part using the engine. The 12th was a lovely sunny day and we sailed for Burghead spending two hours under sail, arriving at 1830 hours. After marching back to school, supper, a hot shower and a bed on solid ground was wonderful. Saturday was our five mile walk against the clock. I made it in 57 minutes 34 seconds. After church service and lunch we were sent on an expedition to Pluscarden Abbey, half the group walking and half on bicycles. We were soaked to the skin but achieved our objectives.

Week 3. 15th to 21st August

This week began with more seamanship and being put in charge of a boat. At athletics we had more practice with weights and javelin. After a briefing on our 3 day expedition to the Cairngorms we were issued with equipment. We arrived at Glenmore Lodge at 1025 hours on the 16th August. From there we climbed to above 3000 feet where we had magnificent views and returned at 1845 hours after hiking over 12miles. Next day was heavy rain but the following day was sunny. At Rothvyn Bothy, we tidied the camp site and left sleeping bags and tents for next group before walking back to Glenmore Lodge where we swapped packs with the next group.

Seamanship was sailing the naval cutter. My results for athletics were; high jump 4ft 8in; road race of 100yds 12.2 seconds; half mile 2.29 minutes.

After church we cycled to Primrose Bay where we had a swim in the sea which was quite warm.



Assault Course

Week 4. 22nd to 26th August.

This week the seamanship consisted of sailing which was exciting, as well as athletics comprising a javelin throw of 82 feet and a 2 mile run done in 12 minutes 20 seconds. We cycled to DuffussHall and were given a lecture by Dr. Hahn of Gordonstoun School. We then cycled to the school and were shown around before attending a short service in the Meikle Kirk. This was a tradition at the end of each course. After tea Mrs Leslie presented Course Awards. I was awarded 3rd

Class Merit with Honours in Seamanship and Merit in Land Expeditions. The course ended on 26th August when we left by coaches to Elgin to start the train ride to Stirling. Thus ended a month when challenges were the norm. Competition was against nature and yourself. Friendships and bonds were made and physical fitness was at its peak.



High Bonnybridge lady evacuated from Singapore prior to the Japanese Invasion in 1941 *By Mae Blackwell*

JESSIE WILSON ADAMS

Jessie was born at Hillview, High Bonnybridge in 1906, the sixth of 11 children of Mary and John Wilson. She married Arthur Adams in 1936 and, as a new bride, travelled to Kuala Lumpur where her husband was employed as an engineer.

Their life changed dramatically when, in December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. She had just given birth to a baby boy when, two days later, the Japanese made their first raid on Singapore. At this point she was in hospital and very ill with a severe attack of pneumonia. At Kuala Lumpur there had been many air raids when she had to spend hours in a shelter which, though it had a splinter proof wall, offered little protection. During these times she was very ill and always had to be helped in and out of the shelter. Then, hoping to escape these raids, they were moved to Singapore. However, things were no better as there were four serious raids the very first night. Then news came through that all women and children were to be evacuated. She was taken, still an invalid, to Singapore Station to wait for transportation to the ship. When evacuation started the docks were on fire and blazing so furiously that they had to go by tender to the ship, RMS Empress of Japan. Her husband was there to see her off, but shortly afterwards he was captured and interned in Changi Camp as a Prisoner of War until 1946.



There were about 1500 women on the ship, many of whom were lying on mattresses on the deck as everyone could not have cabin accommodation. Some of the women had trekked many miles through the jungle. Because of the state of her health Mrs Adams was given a cabin which she shared with a lady from St. Andrews who took care of her and the baby, as well as helping others.

They sailed from Singapore under protection of "a dense smoke screen" but were spotted and attacked by Japanese bombers. Fortunately the ship's gunners brought down one of the planes. Later that day they were relieved to learn that planes manned by Dutch airmen had come to escort them part of the way. On arriving at Durban, to relieve the congestion on the ship, some people were transferred to another ship and conditions were much improved.

The voyage continued and when they reached the equator the baby was christened Allan James, and presented with a certificate by "Father Neptune" to show he had crossed the Equator. The ship finally arrived at Liverpool on 19th March 1942 and it was with great relief that the voyage was over. The ship, Empress of Japan, was later renamed Empress of Scotland.

After the war, and being reunited, Jessie and Arthur lived at Hillview, later moving to Slamannan Road, Falkirk in 1952 and finally in 1987 to Pleasance Gardens. Arthur died in 1989 and Jessie in 1994.



Cissie Kelly in Guido Petales shop in Wellpark Terrace

MICROWAVE TABLET RECIPE

- 1lb (400gms) caster sugar
- 4 oz (100gms) unsalted butter
- 1 small tin of evaporated milk



Mix all the ingredients in a very deep bowl to prevent overflow. Place in microwave on full power for 6 to 6.5 minutes depending on the power level. Remove and mix all ingredients well. Replace in microwave on full power for a further 6.5 minutes. Remove and beat briskly until mixture thickens. Pour into a square tin lined with non-stick baking paper and leave to cool until firm and set.

Enjoy!

A Model Citizen: Duncan Ferguson



By P Swierczek

A chance conversation in the Coffeeteria Café last summer lead me to discover a hidden gem in Bonnybridge. A lady asked me if the Historical Society would be interested in some models of significant relevance to the history of Bonnybridge. Always enthusiastic for any artefacts which further our knowledge of Bonnybridge I jumped at the chance. The lady was Marion Ferguson and her husband, Duncan, is the model citizen. I was invited to visit their home and found it to be an Aladdin's cave of the most incredible handmade models I have ever seen. I am sure even Duncan has no idea of the number of models he has constructed but Marion knows that over the years her niche in the home has become much smaller as Duncan's hobby has taken over every spare inch of space. Just this summer Marion persuaded him to erect a big wooden shed in the garden to work in so she could have her dining room and spare bedroom back!



Duncan has kindly been lending the models to Greenhill Historical Society for display in the Library and the Community Centre. It doesn't matter what we are celebrating Duncan has a series of models to illustrate the particular event. World War1 commemoration? No problem; we had planes, torpedo boats and the Julian tank. Forth and Clyde canal? We had a whole range of passenger boats and cargo barges completed in immaculate miniature detail. Big Roman week? We had siege engines, catapults, a fortified gate tower from Rough Castle in Bonnybridge, Kinneil Fortlet, a gladiator and a Roman ship. His latest model has just been completed of Harris's' Picture House with the showman's caravan at the side.

This is a man of many talents. With his friend George Stewart he formed a band called Vision which has performed at dances, fund raising events and other social functions throughout West Central Scotland since 2003. Their claim to fame was a 'gig' in the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow.

Health problems have led to him having to suspend his musical career at the moment but he continues to produce his amazing models.

Duncan was born in March 1936 and initially lived in Broomhill Road then moved with his parents and siblings to Gateside Avenue when the houses were newly built. He attended Bonnybridge public school and has good memories of his time there, especially of a visit to Scotland Street School museum where the pupils and teachers were all dressed in World War 2 fashions and behaved as if they were being taught during the conflict with the windows covered in sticky paper to protect them from bomb damage.

His interest in models started in primary school when the Airfix kits came on to the market and he spent his pocket money on a whole variety of planes, trains and automobiles. However, it soon became an expensive hobby if you were buying so many kits so he started to make them from whatever he could find. He made his own papier mache from all the local newspapers, Polo Mints became lifebelts and his wife's hairspray was used to seal the surfaces!

When he left school, Duncan worked as a fitter in Laing and Girvan's Foundry but when the work of the foundries started to wane he moved to British Telecom where he and his brother worked as engineers. Chronic back problems forced his retirement aged fifty one and although he had his model making as a hobby he really needed to be occupied. A chance conversation with the Janitor in Bonnybridge Primary lead to him being asked to be a volunteer in the school. He readily accepted the offer and stayed for twenty one years! As well as his daily volunteering he was also chairman of the school board.

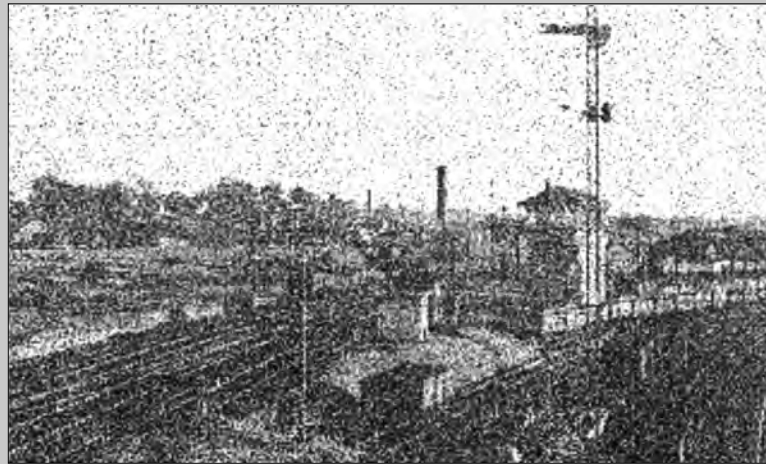
Marion and Duncan had both been married previously with Marion having three children, Duncan having two and together they adopted two girls. All the children have successful careers in various parts of the country and they now have ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren. With such a busy live it is amazing that he has produced such a huge quantity of exquisite models. We are grateful that he has entrusted them to us for our displays and we thank both him and Marion, without whose patience with her diminishing space and support for his hobby none of his work would have seen the light of day.



Greenhill Origins

By William Parker

The name comes from the Gaelic words An Cnoc Gorm which mean a green hill. It is situated 4.3 miles west of Edinburgh and 346 miles north of London and is south of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Greenhill actually starts at the railway bridges where Greenhill station was originally situated. It was a rural community based on farming and only became established as a village/hamlet when the industrial age arrived. The railways were needed to transport goods as well as passengers to and from the area and Greenhill was a thriving station. Houses, a school, shops and a village hall were built to accommodate the influx of workers. However, as the brickworks, foundries and other industries gradually went out of business these buildings were demolished as was the railway station. The whole area had 1265 residents in 2001 but recent house building has increased this number considerably and Greenhill is now considered to be a commuter area.



Greenhill Railway Junction and Creosote Works

Greenhill Railway Station



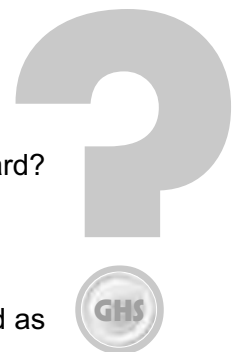
Patriot 45532-Sir Frederick Harrison passing Greenhill on a Fish Train



What do YOU know about the History of Bonnybridge?

By William Parker

- 1 Do you know where the "Hen Hooses" were in Bonnybridge?
- 2 Name any five brick works which were in Bonnybridge?
- 3 What happened to the gravestones from the old Chapel Buildings Graveyard?
(Where the Community Centre/Library are now)
- 4 How many cooling towers did the old Power Station have?
- 5 What place in Bonnybridge was known as the 'Paddock'?
- 6 What was on the site of the War Memorial garden before it was designated as a Memorial Park?



You will find the answers on Page 15 of this edition of the magazine but only after you have tried to answer all the questions!

The infamous Doctor Grindlay

The Man behind the Myth



By Hazel Wyle

Whilst digging up my family's past, I unearthed the story of Doctor Grindlay of Seabegs. Who were my family? The Grindlay's of Seabegs, of course! Helen Grindlay was my 3rd great grandmother, daughter of Charles Grindlay and Helen Russell. She was the 2nd wife of William Stevenson, Innkeeper of Cumbernauld. In William Stevenson's Will, 'Charles Grindlay of Seabegs' was a trustee and I set out to try and find out more about my Grindlay line. Dated evidence showed that the Charles Grindlay, mentioned in the will, could not be the infamous doctor, but was Helen's father and Dr Grindlay was her brother's son.



That is how I fit into all of this and, indeed, how I became a member of Greenhill Historical Society. It would seem that finding bodies still runs in the family, if only metaphorically!

I set about trying to find out the facts about Dr Grindlay and was horrified when I saw a leaflet which stated that Dr Grindlay hung himself in Seabegs wood when his 'sins' were found out. I know from the facts and legal documents, which I have studied personally, that this is absolutely NOT true.

(Dr.) Charles Grindlay was born 1809. The Dr's father, William, died in 1836 at Barleyhill and his mother, Catherine, in 1850. Both parents left wills but Catherine's gave a bit more information. She inherited land from her parents, shared with her three sisters. This land was in an area of Stirling (now the Raploch) from around the castle to the old bridge. This accounts for Dr Grindlay being listed as residing at Winchelhaugh, Stirling on legal documents, as well as him seemingly having great wealth. Dr Grindlay had 3 older sisters and a younger brother, William.

Since he was known as Doctor Grindlay, I investigated and found that he did, indeed, study medicine at Glasgow University. He enrolled in 1827 and attended every class until 1829. (In those days, students were issued with a 'ticket' for every class they attended). However, he did not graduate. (By co-incidence, 1829 was when the infamous Burke and Hare were tried).

It was explained to me that students who did not graduate were still, legally, allowed to practise medicine and may have been an 'apprentice' to a fully qualified doctor. Since the myth about him refers to him never having been a 'real doctor' and having been mixed up with 'body snatchers', I searched the disciplinary records for the university. There is absolutely no mention of him ever having been disciplined or expelled. Medical students could procure their own cadavers and were not totally reliant on bodies being brought in by more sinister means. Perhaps the local tombs around the Bonnybridge area have a few less skeletons in them than they should have!

Dr Grindlay eventually married Margaret McDonald McLellan. From what I can establish, she was 21 and he was 56! The residence of both parties was Winchelhaugh, Stirling. They had two sons, William Mungo Grindlay and Charles Pusey Grindlay. William died in the Glasgow fever hospital aged just 9 years old. Charles Pusey Grindlay married Elizabeth Kissock in 1898 at Gallowgate, Glasgow. They never had any children.



When Dr Grindlay died he was bankrupt. His widow re-married and lived in Glasgow and had further children. Her 2nd husband then died and it looks as if she was left penniless again as she is listed as being a washer woman. She died in Edinburgh in 1924.



“Dirty Bonnybridge” - Football - really!!!

By Irene M Ryan

Many say the village got its knick name ‘Dirty Bonnybridge’ because of local football teams; some say the men went from the works still ‘dirty’, others favour the teams ‘dirty tackling’ on the field. I know this is a popular explanation BUT I would like to offer an alternative reason for the name.

In 1913 the Chief Medical Examiner received complaints regarding the pollution of the Bonny Water. When two inspectors visited Bonnybridge in June of that year they found the river very badly polluted and the smell was “extremely noticeable”.

One source of the contamination was traced to Livingston Pit at Banknock. The coal washing facilities were inadequate, resulting in the flushing of dirt, coal dust, mud and noxious waste over the top of the tanks and into the Bonny. After a few improvements this situation was corrected to the satisfaction of the Examiners which stopped the overflow to a certain extent.

Unfortunately there was another more disgusting material spilling into the river. Bonnybridge Sewage Works only built in 1905, was found to be completely useless to cope with the waste by 1913. The Medical Examiners discovered that the filters and tanks could not handle the sewage, so spilled the excess into the Bonny Water. The smell was causing a stench which permeated for miles around and the residents were warned about water usage.



Coal Mine 1910

Livingston Pit, Banknock



Bonnybridge Sewage Works 1930s



The population of Bonnybridge had risen by almost 1500 people in the 10 years from 1901 to 1911. This could be a reason for the Sewage Works being incapable of processing the waste.

The Bonnybridge Sewage Works were ordered to upgrade the filters, install new tanks and grit chambers, in an attempt to stop the toxic waste. This was carried out at a cost of £1,100, which in today’s value would be about £200,000. It solved the problem, for a time.

Even today the name could still be credited to Bonnybridge. The works football teams are gone, mines have closed and the sewage works are closely regulated. But, today’s ‘Dirty Bonnybridge’ can be found in the Nature Park where the trees and vegetation are coated black and if you touch them the ‘dirt’ is on you. Also, houses in a nearby estate are covered in a black substance. The contamination covering this area is different from past pollution but the disgraceful ‘dirt’ is every bit as distressing today.

There are many examples from over the years of pollution to the land and water in and around the Bonnybridge area so do not be so quick to blame the football teams for the unfortunate ‘nick name’ of the village.

Bonnybridge Golf Club is Ninety



By P Swierczek



Bonnybridge Golf Club was opened officially on 23rd May 1925 by Mrs George Albert Ure, on a dreich day but one of excitement and celebration. The idea of building a golf course at Bonnybridge had been mooted as early as 1912. Interested parties spent several years seeking suitable ground for a nine-hole course in the area and drawing up a constitution for such a facility. However, the outbreak of WW1 meant that no progress was made until 1924 when a piece of land at Roughmute farm was obtained and construction of a sports facility began. The reason for the plural 'sports' is that the ground was not only for the use of the golfers in the village, but also for the cricketers and hockey players, with land and clubhouse space being set aside for them for an annual fee.

The green keeper's role at the new club was so sought after that there were fifty applicants for the post. Also appointed then was Jean, the horse, as most of the grass cutting was done by horse drawn mower. She was stabled at Home Farm when she was off duty at the golf club! But the green keeper and Jean had a bit of help as the club advertised for a tenant to graze sheep on the fairway and rough from May to November each year. This controlled the growth and also brought in additional revenue. I don't think a flock of sheep would be welcomed on today's course far less a horse drawn mower, but these were different times!



Opening of Bonnybridge Golf Club, 23rd May 1925



Clubhouse Extension, 1970

Dr Young became the first captain of the club and the membership in the opening year was 114 gents, 65 ladies and 13 juveniles – very respectable numbers for what was then a small village. The annual fees in 1925 were gents 3/6d (joining fee 10/6d), ladies 30/1d (joining fee 7/6d). The cost of setting up the club was £1,149 which is equivalent to £51,000 today.

During WW2, Bonnybridge Golf Club released several acres of land for growing crops as hostilities on land and at sea drastically reduced the country's ability to provide enough food for the population. The second hole and current practice area were ploughed over and planted with potatoes from 1943 to 1954 when rationing ended. For the first thirty years of its existence the green keeper of the club often doubled up as the 'professional' by giving lessons. It was also the green keeper who sold golf balls, usually second hand, from his shed where the tools of his trade were stored. In 1959 it was decided to build a dedicated shop to supply the equipment needs of the golfers. To this end the committee agreed to purchase a shed from Smith & Wellstood's. The shed set them back £5 and had previously been an ambulance room at the Chattan Foundry!



D G Holmes, aged 14 years

Over the years, the facilities at the club have been improved and modernised and they not only survived the recent recession but have continued to flourish. We wish them many happy returns and ask that if anyone has any photographs, memorabilia or memories pertaining to the club, the club would be delighted to receive them as their centenary celebrations are within sight.



Andrew Muirhead : The Happy Gardener

By Sandra Muirhead-Chevalier

My father, Andrew Muirhead (1928-2014), was a happy man, gardening to the last in his own wee corner of paradise at 1 Princes Street, Bonnybridge. His garden was always a blaze of colour and when it became too small to accommodate his passion, he extended his garden heaven onto the embankment of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Testament to this remains today in the wonderful array of shrubs and flowers planted there for all to see and enjoy. His work is a magnet for walkers, cyclists and joggers who all stop to admire this amazing spectacle. His passion for his garden inspired his talented, friendly, trusty and helpful neighbours who have picked up their gardening tools to keep up the good work that he started.

Andrew Muirhead, born in April 1928 at Jaw Farm, Fintry, left his beloved plot in November 2014, passing away at Larbert hospital aged 86 years. Just a month before, he was still potting up his fuchsia cuttings for the following spring. A sheep farmer's son, his greatest passion had always been horticulture, especially fuchsias, dahlias and roses. He was not only a regular competitor in local flower and vegetable shows but more often than not he stole the show, winning prizes galore with his leeks and onions as well as his floral contributions.

His gardening talents were honed when he cared for the gardens at Denny paper mill where he was always learning and experimenting. He later moved to be a gardener with Falkirk Council and stayed there until his retirement. He never tired of saying how lucky he was to have had such a happy and contented life. So no holidays abroad for Andrew, much to the dismay of his daughters Sandra and Janice and his late wife Maisie! He had his own 'Bonnybrigada' as he called it, enjoying his coffee on the bench in the garden when the sun came out - life couldn't be better than that.

A commemorative plaque to Andrew's memory, erected by his friends and neighbours, now stands surrounded by his amazing topiary, crocosmias, fuchsia and an endless array of flowers and plants which give colour to the embankment throughout the year. His legacy is one that is enjoyed by passers-by day and daily as they make use of the rejuvenated canal tow path. A simple life, a simple man of huge talent – happiness Bonnybridge style!



With special thanks from Andrews family to Sandra Harris of 2 Princess Street for all her special care and attention throughout the years.



David Connell kindly supplied this picture and recalls many of the names.
 Can anyone fill in the gaps and correct spelling of the names?

- Teacher:** Miss Nicol
- Top Row:** ?, Tom Mikolowski?, ?, Ken Roy, ?, Elsie Forsyth, Marie Mitchell, Billy Ritchie, Tom Fairlie, Pat Dillon.
- Middle Row:** Lenny Tauton, ?, Norman Wilson, Jim Pollock, George Maxwell, ? Jarvie, David Connell, Blair Bernard.
- Front Row:** ?, ?, Charlotte Cuthbert, Jane Connell, ? Buchanan, ? McGibbon, ?, Angela Osborne, ?, Senga Ingram, Glynis Halliday, Kazek Brzina, ? Pikelewski.
- Seated:** ?, John Archibald, Colin Wren, Tom Millar.

Answers to History of Bonnyreen Quiz

- 1 This was the name given to the ladies toilets in the brick works and foundries in the area!
- 2 Silica Works, Dougalls, Dyson, RHI, Greenhill, Bonnyside, Broomhill, Campbell's (Rough Castle), Millinquarter to name but a few!
- 3 They are still there! Some are buried underneath the car park, some in the grassy area between the Community Centre and the Library and some in the wall on Canal Brae.
- 4 The Power Station had four cooling towers - two wooden ones and two concrete ones.
- 5 This was the name given to the 'Bookies' at the toll where the Bridge Inn now stands.
- 6 The War Memorial Park was originally the town rubbish dump!



Big Roman Week in Bonnybridge Library

