

# Cairntable Recollections



Including Times of an Older Muirkirk

Recalled by

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2011

## INDEX (Name)

“Auld Lang Syne .....	299	Ghosts of Muirkirk .....	225
1000 Years’ Service .....	213	Glenbuck and its Laird .....	247
A Famous Flock Master .....	066	Glenbuck Murder .....	124
A Football Song .....	242	Glenbuck Old Folks .....	088
A Look Back in Time .....	104	Glenbuck Over 60’s Reunion .....	306
A New Rally .....	219	Glenbuck Public School .....	322
A New Venture .....	239	Glenbuck Remembered .....	231
A Night for Sportsmen .....	216	Glenbuck Re-Union 1925 .....	307
A Reverie .....	218	Glenbuck Re-Union, 1938 .....	332
A Secluded Monument .....	076	Glenbuck School .....	119
Adder in Garden .....	091	Golden Memories .....	063
Albert Place .....	003	Harry Lauder’s Visit .....	089
Alec Brown, Cherrypicker .....	115	Hobbie & Handicrafts Exhibition .....	296
An Outside View .....	311	Homecoming Scotland .....	051
Angling .....	214	Immortal Memory .....	234
Another link Severed .....	208	In Winter’s Grip .....	191
Another Medal .....	269	Inquiry at Ayr .....	151
Auld Coutburn Raw .....	159	Interviews .....	137
Auld Meikle’s Raw .....	101	It’s a Dog’s Life .....	298
Australian Air-Mail .....	091	John Brown of Priesthill .....	068
Aye, Aye .....	310	John McCartney Poem .....	109
Ayrshire Mining Disaster .....	143	John Whyte .....	265
Back to Real Life .....	031	Kames Colliery Draw .....	235
Back to the Seventies .....	244	L.O.L. ....	279
Bankhead Pit Disaster .....	133	Lady Bowlers win Championship .....	230
Bankhead Pi, 1898t .....	139	Lapraik Connection .....	055
Bill Shankly .....	203	Lapraik Family in Muirkirk (I) .....	057
Billiards .....	188	Lapraik Family in Muirkirk (II) .....	060
Blizzard of 1947 .....	015	Last Train to Lanark .....	235
Blood Transfusion Service .....	228	Leap Year .....	087
Bone Repreived .....	132	Lesser Temperance Hall .....	260
Bowling Record .....	100	Level Crossing .....	075
Bughouse Boys Cycle Race .....	015	Life Goes On .....	237
Burns Centenary .....	240	Lights & Shadows of Muirkirk .....	078
Burnside Brig .....	294	Lightshaw Derby .....	251
Canadian Visitors .....	283	Link with Old Muirkirk .....	196
Changes Continue .....	234	List of Glenbuck Creditors .....	182
Changing Scenes .....	212	Local Angling .....	020
Closure of Golf Course .....	226	Local Connection .....	236
Coat of Arms .....	239	Local Football .....	032
Conscientious Objector .....	080	Lodge St. Thomas .....	285
Coronation Year .....	219	Long Service Certificates .....	213
Covemamting Facts Uncovered .....	194	Long Working Career .....	329
Covenanting History .....	232	Looking Back .....	241
Cricket Query .....	250	Maidenbank Memories .....	122
Dates to Remember .....	160	Malayan Emergency .....	026
Demise of Glenbuck Ironworks .....	178	Memories from the Past .....	014
Diary of a Holiday .....	317	Modernaires Dance Band .....	217
Digging Up the Past .....	237	Modernaires Win Championship .....	016
Douglas Gas .....	091	Moorchurch District Council .....	319
Ecclesiastical .....	048	More About Lapraik .....	184
End of War .....	010	More Changes .....	213
English F.A. Cup .....	375	More History Notes .....	163
Farms in Muirkirk .....	265	More Names .....	083
Fire at Parish Church .....	016	More on Coutburn Raw .....	175
First Glenbuck O.A.P’s Reunion .....	303	More on Sport .....	043
Five-a-Side Football .....	205	More on Thos. Whyte .....	264
Football/Doctor/Floods .....	189	More on War Effort .....	204
Funeral of Victims .....	138	Muirkirk “Top Ten” .....	210
Garronhill Outdoor Theatre .....	204	Muirkirk and the Gas Detector .....	086

## INDEX (Continued)

Muirkirk Births .....	365	Round and About .....	334
Muirkirk Co-operative Society .....	007	Sanquhar Road .....	200
Muirkirk Curling Club .....	271	School Dux and Sports Champ. ....	201
Muirkirk Cycling Club .....	044	Schools Football .....	042
Muirkirk Disaster Poem .....	158	Scotland's Singing Collier .....	376
Muirkirk Estate on Market .....	092	Session Records of Muirkirk .....	256
Muirkirk Farmers' Society .....	279	Sir Walter Scott .....	252
Muirkirk Golf Club .....	034	Some Howlers .....	322
Muirkirk Golf Club .....	336	Some Notes on Old Muirkirk .....	094
Muirkirk Golf Club At Home .....	177	Southside Rows .....	116
Muirkirk Hero .....	072	Start of a Working Life .....	022
Muirkirk in China .....	325	Station/Old Workers Honoured .....	321
Muirkirk in Olden Times .....	073	Still More Changes .....	215
Muirkirk Marriages .....	338	Still More Changes .....	227
Muirkirk Mining Accidents .....	165	Successful Bowler .....	086
Muirkirk Orange Lodge .....	285	Temperance Hall .....	243
Muirkirk Ordnance Gazateer .....	197	The Big Freeze .....	199
Muirkirk Reminiscences .....	173	The Blackout .....	021
Muirkirk Water Supply .....	098	The Bond that is Muirkirk .....	099
Muirkirk's Own Champion .....	041	The Cameronian Dream .....	113
My Auld Toon .....	379	The Conclusion .....	378
Narration by Robert Blyth .....	135	The Co-op - the Beginning .....	090
National Service .....	024	The Co-op Society of Glenbuck .....	090
New Life for Juniors .....	228	The Disaster at Muirkirk .....	150
New Traders .....	225	The End in Sight .....	329
New Ventures .....	225	The Great Freeze .....	087
North Moor Right-of-Way .....	011	The Great War .....	069
North Side of Village .....	018	The Heid Inns .....	360
Now You Know .....	206	The Homecoming .....	207
Of a Sporting Nature .....	039	The Ironworks .....	036
Off the Map .....	220	The Journey Home .....	031
Old Churchard .....	097	The Kype Monument .....	284
Old Clay Pipes/ War Relics .....	281	The Motive Power of Industry .....	373
Old Folks re-Union 1916 .....	229	The Muirkirk Disaster .....	156
Old Muirkirk in Word & Pictures .....	301	The Railway .....	035
Old Muirkirk Recalled .....	363	The Story Continues .....	028
Old Muirkirk, Main Street .....	225	The Trial of Bone .....	125
Old Scots Words Answers .....	208	The War Effort .....	202
Old Tokens .....	268	The War Effort .....	275
Open Cast Coal Mining .....	214	Thirty-Three Signs of Rain .....	087
Out With the Old .....	230	Time Marches On .....	215
Parish War Record .....	085	Top o' the Toon .....	005
Peace Restored .....	209	Top of the League .....	196
Photographic Collection .....	176	Topographical Survey of Muirkirk .....	289
Professor Tom Symington .....	108	Vault Wood .....	017
Quoiting Champion .....	217	Village Personalities .....	232
Quoiting Champion Tom Bone .....	040	War Medals/ Washing Days .....	282
Quoiting in Muirkirk Parish .....	276	War Memories 1939 .....	190
Recovery of Bodies .....	136	War Years .....	008
Recreational Activities .....	012	Welcome Home Fund .....	206
Recreational Glenbuck .....	251	Well Known Personalities .....	358
Reflections .....	286	Well Known Personalities .....	359
Regal Cinema .....	004	Welltrees Disaster .....	065
Regal Cinema .....	245	Welltrees Rememebered .....	064
Reminiscent .....	255	Wembley Wizards .....	269
Returned by Mother Earth .....	226	Where Did They Live? .....	081
Reward for Bravery .....	157	Whyte Dynasty .....	261
Robert Blyth is a Hero .....	144	Winter Memories .....	364
Roll of Honour, 1939-1945 .....	211	Ye Royal and Ancient Game .....	330
Roll of Honour, 1914-1918 .....	280		

## INDEX (Numerical)

Albert Place .....	003	The Co-op - the Beginning .....	090
Regal Cinema .....	004	The Co-op Society of Glenbuck .....	090
Top o' the Toon .....	005	Australian Air-Mail .....	091
Muirkirk Co-operative Society .....	007	Adder in Garden .....	091
War Years .....	008	Douglas Gas .....	091
End of War .....	010	Muirkirk Estate on Market .....	092
North Moor Right-of-Way .....	011	Some Notes on Old Muirkirk .....	094
Recreational Activities .....	012	Old Churchyard .....	097
Memories from the Past .....	014	Muirkirk Water Supply .....	098
Blizzard of 1947 .....	015	The Bond that is Muirkirk .....	099
Bughouse Boys Cycle Race .....	015	Bowling Record .....	100
Fire at Parish Church .....	016	Auld Meikle's Raw .....	101
Modernaires Win Championship .....	016	A Look Back in Time .....	104
Vault Wood .....	017	Professor Tom Symington .....	108
North Side of Village .....	018	John McCartney Poem .....	109
Local Angling .....	020	The Cameronian Dream .....	113
The Blackout .....	021	Alec Brown, Cherrypicker .....	115
Start of a Working Life .....	022	Southside Rows .....	116
National Service .....	024	Glenbuck School .....	119
Malayan Emergency .....	026	Maidenbank Memories .....	122
The Story Coninues .....	028	Glenbuck Murder .....	124
The Journey Home .....	031	The Trial of Bone .....	125
Back to Real Life .....	031	Bone Repreived .....	132
Local Football .....	032	Bankhead Pit Disaster .....	133
Muirkirk Golf Club .....	034	Narration by Robert Blyth .....	135
The Railway .....	035	Recovery of Bodies .....	136
The Ironworks .....	036	Interviews .....	137
Of a Sporting Nature .....	039	Funeral of Victims .....	138
Quoiting Champion Tom Bone .....	040	Bankhead Pit, 1898 .....	139
Muirkirk's Own Champion .....	041	Ayrshire Mining Disaster .....	143
Schools Football .....	042	Robert Blyth is a Hero .....	144
More on Sport .....	043	The Disaster at Muirkirk .....	150
Muirkirk Cycling Club .....	044	Inquiry at Ayr .....	151
Ecclesiastical .....	048	The Muirkirk Disaster .....	156
Homecoming Scotland .....	051	Reward for Bravery .....	157
Lapraik Connection .....	055	Muirkirk Disaster Poem .....	158
Lapraik Family in Muirkirk (I) .....	057	Auld Coutburn Raw .....	159
Lapraik Family in Muirkirk (II) .....	060	Dates to Remember .....	160
Golden Memories .....	063	More History Notes .....	163
Welltrees Remembered .....	064	Muirkirk Mining Accidents .....	165
Welltrees Disaster .....	065	Muirkirk Reminiscences .....	173
A Famous Flock Master .....	066	More on Coutburn Raw .....	175
John Brown of Priesthill .....	068	Photographic Collection .....	176
The Great War .....	069	Muirkirk Golf Club At Home .....	177
Muirkirk Hero .....	072	Demise of Glenbuck Ironworks .....	178
Muirkirk in Olden Times .....	073	List of Glenbuck Creditors .....	182
Level Crossing .....	075	More About Lapraik .....	184
A Secluded Monument .....	076	Billiards .....	188
Lights & Shadows of Muirkirk .....	078	Football/Doctor/Floods .....	189
Conscientious Objector .....	080	War Memories 1939 .....	190
Where Did They Live? .....	081	In Winter's Grip .....	191
More Names .....	083	Covenanting Facts Uncovered .....	194
Parish War Record .....	085	Link with Old Muirkirk .....	196
Successful Bowler .....	086	The Big Freeze .....	199
Muirkirk and the Gas Dector .....	086	Muirkirk Ordnance Gazateer .....	197
Leap Year .....	087	Top of the League .....	196
Thirty-Three Signs of Rain .....	087	Sanquhar Road .....	200
The Great Freeze .....	087	School Dux and Sports Champ. ....	201
Glenbuck Old Folks .....	088	The War Effort .....	202
Harry Lauder's Visit .....	089		

## INDEX (Continued)

Bill Shankly .....	203	Reminiscent .....	255
More on War Effort .....	204	Session Records of Muirkirk .....	256
Garronhill Outdoor Theatre .....	204	Lesser Temperance Hall .....	260
Five-a-Side Football .....	205	Whyte Dynasty .....	261
Now You Know .....	206	More on Thos. Whyte .....	264
Welcome Home Fund .....	206	John Whyte .....	265
The Homecoming .....	207	Farms in Muirkirk .....	265
Old Scots Words Answers .....	208	Old Tokens .....	268
Another link Severed .....	208	Another Medal .....	269
Peace Restored .....	209	Wembley Wizards .....	269
Muirkirk "Top Ten" .....	210	Muirkirk Curling Club .....	271
Roll of Honour .....	211	Muirkirk Farmers' Society .....	279
Changing Scenes .....	212	The War Effort .....	275
More Changes .....	213	Quoiting in Muirkirk Parish .....	276
Long Service Certificates .....	213	L.O.L. ....	279
Open Cast Coal Mining .....	214	Roll of Honour .....	280
Angling .....	214	Old Clay Pipes/ War Relics .....	281
Time Marches on .....	215	War Medals/ Washing Days .....	282
Still More Changes .....	215	Canadian Visitors .....	283
A Night for Sportsmen .....	216	The Kype Monument .....	284
Quoiting Champion .....	217	Muirkirk Orange Lodge .....	285
Modernaires Dance Band .....	217	Lodge St. Thomas .....	285
A Reverie .....	218	Reflections .....	286
Coronation Year .....	219	Topographical Survey of Muirkirk .....	289
A New Rally .....	219	Burnside Brig .....	294
Off the Map .....	220	Hobbie & Handicrafts Exhibition .....	296
Ghosts of Muirkirk .....	225	It's a Dog's Life .....	298
New Traders .....	225	"Auld Lang Syne" .....	299
Old Muirkirk, Main Street .....	225	Old Muirkirk in Word & Pictures .....	301
Returned by Mother Earth .....	226	First Glenbuck O.A.P's Reunion .....	303
New Ventures .....	225	Glenbuck Over 60's Reunion .....	306
Closure of Golf Course .....	226	Glenbuck Re-Union 1925 .....	307
Still More Changes .....	227	Aye, Aye .....	310
New Life for Juniors .....	228	An Outside View .....	311
Blood Transfusion Service .....	228	Diary of a Holiday .....	317
Old Folks Re-Union 1916 .....	229	Moorchurch District Council .....	319
Lady Bowlers win Championship .....	230	Station/Old Workers Honoured .....	321
Out With the Old .....	230	Some Howlers .....	322
Glenbuck Remembered .....	231	Glenbuck Public School .....	322
Covenanting History .....	232	Village Personalities .....	232
Changes Continue .....	234	Muirkirk in China .....	325
Immortal Memory .....	234	The End in Sight .....	329
Kames Colliery Draw .....	235	Long Working Career .....	329
Last Train to Lanark .....	235	Ye Royal and Ancient Game .....	330
Local Connection .....	236	Glenbuck Re-Union, 1938 .....	332
Life Goes On .....	237	Round and About .....	334
Digging Up the Past .....	237	Muirkirk Golf Club .....	336
Coat of Arms .....	239	Muirkirk Marriages .....	338
A New Venture .....	239	Well Known Personalities .....	358
Burns Centenary .....	240	Well Known Personalities .....	359
Looking Back .....	241	The Heid Inns .....	360
A Football Song .....	242	Old Muirkirk Recalled .....	363
Temperance Hall .....	243	Winter Memories .....	364
Back to the Seventies .....	244	Muirkirk Births .....	365
Regal Cinema .....	245	The Motive Power of Industry .....	373
Glenbuck and its Laird .....	247	English F.A. Cup .....	375
Cricket Query .....	250	Scotland's Singing Collier .....	376
Recreational Glenbuck .....	251	The Conclusion .....	378
Lightshaw Derby .....	251	My Auld Toon .....	379
Sir Walter Scott .....	252		

## PHOTO AND SKETCH INDEX

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<p>Page</p> <p>003 Albert Place</p> <p>004 Regal Cinema</p> <p>005 Wanlass Place</p> <p>006 Granny Gibney</p> <p>007 Kirkgreen Co-op.</p> <p>009 Snowstorms</p> <p>013 Powder House</p> <p>016 Parish Church Interior</p> <p>018 John Brown's Stone</p> <p>Long Stone of Convention</p> <p>019 Rock Pool near The Hall</p> <p>Minister's Pool, Torhill</p> <p>020 Hogg's Bakery</p> <p>026 Jungle Patrol</p> <p>027 16ft Python in Jungle</p> <p>028 Minden Barracks</p> <p>029 Tea Break in Jungle</p> <p>035 Train at Glenbuck Dam</p> <p>036 Furnace Road</p> <p>037 Muirkirk Ironworks</p> <p>038 Blast Furnace Ruins</p> <p>039 Kaimshill Holm</p> <p>040 Tom Bone, Glenbuck</p> <p>041 John Kilpatrick</p> <p>042 Schoolboy Team</p> <p>044 David Greenwood</p> <p>047 Early Cyclists</p> <p>050 Church and Chapel</p> <p>054 Masons Arms Hotel</p> <p>056 Lapraik's Plaque</p> <p>062 Lapraik's Descendents</p> <p>064 Torhill</p> <p>071 Memorial Gates</p> <p>072 Saving the Guns</p> <p>074 Main Street, West</p> <p>075 The Red Raw</p> <p>077 Kype Monument</p> <p>080 Ironworks Cottages</p> <p>084 Railway Time-Table 1931</p> <p>102 Meikle's Row</p> <p>103 Steele's Corner</p> <p>103 "Jack's" advert</p> <p>107 Glasgow Road</p> <p>106 Pro. Tom Symington</p> <p>112 Wellwood Bridge</p> <p>114 Cameron's Monument</p>	<p>Page</p> <p>115 Alec Brown, Cherrypickers</p> <p>121 Glenbuck School</p> <p>126 Glenbuck Village</p> <p>138 Robert Blyth's Medal</p> <p>150 Robert Blyth</p> <p>152 Bankhead Pit</p> <p>157 Bankhead Row</p> <p>162 Regal Cinema</p> <p>164 Waukmill, Ashieburn</p> <p>167 Wellwood Pit</p> <p>172 Working Men's Club</p> <p>176 Silhouette Salon</p> <p>181 Grasshill Row, Glenbuck</p> <p>183 Glenbuck Ironworks Ruin</p> <p>186 James Lapraik</p> <p>193 Palmer's Crossing</p> <p>The Station</p> <p>195 Dundas Hall Advert 1936</p> <p>200 Dundas Hall Advert, 1931</p> <p>203 Co-operative Advert</p> <p>Bill Shankly</p> <p>209 "Tanks " Advert</p> <p>210 Muirkirk Top Ten Girls</p> <p>217 Modernaires Dance Band</p> <p>220 E.U. Church, Glasgow Rd.</p> <p>221 Kames Church/Institute</p> <p>Melody Quintette Band</p> <p>222 Thomas Floyd, Poet</p> <p>225 Turner's Building, Main St.</p> <p>227 Old Golf Course</p> <p>230 Winning Lady Bowlers</p> <p>233 Main Street, Douglas</p> <p>235 Last Lanark Train</p> <p>244 Temperance Hall Brae</p> <p>245 Dundas Hall</p> <p>246 Dundas Hall Advert</p> <p>247 Charles Howatson</p> <p>249 Glenbuck House</p> <p>250 Evergreens Cricket Team</p> <p>263 John Whyte, Poet</p> <p>266 Wellwood House</p> <p>267 Crossflatt Railway Bridge</p> <p>268 Ironworks Tokens</p> <p>Old Medallion</p> <p>269 Another Medal</p> <p>270 Wembley Wizards Ticket</p>	<p>Page</p> <p>271 Muirkirk Curling Club</p> <p>276 Tom Bone, Quoiter</p> <p>277 Ballochmyle Silver Quoit</p> <p>John Kilpatrick, Muirkirk</p> <p>278 Old Quoits/Old Pipe</p> <p>279 L.O.L. Regalia</p> <p>281 Old Clay Pipes/War Relics</p> <p>282 War Medals</p> <p>Old Mangle</p> <p>283 Alec and Margaret McCall</p> <p>284 Kype Monument</p> <p>285 Orange Lodge Jewel</p> <p>Lodge St. Thomas Medal</p> <p>288 Old Manse House</p> <p>293 The Store Brae</p> <p>Wallace's Property</p> <p>297 Grey Mare's Stone</p> <p>298 Advert</p> <p>300 Lantern Slides</p> <p>302 Linkieburn Square</p> <p>Linkieburn Castle</p> <p>305 Glenbuck School</p> <p>309 Bus Timetable</p> <p>Mayflower Bloom</p> <p>315 John Young</p> <p>316 Trotter's Advert</p> <p>318 Reopening of Regal</p> <p>322 Tea Time at Glenbuck</p> <p>325 Begg's Smiddy</p> <p>328 School Board Election</p> <p>331 Old Golf Course</p> <p>333 Glenbuck Post Office</p> <p>335 Keenan's Advert, 1938</p> <p>336 Muirkirk Golf Club</p> <p>337 Muirkirk Golf Club</p> <p>357 Cauld Watter Spoot</p> <p>358 Muirkirk Personalities</p> <p>359 Muirkirk Personalities</p> <p>359 Cauld Watter Spoot</p> <p>360 Willie Weir, Heid Inns</p> <p>361 Vintage Car</p> <p>362 Masons Arms Hotel</p> <p>364 Hall Farm Ruins</p> <p>374 Glenbuck Loch</p> <p>375 Alec Brown, Cherrypickers</p> <p>378 Shankly Brothers.</p>
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# Cairntable Recollections

## FOREWORD

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It is now over 10 years since "Cairntable Echoes" was written and published, and is now almost out of print, although it is still being sold. Because of its popularity I have been prompted to write another book, "Cairntable Recollections," which is an account of my early life through the Second World War years and into my working life.

As with my first effort, I have depended on the files of the "Muirkirk Advertiser" as a source of most of my material, which could not, because of space, be included in "Cairntable Echoes" This source is almost inexhaustible, and I am indebted to the foresight of William Shaw Smith, who founded the "Advertiser" in 1907.

Unfortunately cost has prevented "Recollections" from going into print, but what better way to make it available to readers than publishing this "labour of love" as an e-book on the internet. I feel sure my new publication is every bit as interesting and educational as my first.

I would like to thank Kenny Baird ([ayrshirehistory.com](http://ayrshirehistory.com)) for his encouragement and for all the work he put into preparing this book for on line publication.

James Taylor, Muirkirk

October 2011

## WHERE IT ALL STARTED

I was born at Albert Place, No. 160, at the “Top o’ the Town” on 18th February, 1933. This building was situated across the road from where the Working Men’s Club stood. Our house was a “but and ben” type with a living room and a small kitchen attached. The floors were of flag-stones. There was a back door leading out to the wash houses, with a communal drying green, and outside water closets. The household water was supplied by out door taps. In the living room, there were two built in beds with wooden boards below the mattresses, and underneath the coal for the fire was stored. The fire consisted of a large open range with a side oven and a swee for hanging the cooking pots and a metal smoke screen which could be lowered or raised when necessary. The fireplace was cleaned and black leaded every week. Gas supplied the lighting from a mantle fixed on to an apparatus on the mantelpiece. The gas meter was situated in a press below the front window. My arrival brought the family size to five, I being the youngest brother to John and George. Over-crowded it certainly was, and I was mainly brought up with my mother’s sister and brother (Janet and William Thomson) who lived just a stones throw down the street in Harkness Buildings, up from the Temperance Hall.

Muirkirk was a totally different place then. The Main Street was very compact with few breaks in the housing on either side of the street. Albert Place had the only cement pavement in the street which made it easier to clean than the rest. There were five houses at ground level. The upstairs houses were accessed through a close, and as I remember there were six apartments. The Thomsons were next door to us, and were very good neighbours. Old Joe Thomson was famed for his memory and could do his turn at local socials. His master-piece was “Paraffin Ile!” (Oil). Further up the building was “Pee” Samson, the Cannons, and the Turners. Upstairs I remember The Allans and Jen Rowe at the Masons Arms end, and further down, upstairs above us, was the Miller Family and the Harrigans. To the rear of the storied building was a communal drying green with the coal-houses, washhouses, and outside lavatories near-by. Facing these was situated a row of houses called Albert Cottages, where resided John Devine (Parish Church Choirmaster), Jimmy Watson (railway worker), and the Gold Family.



ALBERT PLACE

Westwards, at the foot of the brae on the opposite side, stood the Temperance Hall, where the Salvation Army had its headquarters in earlier times, and where almost every function of any importance was held—it was certainly the hub of the entertainment world of the village. It was later to be converted into a cinema — The Picture House — and was to continue as a very important place for entertainment. When the printing works of William Shaw Smith was destroyed by fire in 1925, the lesser Hall at the rear of the building was used to re-house the print shop where the “Muirkirk Advertiser and Douglasdale Gazette” was published every Thursday afternoon. Further up the street, just past Rowe’s Garage was Carruthers’ Park, another popular place for entertainment of a different nature. This was where the travelling show people (we had Lawrence, Codonas, etc.) set up their stalls and other equipment on a regular basis throughout the year. And frequently we had visits from the travelling Circus (one of them springs to mind — Pinders).

A great occasion took place in September 1938, when work began with



alterations to the Dundas Hall (Co-operative car park), formerly the Dundas Church, which would see a brand new cinema in Muirkirk—The Regal Cinema. It was officially opened on 2nd December that year. The first film shown was the musical extravaganza “Rosalie,” with Nelson Eddie and Eleanor Powell.

The following year gave me one of my earliest recollections as that of a six-year-old boy, when on the 2nd February the Regal Cinema was destroyed by fire. On my way to school that morning the sight that greeted me at the foot of the town was awesome. The fire, which had started about 5 a.m., spread with alarming speed and engulfed the whole building. Within two hours the flames had reduced the Cinema to its bare walls and only the sound-proofed operating box was left intact. When I got there the firemen were still dousing the embers and I can recollect that there were water hoses every where with the street gutters running like a burn. I was amazed to see that the putty from the front windows had melted and trickled down the wall to form small lumps on the pavement. I have a recollection of being taken to a concert in the Dundas Hall before its transformation.

The Regal was re-built quickly, and re-opened on 2nd June with “Alexander’s Rag Time Band,” starring Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, and Don Ameche.

## TOP O' THE TOWN

The top o' the town in those days was quite some place. To the east side of Albert Place adjoining the building was the property of the Mason's Arms Hotel, known locally as "The Heid Inns." It boasted a social group entitled "Mason's Arms Recreation Club," and had its own Club-house (called the "Bughouse"). This was adjacent to the Quoiting Green, which in my young eyes seemed to me to be quite a place—the quoiting area being roped off and terracing built around for the spectators. We as boys used to clamber over the coal houses of Albert place to gain entry and get a good view point when the big quoiting matches were being played.

The Masons Arms was one of the oldest hostelries in Ayrshire, and at that particular point in time was managed by Walter Weir, who was also involved in the Temperance Hall Picture House. A stone stairway ran up the side of the Hotel, from the Main Street, where at the gable end sat the chip shop, which I remember well. At the gable end of this was the meeting place of the "Tap o' the Toon Cronies". It was known as "The Sheden." A little further along I remember the Dunsmore's house and the storey building where Jimmy "Nae Legs" Higgins lived — Jimmy had lost both legs in an accident. He could fairly scoot about on his clenched fists, the stumps of his legs being covered with half a club football! Opposite the Higgins' house there was another shorter set of stairs leading up from the Main Street, but road access to this part of town was via Garronhill past the McKay's abode.



WANLASS PLACE

I would like to mention that until 1929 there were no numbers on the Main Street houses, and in earlier times the houses were named after the persons who owned the property. These names were used long after the door numbers appeared. Across the road from Albert Place was Ronaldo Place (Walkers, Aggie Muir, Bradford, McKinnon, and Hogg were some of the tenants, with the Blyths in the cottage at the back through the close). Going towards the Temperance Hall was Wanlass Place (where Geordie Willox had his sweetie shop), Fergus Place, Annslea ("Laird" Mathieson's Cottage), Mossend Place, and the property next to the Temperance Hall was Harkness Buildings. Across the road from the Printing Office was McGladeries's Building (where lived the Mathieson family). Up the street from this there was a stairway with iron railings leading to Annie Blyth's property. Past Love's Cottage and

Johnny Gray's house on the other side of the lane was one of Muirkirk's best-known characters in the person of Granny Gibney, who kept pigs and hens up the brae from her house. Granny Gibney was a native of Ireland, and when she died in 1941 was the oldest resident in Muirkirk. She had no birth certificate, so her exact age was not certain, but it was reckoned to be about the 100 years mark.

Past the Temperance Hall and across from the school playground there was Douglas Place, and next to that, back from the other buildings was Alex Da Prato's fish and chip and confectionary shop. Alex used to go round the houses selling his ice-cream (which was a treat) on his pedal-powered vehicle. Prior to this, the property was known as the Douglas Arms. Across the lane from the Main Street School on the south side, was the grocery shop of Bob Kirkwood (and it is believed he was the only grocer in Scotland to sell paraffin!). Next door was Minnie Brown's fruit shop. Across the road at the foot of The Stile was Clark's Buildings and next door was Victoria House (Lady Chemists, then the Co-op. and Jimmy Pringle's). Next was the property known as Parsonstown House (a cottage occupied by Bob Young, plumber), but where stood the Printing Office and Young's first shop, which were destroyed by fire in 1925). Further along the Main Street was Robertson Place (Hogg the Baker), and across the road between the Bank and Victoria Buildings was a row of houses named Meikle's Row, which were demolished to make way for the Council houses about 1938. Across the road the Central Bar was run by the Dunbar Family. Next to the Clydesdale Bank was Blackwood's Building (Moorhead's shop) and the joinery and funeral undertaking business of William Blackwood & Son. This was followed by Jenny McLean's millinery shop and Dickie Wilson's newsagents' shop; and of course the Muirkirk Co-operative Society Buildings.

Across the road was Cairn House home of the Misses Findlay and next to the Memorial Gates was the Baird Institute, and then the Nurses' Home (Mitchell's house); and of course, the imposing Irondale House which housed the Mine Manager and other workers. This was where the Doctor's Surgery was located. And at the Furnace Road Corner we had the Black Bull Hotel, who's named changed several times in its history, it being now known as the Coachhouse Inn.



GRANNY GIBNEY

Back to the top of the town, just past the Mason's Arms Hotel, the Main Street was split in two by the Old Bank Cottage (where lived my uncle, Johnny Taylor, and his family). To the right, the road went up to the Garronhill. To the left was the start of Bridge Street, and directly across from the Old Bank Cottage was Carruthers Park (donated to the people of Muirkirk by Doctor Carruthers), where as boys long hours were spent there playing games and football. There was a set of swings here. Between the Park and Rowe's Garage, leading from the Main Street, was Manse Lane. Where this name originated from we could never find the answer. Here Tammy Rowe had his contractors' Garage. I also remember the Lockharts and Archibalds lived here, and also a corrugated shed from where clothing etc was sold. In days gone by Walker's Lemonade Factory was sited here; and I still have in my possession a green glass bottle from that factory.

Further along the main road, there was a block of steps on the right which led up to Bank House; and east of this was the red sand stone "Jack's Buildings". Across the road was the Kirkgreen Branch of Muirkirk Co-operative Society. I always thought it strange that it was named after Kirkgreen when it was actually situated in Bridge Street. Later in life I discovered that the original Kirkgreen Branch was situated at the corner of Kirkgreen and Bridge Street on the opposite side of the road from the Black Bottle Tavern. The shop was moved to Bridge Street when the Co-operative Buildings and shop premises were erected, some time earlier in the century.

It seems appropriate at this stage to say something about the Muirkirk Co-operative Society. It was formed in 1885 by a group of Muirkirk men who met in a local pub, Wee Kate's, and it was reputed that they put a small amount of money each on the table, and so formed Muirkirk Co-operative Society. Amongst the founder members were Thomas Weir, William Hogg, William McCall, and John Hazle. From this small beginning, it grew in to one of the strongest societies in Scotland. In no time at all it had helped Muirkirk to be become almost self-sufficient. It boasted the following departments:

Grocery	Drapery	Boot Repairing	Household Coal	Fruit & Vegetables
Fleshing	Bakery	Chemists	Hardware	Catering Dept.



KIRKGREEN CO-OPERATIVE

In addition there were the following services — Opticians, Funeral Service, Gent's Tailoring, and Accumulator Charging. The Fleshing department had their own Slaughter House (situated through the close at the Main street premises and near the School Boundary). The animals for slaughter were kept waiting in a field in Wellwood Street which we called the "Butcher's Park." There was a very extensive door-to-door service by way of horse and cart — so one could do a week's shopping without leaving the house! In addition the Co-op played a big part in the social life of the village, and every year the older members enjoyed the "Store Guzzle," when they were treated to a steak-pie tea and programme of entertainment — originally in the Temperance Hall, and later the Dundas Hall (Regal Cinema). Another annual event organised by the Co-op was the Children's Gala Day and Fancy Dress Parade. And periodically there were Smokers' and Co-operative concerts to keep the members entertained.

The Society paid out a quarterly Dividend on a percentage of goods purchased, and this was a good way for members to start a savings scheme.

## THE WAR YEARS

In 1939 I started my scholastic career, but was oblivious to the dark war clouds which were passing over Europe. Even before the official declaration, the country was being prepared for war. So I suppose for the children who could not fully understand what was happening, it was all a great adventure, and gradually our way of life was about to dramatically change. In March that year gas masks were issued to all the inhabitants, and with the arrival of about 300 evacuees, mainly from Glasgow, we knew it was all for real. And so the country was not surprised when in early September the declaration of war was made. Immediately the black-out came into operation and the inhabitants were warned to carry their gas masks at all times. It soon became normal to see each one carrying their wee brown cardboard box containing the gasmask (this was replaced later with a more up-to-date and attractive plastic case).

We could not but fail to see the changes around us. The inside of the school windows were masked with sticky tape (to prevent flying glass) and outside the windows were bricked half-way up, and a protective brick wall was erected at the School entrance doors. In the village, any sign with the word "Muirkirk" had to be obliterated, and this included Muirkirk Co-operative shop signs, the memorial gates, and all road sign posts. It was as if they wanted Muirkirk erased from the map. Travelling was restricted. The two cinemas were closed as were the schools, which were re-opened about two weeks later. Rationing was brought into operation immediately, and ration books were distributed locally.

If all this wasn't bad enough, in January, 1940, the worst blizzard of the century struck Muirkirk with great ferocity. Muirkirk was completely cut off from the outside world, and flour and yeast had to be brought in by horse back, so that bread could be baked. Everywhere was closed (including the schools). The railway line at Muirkirk was blocked for eighteen days. My own recollection of the storm was that two huge snow drifts (about 8-10 feet high) had formed on each side of the Main Street stretching from Rowe's Garage to The Stile, and the only way to get across the street was where there was a break in the housing, i.e. between the Temperance Hall and Douglas Place and the school lane and The Stile. It was a case of "All hands to the shovels" to get the pavements clear!

An air-raid siren was installed on the roof of the local Police Station. It was tested periodically. The Church Bells would only be rung in the event of an invasion. To help the war effort a waste-paper depot was established in the old Band Hut in Meuse Lane (off the Stile), and garden plots were established at the bottom side of the Victory Park and in a field at the back of the Clydesdale Bank.

Perhaps the worst aspect of it all was the blackout, which made getting about in Muirkirk very difficult. All flash lights and torches had to be dimmed with tissue paper, and slatted covers had to be installed on motor vehicle lights. All windows in the houses had to be made "light tight," even if it meant using drawing pins. On one occasion I remember my grand-father, who lived in Harkness Buildings, had went a walk one afternoon, and got involved with a friend, and as a result, the darkness was falling when he made his way back home. Prior to setting off he had put a "raker" on the fire, which had subsequently burst into flames, lighting up the entire living room. Relatives and friends had to cover up the window on the outside with newspapers to keep the light from shining through in case the Warden appeared on the scene! I also remember the rehearsal of a mock air-raid at Kirkgreen, which seemed very realistic, with bodies lying all over the place.

Later on in the War, air-raid shelters were erected at Victory Park, Carruthers Park, and Linkieburn. These were very utility affairs, just the bare brick-work with slatted wooden doors, which we as children could climb over quite easily to gain access. Fortunately they were never needed. However it was a regular occurrence to get to an elevated view-point where we could see the flashes in the night sky over Middlefield Law, which told us that the Germans were bombing Clydebank again—I have a very vivid memory of this.

A worrying aspect of the War was the rationing, and although the allocations seemed meagre, local families coped well, and there was always someone who knew someone who could get luxury items on the black market. The same applied to clothing; confectionery (sweets and chocolates) was a different matter, and all I can remember about the sweetie shops were the bare shelves! What did evolve from this aspect was the forming of queues for everything, and a visit to the Co-op could take several hours to complete. We shopped at the Kirkgreen Branch, and on a Friday the queue could stretch well down the street. Inside on the counter was a box, not unlike a post box, where you deposited the Store Book, and the server would pull the bottom one out, and one had to wait till it was their turn.



SNOWSTORM OF 1940 – INSTITUTE BRAE

A sign that big changes were on the way, both nationally and locally, was the closure of Alston's Smiddy in Main Street in 1942. I can remember the horses waiting their turn to be "shoed" here, but the change-over to mechanisation was taking its toll. My brother John had started an apprenticeship with Alston, and so was the first casualty when he lost his job. He was lucky enough to get started in the blacksmith's shop at Kames Colliery. The Smiddy was roughly across the road from Hogg the bakers, down between the two buildings on the left.

A delicacy appeared in Muirkirk in 1943 in the shape of bananas — the first we had seen since the start of the war, but not everyone was lucky enough to get one. Some had to do what my mother did. She boiled and mashed parsnips and added banana essence to make a spread, and it didn't taste too bad!

For the first time since the war started, Muirkirk Parish Church bells were heard ringing in 1944 — to celebrate the Allied victory in the Battle of Egypt. In the same year I witnessed the dismantling of the railway bridge across the Furnace Road leading on to the slag bing, near where the Gent's toilet was situated. Also at that time the bridge which crossed the Douglas Road at Airdsgreen was shorn of its metal. According to local information this bridge had been erected to carry a branch railway line from a quarry at Maidenbank, but was never used for this purpose. We also witnessed the removal of the iron railings from the front of most houses in Muirkirk — this was to help the war effort.

The end of the war in 1945 saw Muirkirk celebrating like most other communities. There was a party with open air dancing at Kirkgreen. Flags were flown and the bells were ringing. There were other parties in various parts of the village, and there was a real happy atmosphere. That year the gasmasks were handed in, though some were kept as souvenirs. Hardly a week went by without a welcome home party for our soldiers returning from the war. I attended the one for my uncle Eddie Clark, who worked with the Co-op. Grocery. They were all great occasions, and it was amazing how the women folk could turn out such catering under very austere conditions.

A rather sad occasion occurred in the village just after the war in 1946 with the death of the Rev. John Henderson, who had been Parish Minister at Muirkirk for 36 years. I remember the large concourse of mourners who followed the cortege to Muirkirk Cemetery, where he was laid to rest. I still have clear memories of that day — I was a member of the Boys Brigade that escorted the hearse. The memory of that occasion will live with me for ever.

In 1946 the air raid shelters were removed — the same year the Ironworks Store closed for business.

The Temperance Hall Brae was not always called by that name. In earlier times it was called Lees's Brae, after George Lees, who owned a field to the rear of Harkness Buildings. This was where the travelling shows set up stall when they came with their various modes of entertainment; it was also a favourite site for some of the Temperance bodies who set up summer tents to preach the Gospel.

Another name of former times was Meuse Lane which ran (parallel to Main Street) from Hogg the Bakers to the Butchers' Park at the other end, cutting through The Stile, which was just a narrow footpath at that time.

## NORTH MOOR RIGHT-OF-WAY

Mention of The Stile brings me to another episode of times gone by concerning the North Moor Right-of-Way. This was a frequently used path which stretched from The Hall on the Greenock Water over the hill and down past Bankend Farm near to where is now situated the Observation Post. It then made its way towards the village via where now stands Middlefield Drive. But at the time mentioned, the houses had not been built. The right-of-way crossed over the Glasgow Road next to Heathfield and down the Top Stile past where Doctor Weir's bungalow was built, continuing past Trotters house; and across Wellwood Street to the bottom part of The Stile, which eventually came to meet the Main Street at Clark's Buildings. Ayr County Council, in their wisdom, decided when building Middlefield Drive to cut off the access to the right-of-way. There was a great uproar from the local inhabitants, and after much debate and argument, the Council capitulated and built a gate at the top of the Drive to give access to the path. Who said local opinion doesn't matter? At a point after crossing the dry-stone dyke beyond Bankend a shoot of the path veered right and ended at the Greenock Water at a popular place called the Sheep's Brig, where there was a narrow wooden and rail construction over the Greenock Water which allowed the sheep to cross. There was a natural bathing pool here where the river had cut through the solid rock to form a deep chasm—probably about half way between The Hall and Mansefield Farm.

Interestingly, the right-of-way continued across the Main Street towards the River Ayr via the School lane at Kate's Hall. Here there was a footbridge across the River as well as a ford which allowed horse and cart vehicles to cross over to the other bank. The path continued up towards the Royal George. This is where the story becomes interesting. At one time, long ago, just about the start of the ironworks, it was thought that the old Sanquhar Road passed through the middle of the works. If this was the case then could the North Moor Right-of-Way join up with the Sanquhar road, perhaps near where the High Weighs were situated? (Near to Mitchell's House) Food for thought!

While on this subject, there was another right-of-way which passed through Tardoes Farm towards Lightshaw. The resident farmer decided to build himself a new barn and blocked off the road entirely. Again there was quite a stir in the village about this, and in the end justice prevailed. The Council Planning department decreed that the path should be re-opened or the barn dismantled. A compromise was reached and the farmer opened up a door at the other side of the barn allowing walkers a road through. I believe the barn is still standing to this day.

Another right-of-way was from Bankhead along the pug line to the Waulkmill and Ashieburn, up the burn to the top path which went past the old lime kilns and the Perchy Dam (which was an old iron-stone quarry flooded with water), through Crossflat farm and back on to the Auldhouseburn road. The farmer then disputed this and tried to keep the walkers away by putting bullocks in the field as well as having barking dogs in the farm courtyard. Things haven't changed much over the years, as the present farmer even closes the River Ayr walkway in early Spring. Will we have to wait for another reaction from the people of Muirkirk before this situation is put right?

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

As schoolchildren, we were mainly left to make our own entertainment, and in the war years there were the simple games of hide and seek and tig. A favourite game at the top of the town was called "leevie-o." It consisted of two teams, one of which was enclosed in a chalk circle, and to get out of this a member of his team (outwith the circle) would have to "tig" him in order for him to escape. If a member of the opposite team "tiggered" you outside of the circle, you were sent back in; and this game could go on for ever. There were the usual ball games and skipping ropes, and of course, one of the favourites we called "beds" or "peevers." when various shapes and lines were drawn on the pavement with a piece of stooky (chalk). The peever was made from either a piece of hardwood or ideally a piece of marble, and this had to be moved around the obstacle using the one foot you were standing on. I must confess that the girls were better at this game than the boys. Sometimes we would trek off to the River Ayr to indulge in a game of "Chucky Stanes." We scoured the gravel beds to find the best stones. A stone would be set up on the top of another, and the object of the game was to remove this stone by targeting another "chucky" at it and hoping to remove it. The cracking of the stones could be heard for miles! We also played "Peeries," keeping the wooden peerie going round by the use of a leather "whang" attached to a short stick, like a whip.

The best and most popular activity of them all was undoubtedly that mode of transport called the Gir' and Cleek. The gir' comprised a perfect round shape of iron about 18 inches in diameter. There were two models, i.e. the first was made of rounded steel, just over ¼-inch thick, the second was made of flattened iron, about an inch broad. The first was called a "Stane Stotter," the second a "Wind Cutter." Both were propelled by a driving shaft made of heavy-duty fencing wire, bent at the top to form a handle, and with a "U" shape at the bottom so that the Gir could fit in the "U" and push the Gir forward, or reversed to the inside of the Gir to prevent it running out of hand. It was a great piece of engineering, and there were not many boys at the top of the town without one. We used to travel miles with these, just like a pack of cyclists. Of course, through time the "U" piece of the Cleek would wear through and the owner would be left stranded. When this happened there was nothing else for it — the Gir was lifted over his head and under an armpit, and he had to walk all the way back home!

We used to cut our own "pea-shooter" from the plants which grew in abundance at the side of the road. These were hollow, of course, and we were never short of ammunition in the way of rowans and hawthorns. If you were in luck you could gain possession of a glass tube from the engines at Kames Pit, and then you were in the Rolls Royce category. We also made our own slings with a Y-shaped branch from a tree and the rubber from old tyre tubes. Guddling in the burns for small trout and catching minnows and "beardies" was also indulged in with great enthusiasm. We used to go looking for "puddock's jeely," which was in abundance in the old canal. But my favourite place was the old water tank which used to supply the water for the street pumps, and which was situated across from the Butcher's Park in Wellwood Street. Hunting for birds' nests was another favourite past-time, and there were some quite extensive egg collections in Muirkirk. Also I remember the Walker's having their own quiting rink down the back of their house (near Rowe's Ice Cream factory). Here they had an extensive collection of quoits — this suited me fine as I could get a smaller and lighter pair, as I could hardly throw the larger ones!

In the winter time we had sledging, and it seemed to me that we had ideal conditions most winters. A favourite slope was the Temperance Hall Brae, but we hadn't much time before the housewives spoiled our enjoyment by throwing ashes on the road. So we retreated to the Sandy Brae at the East end of Garronhill, and this seemed to last longer than the Main Street run. A really good place, and a safer one for sledging, was in the Tardoes field across from the Parish Church. Just like the Gir and Cleeks, the sledge came with two types of runner, the round ones and the ones with flat blades. Skating was also tried to a lesser extent, and I remember a good wee pond on the River Ayr side of the Slag Bing. Of course, just before my time, there was curling in the Victory Park. What is at present the putting green, used to be a tennis court in the summer, but was flooded in the winter and when the frost came they had curling. I remember the hut with all the curling stones and the taps where the water was turned on to flood the courts.

I must not forget to mention the games of football we played with the "tanner ba'," usually one made of hard rubber or a tennis ball. These games could be played almost any where. Another popular game with the small ball was "headers. Four jackets were laid out on the ground—two facing each other several feet apart, with one player in each "goal" throwing the ball up and using his head only to score a goal past his opponent. There were some sore heads the next morning! Another favourite was the game of "bools" (marbles) which was easily set up by making a small hollow in the gutter with the heel of a boot. The object was to get your opponents bool into the hollow by hitting your own one against it. Bools were always available at "The Dandies" in Furnace Road.

Another game which relied totally on Mother Nature was "Oakies," as we called it locally, or more familiarly known as "conkers." When in season, chestnuts and acorns were heated in the oven until they were hardened enough to pierce a hole through and insert a piece of string about a foot long (some used a bootlace), and tie a knot to keep the chessy intact. The object of the game was for one player to hold the piece of string up with the chessy hanging down, and then the opponent had to try and crack this chessy with his own holding the end of the string in one hand and the chessy in the other. The one with the chessy intact was the winner and he could keep the battered one as a souvenir and proof of his win.



THE POWDER HOUSE

## MEMORIES FROM THE PAST

I can just remember my first day at school, or rather the event leading up to it. On the way to Furnace Road my mother took me in to see my grandmother, who lived in the first ground-floor house in Victoria Buildings, next to the cottage, Sornlea. The Headmistress was Miss Brown, and Mr “Paw” Gordon was the Headmaster. Other teachers at that time were Miss Elizabeth McDougall, Miss Fleming, Miss Agnes Taylor, and Miss Mary Anderson. Some time later we were moved to Main Street School where we were sent to the dreaded Katie Mulveen’s class — and she put the fear of death into most pupils, with the exception of the more talented ones. My vivid re-collection of the Donald School as it was called was the Gym Room in the winter time with its coal stove although the place always seemed to be freezing. Another teacher there was Annie Delgrano (Mrs Kirkwood). I was certainly glad to get back to Furnace Road, but in all honesty, I didn’t particularly like school, and my leaving day I always looked forward to.

The top of the town, to me, was always a friendly place, and a trusting environment. The front doors were seldom locked, and on the few occasion that they were the key was hung up at the side of the door on a nail. I remember it was just too high for me to reach, and I had to jump up and try and dislodge it. When I did eventually succeed, I had to get Geordie Willox from the sweetie shop across the road to turn the lock for me — in my eyes the key seemed to be large and heavy and I couldn’t imagine anyone carrying it about in their pocket.

Play pals I remember at that time were Adam Hogg (Hoagy), Andrew Walker (Curdy), Jimmy Davidson (Peachy), the Walker Brothers (in particular Matt and Bert), Thomson Aitken, the Cannon Brothers (John and Willie), the Rowses from the Garage (including Ralph and Evelyn), my cousins from Old Bank Cottage (Margaret, Jackie and Harry Taylor) to name but a few. They were happy times, and when my mother announced that we would be moving house later on in 1941, I greeted the news with some intrepidation. But I need not have worried, because our move to 21 Wellwood Avenue turned out to be the first big adventure of my life. Oh, what changes we had. Along with my two brothers we had a room to ourselves, hot and cold running water, an inside bathroom and toilet — it was just like heaven. Life at school became a little more bearable and there were some pleasant memories. Miss Sunderland was our music teacher, and the Maths teacher was Miss Nicholas Bell, who was later to become my aunt through her marriage to my Uncle Alex. Taylor, Language Teacher.

In 1944 a concert in aid of the Welcome Home Fund for our armed forces members returning from the war was held in the Ironworks Institute, when the highlight of the evening was the appearance of Scotland’s leading entertainer in the person of Sir Harry Lauder. The reason for mentioning this is that I was standing at the foot of the Glasgow Road, near Dickie Wilson’s shop, when a sparkling chauffeur-driven limousine came down the Glasgow Road, turning right, and making for the Institute — sitting in the back seat was none other than the remarkable man himself, and that is a moment I will never forget. Incidentally, Harry Lauder made several visits to the old folks re-unions in Muirkirk, and was usually accompanied by his daughter, Greta.

Another severe winter, one of the worst of the century was experienced in Muirkirk in 1947. It started on New Year’s Day and continued well into the month of March. There were the usual transport disruptions and a spate of burst pipes, with strong winds whipping up the snow drifts. I remember trying to get to school

through the Victory Park and I was able to walk up a huge drift and over the top of the wire fence which enclosed the tennis courts. I can also remember when a boy with his leg in plaster was visiting Muirkirk, when he foolhardily tried to get back to Cronberry on foot on Thursday night. A search party was got up but were forced to turn back at Wellwood. Two Police officers from Muirkirk finally got through on foot and contacted the Cronberry search party, and every farm and outhouse was searched in vain. The search was halted at 5 a.m. with no trace of the lad. At daybreak the searchers set off from Cronberry again, making towards Muirkirk when the boy was found at the proposed railway sidings east of Boghead in a watchman's hut, seemly none the worse of his experience!

One of the most entertaining spectacle ever to happen in Muirkirk was when the Bughouse Boys tried to emulate the annual Muirkirk - Douglas - Muirkirk Cycle race with their own event in 1948. The Head Inn's boys being a wee bit older, the course was shortened to run from Rowe's Garage to the Miners canteen at Glespin and back. Thirteen riders took part, and a large crowd of spectators gathered to watch the event. The machines — begged and borrowed — were a heterogeneous collection, and the riders were well assorted, too.

First man home was "Hoppy" Barrie, who astounded the critics and the time-keeper with a record-breaking run. It transpired that Hoppy had fallen off his bike at Glenbuck Dam, and was picked up by a passing motorist. Laugh 1.

The winner proved to be Andrew Walker, who covered the roughly 14 miles course in 46 minutes; Jock McNally was a good second favourite in 48 minutes, and Henry Casagranda came in with a good run to pip some of the classic candidates in 49 minutes. The older stables shone in the Handicap Section. "Jaggy" Mitchell finished all smiles and first in 41 minutes (handicap deducted), with Tammy Casagranda second, and Geordie Hill third. At the other end was "Barney" Brown, who had an "awfu' poor bike." He took 59 minutes.

The speedsters got a great reception at the presentation of the prizes, and Miss Betty Gray did the needful in handing over the awards. "Jaggy" was rewarded with a hearty kiss which was the envy of all the others and which made this hero blush, and no wonder, for he had also won the special prize for the best looking cyclist. John responded in typical sporting fashion by handing over his spoils — (15/- and a razor) for the benefit of the Old Folks' Reunion). All the other competitors got prizes and everybody was happy and amused.

Another sad event I witnessed was the demolition of the Pavilion Theatre, which held a lot of memories for older members of the community. It was situated near the site of Kinloch-Anderson's Factory at Smallburn. I had occasion to attend here a couple of times, and although it was never the last word in comfort, it did provide a much-needed place for relaxation and enjoyment with variety shows and movie film projections. Many a time Muirkirk's own comedian, Harry Caldwell (George Arntott was his stage name), performed here.

On Friday morning, 14th January, 1949, I opened the daily newspaper and was astounded to read that the Parish Church had been burned to the ground the night before. Discarding breakfast, I got my bike out and raced along Wellwood Street, and sure enough all that was left of the grand old building was its familiar grey walls. It was a scene of utter desolation and ruin, and there was many a tear in the eyes of the large crowd who were standing witnessing another distressing episode in Muirkirk's history. That picture was etched in my memory for life. Many had been there all night.



PARISH CHURCH BEFORE THE FIRE



A great sense of pride swept through the village when we learned that our local dance band, The Modernaires Orchestra, had won the All-Britain Championship at Bellevue, Manchester. This was in 1953. The members of the band were:—

Tom Hill .....	1st Alto Sax
John Wilson .....	1st Tenor Sax
Gerard Lang .....	2nd Tenor Sax
William Walker .....	Baritone Sax
James Jones .....	Trumpet
Robert Weir .....	Piano
Robert Wallace .....	Bass
James Lang .....	Drums

The Vault Wood, near Auldhouseburn Farm, was another favourite place where as boys we would explore, but later when we heard about the history of the place we were not as keen to spend too much time there. This was where the Hunter Family from Auldhouseburn House had a Mausoleum, where members of their family were entombed in earlier times. After the New Cemetery at Glasgow Road was opened, the corpses from the Vault Wood were removed and re-interred here. This gruesome episode in the history of the Hunter family was carried out at the dead of night, and the remains were removed by horse and cart — cushions were tied to the hoofs of the animals to deaden the sound of the journey through the village.

Ashieburn was another favourite destination for the boys from the town. The old ironstone quarries were a great place for looking for fossils, and many were found — mostly of sea shells and fish, which told us that this district at one time was covered by oceans! Between here and Crossflat Farm could be found the site of the Limekilns which was used to supply the ironworks. Near-by was an old quarry, now filled with water, called the “Perchy Dam,” and because of its reputation, to us it was a rather sinister place, with its dark waters holding many secrets. Several people had indeed used its murky water as a means of escaping this life by way of suicide. Further along, near Langloanhead Cottage, there was an old open mine shaft, and although it was fenced off, it was quiet easy to throw a stone down the shaft and listen for the noise as it fell to the bottom where it hit the water, the sound of splashing echoes coming back up the shaft. We had been warned by our fathers never to cross that fence!

An old favourite, and nearer home was the Kirk Plantation, known locally as the Wee Tree Wood, where many an hour was passed playing games and building “dens and making bows and arrows.” The wood was replanted in my time.

After the family moved to Wellwood Avenue new areas opened up for exploration, and there were new friends to be found. The families residing there at that time were — McLuskies, Wilsons, Bolands, McDades, Higgins, Flemings, Bradford, Clark, and Matthews, to name but a few. We were handy now for the Victory Park and in later years on Sunday afternoons it was great to take part in the “friendly” football matches in the near-by Victory Park. Actually the games were anything but friendly, and you would have thought your very life depended on you being on the winning side. As I remember it, there seemed to be no limit to the number of players taking part, and some days it got very crowded. There was always a lot of talent on view. We had the ferocity of Ian McVey and the skill of Blyth Mitchell. The list was endless. The Menzies Brothers, Jock Cannon, Jim Bell, Ian Mitchell, Alex. McCall, Joe Benny, John Samson, Davy Towle, Allan Irvine, and many more. Those taking part periodically gave half-a-crown each to purchase a new club ball, and we seemed to go through these with alarming regularity.

The tennis courts in those days attracted a good few enthusiasts, but none better than the local experts — Duncan Thaine, Douglas Crosbie, Tom Young, Jenny Crosbie, Jean Holden and Joyce Dempster. I should add that Duncan Thaine was the Ayrshire Lawn Tennis Junior Champion and he was also very hard to beat at the table tennis.

The north side of the village now became our hunting ground. There was the Smallburn Wood and the Hawksie Wood — and this was the time before the Scheme was built. The Miller Road, from the Cumnock Road went up by the side of the Smallburn Burn, right up to Bankend Farm, where it continued on to catch the Glasgow Road at Kirkburnhead Toll. This was a favourite circular walk in those days. There was a branch off before coming to Bankend, which went past the Long

Stone of Convention and over the hill to Burnfoot Farm on the Greenock Water. From here there was a choice of going up on to the High Road, turning left and going via Netherwood and on to the Sorn Road and back into the village. Turning right took one past the Forkings and out to the Strathaven Road at Linburn and then into the village via the Glasgow Road, or using the right-of-way past the Powder House and on to the Toll Brae and into the village. So there were plenty of choices to make for that Sunday walk. Those so wishing could extent the walk to take in Middlefield Law, when they would be rewarded with lovely views of the Greenock Valley, and the same could be said of the Black Hill. Here across from the Powder House road could be found what we were told was "Wallace's Cave." It was, however, more likely to have been the entrance to an ironstone mine. The sides of the entrance were smooth cut, and at that time it was possible to go in for several feet. Ironstone was taken from this district for the Muirkirk Ironworks. Another favourite walk in this vicinity was to John Brown's Grave, near Priesthill. Here there were several alternatives. Some choose to retrace their steps back to Muirkirk. Others would continue over the hill to Glenbuck and thence back to the village. Others would make their way down Ponesk Glen to near Airdsgreen and back into Muirkirk. These routes could be done in reverse, and older walkers said the easiest walk was from Glenbuck to Priesthill. No matter, the end result was most satisfying.



JOHN BROWN'S STONE, PRIESTHILL



LONG STONE OF CONVENTION

After moving to Wellwood Avenue, my new friends introduced me to the delight of "dooking" in the Greenock Water. This was reached by following the right-of-way over the North Muir to a point just below The Hall, where one of the best swimming and picnic spots in the area could be found. I refer to The Rock Pool, (below, left), sometimes also known as the Rocky Pool. On a good summer's night this place would be a throng of activity, and one had to queue up to get a place on the bank for

jumping in. There were other places on the Greenock, but not quite as good as the Rock Pool. Up stream there was the Sheep's Brig where a narrow chasm had been cut out of solid rock by the rushing of water over the years — it was narrow, but a good dook could be had there. Then there was a decent pool near Mansefield, and this one could be reached via the Strathaven Road.



Then there was of course, Burnfoot Bridge, not as good for swimming, but never the less a perfect place for a picnic with younger children. And if we wanted a change we could always revert to the River Ayr. There was a good pool down from the rear of the Mason's Arms Hotel, and upstream from there swimming could be had near the Crossflat Bridge. The best place on the River Ayr was undoubtedly Henderson's Pool (or the Minister's Pool as it was sometimes known). It was situated near the Torhill Viaduct, but after the pillars were blown down by army personnel during the War, it was never the same again.

Strangely enough, after moving house we, as young lads, never ventured much to the southside of the village. I think we knew when we were not wanted, and always felt there should have been a warning sign erected at the Station Tunnel with the following notice—"No Prisoners Taken!"



MINISTER'S POOL

It was from Wellwood Avenue that my father first took me fishing, but I wasn't interested on the angling aspect — only in bird-nesting. Father had an A.J.W. motor bike, but as petrol was rationed we only used this method of transport on larger journeys. For nearer-hand destinations we depended on the push bike. I had the loan of a Raleigh, which was light-weight compared to my father's Hercules. Jimmy Marshall from Burnside usually accompanied us (or met us at the appointed destination). I looked forward to those occasions, mainly because Jimmy always visited the bakehouse at Hogg's before setting off, and he always had something in the cookie line, despite the rationing. The Swinging Bridge at Limmerhaugh was a favourite, as well as the Glenmuir Water. I was appointed Chief Fireman and was responsible for looking after the fire for the much-looked forward to "Drum Up." When the motor-bike was available we went further afield, one place in particular was Duneaton Foot, where my father would fish as far up as Hogg's Brig on the old A74 Road. Sometimes we went to Crawfordjohn or perhaps up the Snaer Water. Another place before the dam was built was the Daer Valley. Over the years my father had made many friends with herd folk and farmers alike, and on most occasions was able to trade his trout caught for that special commodity during the war—fresh eggs! I enjoyed meeting and listening to the conversation when we met these people, and learned a lot about their way of life. One family lived on Duneaton River upstream from Auchendaff, which we called The Shirkeley. Its correct name was Sherriffcleugh. There an old lady lived who could forecast the weather by watching out for all that Mother Nature showed — animal behaviour, cloud formation etc, and she was uncannily accurate with her predictions. One I remember — when the smoke from a Chimney blows down to the ground look out for rain. On one occasion we were heading to The Shirkeley where father hoped to exchange his catch for fresh eggs, but unfortunately in a conversation at his work at Kames Colliery he let slip his intentions. When we arrived at the steading, someone had been there before us and there were no eggs available. It transpired that the President of Muirkirk Angling Club, R. J. Bradford, had walked over Cairntable to the Shirkeley and procured the eggs before we arrived. At that time I regularly attended the weigh-in in the Masonic Hall of the monthly competitions, and had the job of delivering (on my cycle) the fish to older residents and those of an infirm disposition in the village. There were some large catches in those days.



HOGG THE BAKER'S SHOP

My early life seemed to centre around happenings in the Main Street, and in the summer months especially we would look forward to the local cafes receiving their regular supply of ice, essential for making ice cream. When the ice lorry stopped at Da Prato's (across from the Main Street School) it soon attracted a bunch of school kids. They knew of course what it was, with the melting ice dripping from the sides of the vehicle. The driver would lay down patchsheet bags on the pavement, and using huge tongs, would pull the very large blocks of ice down on to the top of the bags. Then still using the tongs would drag the ice up the incline to the chip-shop. During the procedure pieces of ice would break off the blocks, and these were soon picked up by the children. What better way to cool down on a hot summer day than by getting a piece of ice to sook!

Round about the Second World War period it was common for travelling street traders to be seen in the village, especially during the summer months. I also remember the chap who sharpened knives and scissors. He had a pedal-powered contraption for turning his "stone." He attracted customers with his cry of "Shears to Sharpen!" Then there was the rag and bone merchant with his "Delph for Rags," and in exchange for old clothing the housewife could get crockery, cups and saucers, etc. Also a regular visitor was the "Bleach Man," who sold bleach and other household liquids. And of course there was the usual invasion of tramps and vagabonds. Some regularly ended up at Cumnock Court. The two I clearly remember were Jimmy and Maggie Sticks. When children in those days became a bit disobedient, the mothers would threaten them with "Maggie Sticks will come and get you!" and this usually would do the trick. Like other communities, Muirkirk was visited regularly by the Gypsies. They would come with a tray hanging from their neck selling various odds and ends—needles, thread, ribbons hankies, etc.

Another happening which caught the attention was the erection of new poles with the introduction of electricity. This must have been in the early 40's because I remember the power being connected to our house in Albert Place. Before that I just recollect the gasman coming up the street in the evening lighting the gas street lamps! But the erection of the electric poles fascinated us as young boys. It seemed to us that an awful lot of the pole was hidden underground. There were no mechanical diggers in those days and the traffic was brought to a halt for long periods when the pole, which was laid across the street was attached with ropes and manhandled into the hole — quite an achievement.

Another incident I like to recall was when during the blackout I was sent across the street to Jen Rowe's Shop for a packet of cigarettes for my father. It was absolutely pitch-black, and I had difficulty getting to the shop and back. But groping about I eventually found the handle of the front door, which I opened just enough to let me into the lobby and close it quickly in case there was any escaping light. Next I had to negotiate the inside door which was closed with the old fashioned sneck, where you pressed down the wee bit flattened metal and this released the bar from its catch and the door could be opened. At first I had difficulty in locating the apparatus, and when I finally did it was as quick as I could release the latch, open the door, get in at the same time, and close the door — all done in one movement, because we had got it down to a fine art. Or so I thought. You can imagine my astonishment when I found myself in the middle of Parker's living room, two doors away from our own!



## THE START OF A WORKING LIFE

The day of my leaving school finally arrived in April, 1947, I having been looking forward to it for some time. I might have left there a wee bit earlier when the Headmaster called me to his office and offered me the chance of a job with Archie Mitchell, who was starting up a Painter & Decorator business in Furnace Road. I rushed home with the news, but my parents were not all that keen for me to start here. Little did I know at the time but that was a wise move. Joe Montgomery took up the offer and the job only lasted a couple of years before he was paid off. I was lucky in the fact that I just missed having to stay on for another year, as from the summer that year the school-leaving age was increased to 15 years. So, it was job hunting for me, but there was nothing on offer, apart from the Kames Pit. My father was adamant that I should not go to the pits, even if it meant I might have to stay idle for some time. To this very day I thank him for that. But it was difficult as most of my pals were all working and those at Kames Colliery now had their pocket money, and this worried me. So in a bit of desperation I took Willie Wilson's offer of a job with him cleaning windows, sweeping chimneys, and doing small plumbing work, in fact any work he could lay his hands on, and sometimes even painting (was that not ironic). My wage was 15/- per week. It was a dirty job, and most days I would come home looking like Al Jolson, but at least I enjoyed it and got to meet a lot of people, and learned a little bit more of life. Willie had a good contract with Wm. Baird & Co. to sweep the chimneys of the miners' rows here in Muirkirk, and at Lugar, Cumnock, Skares, Auchinleck, and New Cumnock. He had negotiated a contract whereby the tenants would be fore-warned of a time when the job would be done, and if we could not gain access to the house then the chimney couldn't be swept and there was no going back. So Willie would tell the tenants the work would start at 7 a.m., knowing full well that many of the house holders would not be ready at that time, and Willie would be paid whether the Chimneys were swept or not. Quite a nice wee scam! One job we did regular at that time was the taking out of the old open-fire ranges and replacing them with the solid iron ones with a row of tiles down each side, just like the ones that would be found in bedrooms. Of course this left a big void to fill above the fireplace. This was overcome by placing two pieces of angle-shaped iron from bed frames to hold the first row of bricks. We were always on the look-out for old discarded beds!

But as the months went by I could feel I would eventually be heading for the Kames Colliery, when in October I applied to an advert for a vacancy at the Printing Office for an apprentice. I went for my interview and sat the written test, and a week later was offered the job, which I duly accepted. The printing office was in the Lesser Hall adjoining the Temperance Hall, and the first thing to hit me was the aroma from the printers' ink and type-cases. A unique smell, which was difficult to describe, and one which was always there — it wasn't an unpleasant smell. I was destined to serve a 7-year apprenticeship, and it looked to me as if I would need that time to learn everything. This was of course where the "Muirkirk Advertiser and Douglasdale Gazette" (affectionately known as "The Wee Paper") was printed and published every Thursday morning. John Samson was the proprietor, but I was put under the supervision of the founder, William Shaw Smith, who had come to Muirkirk in the early 1880's to start his printing business in Muirkirk.

Shaw Smith was an exceptional man, a true master at his trade with a life-long experience, and his advice and encouragement to me were invaluable. The first thing he did was to take me through the back to the machine room and with a small

chase (an iron frame used to lock up type) placed on my head he would mark my height on the wall and add the date, and this he did every year. I can tell you I was amazed when in future years I looked at the markings—I must have really been a small apprentice. Also working there was Peggy Ross (Stacey), who started her printing career in the old printshop which was destroyed by fire (Parsonstown House) and had a life-long association with the printing office. She left to get married but returned to help out on a part-time basis, but when I joined she was full-time. Peggy was one of the “old school,” and I was grateful for her help and assistance in those days. The other girls were Jenny McLauchlan, Betty Paterson, Jenny Wilson, Isobel Blyth, Irene McCulloch and Annie Steven. So the “Muirkirk Advertiser” did its small share to help the employment situation in Muirkirk.

Those early working years were to prove a great learning point in my life. The “Advertiser” Office, as it was called was actually the hub of the village, where all the local organisations reported with news tit-bits and reports of how the various bodies were progressing. It was also a great time as far as football was concerned, and even before I had left school I had become a supporter of Muirkirk Juniors, and my uncle, Billy Thomson, took me to most of the away games. The Juniors had a good team at that time, and from then until well into the fifties, I suppose it could have been called the golden era of junior football in the village. And was I not a lucky young man when Mr Samson introduced me to the art of reporting football matches, and from early on I never missed a Muirkirk Junior game—home or away. In time I was to become the sports correspondent for the Sunday Post, Sunday Mail, Evening Times, Evening Citizen, and the Evening News. Also I had to supply reports to various weekly newspapers when their football representatives had occasion to play at Ladeside Park. I really enjoyed it all—and the bonus was that I was being paid (however modestly) for doing it.

One of my greatest memories was of following Muirkirk Juniors to the 5th round of the Scottish Cup competition in season 1948-49. In the 1st round Muirkirk were drawn at home to Burnbank Athletic, and looked high and dry with a 4-1 lead, but Burnbank stormed back to level the match at 5-5. Muirkirk convincingly won the replay 3-0. Round two saw Muirkirk away to Shettleston, and although playing a little below their usual form they produced a good second half display to win 5-3. The Juniors received a bye in the third round. The fourth round gave them a Ne'erday game away against Rosyth Recreation, and they returned with a credible goal-less draw. The replay saw one of the most exciting games ever played at Ladeside, and what a climax there was. The rain had lashed down all game, and with only two minutes left for play Muirkirk were leading 4-3 when Rosyth were awarded a penalty kick. A deadly hush fell over Ladeside, and you can imagine the exuberance of the supporters when Joe Mackin saved the penalty! In the 5th Round the Juniors had to travel to Glasgow to face the strong-going Cambuslang Rangers. It looked all over for Muirkirk when the home team took a 2-0 lead. But with 7 minutes left Jock Inglis rattled in a great shot, and two minutes from time he did the same again! A crowd of 6,000 gathered at Ladeside for the replay and the game ended in a 2-2 draw. I had never seen anything like it in Muirkirk.

A special train had been laid on from Glasgow and there were buses and cars parked everywhere. The defining moment for me was when the final whistle blew, the game ending in a 2-2 draw. I had my cycle with me and had to make a dash back to the printing office to get the result away to the evening papers. I peddled like mad, and when I got to the top of the Furnace Road, I paused, and looked over my shoulder, and I can still see the scene as if it was yesterday. The crowd had come surging down past Kameshill filling the breadth of the road on to the bridge and then mushrooming out and up Furnace Road—awe-inspiring! A crowd of 8,000

gathered at Lesmahagow for the second replay which ended in a goal-less draw. The third replay took place at Somerset Park, Ayr, in front of a crowd of 10,000, when Muirkirk, thanks to a soft goal, lost by 1-0. It had been a terrific run and provided the village with a great uplift which was never again to be repeated.

It was a busy time in the printing office. The publication of the "Advertiser" took up about two full days of each week. The paper was about 95 per cent hand-set. It took 10 minutes to set-up 2 inches of type, and of course when the paper was printed the type had to be put back into their cases ready for setting-up the following week. The remainder of the week was taken up by a wide range of everyday printing. A good deal of the work was "periodical," i.e. every week the posters for six different cinemas in the area were printed; quarterly the Co-operative Balance sheets of six different Societies were printed. The balance sheets were a big job and each letter and figure had to be put into place by hand. It was never-the-less bread and butter stuff, and there was plenty of other interesting printed jobs to be produced. The old crimped football tickets which were a great favourite in those days, when your two numbers had to match up with the results in the Sunday paper. In all we printed for 22 different Clubs—not all football ones.

Outwith the office, I got involved a wee bit in athletics and tried my hand at running and was a member of Muirkirk Cycling and Athletic Club. The coach at the time, Hugh Bell (who had competed at Powderhall thought my best distance would be the mile. I wasn't very successful, and I think my only claim to fame was that I competed at Glasgow Rangers Sports at Ibrox Park the same year as Fanny Blankers, the famous Holland athlete, took part. I always felt that Coach Hugh did not want anyone else to try the sprinting — that was reserved for his son, Billy. I also ran at the Police Sports at Shawfield Stadium.

Some time into my apprenticeship the term was reduced from seven to six years, and very soon I was presented with one of the big decisions of my young life. I was due to register for National Service, and had to make up my mind whether to join up at the normal 18-years-of-age point, or wait till my apprenticeship had finished. I took the second option.

## **NATIONAL SERVICE**

In October, 1953, I commenced my National Service, having been called up to join the Royal Scots Fusiliers at Churchill Barracks in Ayr, and so started another unforgettable period of my life. Having delayed my call-up meant that most of the lads in my intake were younger than me. There were no other Muirkirk boys in that intake. Jackie Laidlaw from Muirkirk was an instruction Cpl. at Churchill Barracks, but sorry to say, Jackie didn't want to know anyone from Muirkirk, and he didn't want the other recruits to know that he was also a conscript. I had made up my mind to try and make the best of my time in the Army and to keep out of trouble, and for the most part I did this. The training at Ayr was tough and I well remember doing a strenuous route march from Ayr up and around Maybole. We did our fire-arms training at a rifle range at Irvine, next to the Munitions factory at Ardeer, and one week we would march to Irvine and get the trucks back; the next week the journey was reversed. The ten-week training period soon passed.

And then we were transferred to join the 1st Battalion at Redford Barracks, Edinburgh, where we were split up amongst the various Companies, and kitted out in preparation for our move to Malaya. This country had been fighting a Chinese communist insurgency for some time, and it was the British Army who were in the thick of it. Needless to say, it gave us all food for thought, but the boys were all in good spirit that night when we boarded the special train at Waverley Station for the

long journey to Southampton. There we boarded H.M.S. Asturios for the three week journey to Singapore, and that was the start of another adventure.

The next morning we set sail on a very fine ship. It did not appear to me to be a made-to-measure troopship. I had been lucky enough to be attached to the medical side of the Battalion and joined "Support" Co. We were allocated cabins just below deck, four men to a cabin, which were very comfortable, with shower room and laundry room near by. When depositing our fire-arms in the ship's armoury, which was in the "belly" of the boat we had to go down through the troop decks, and I must say the lads there were not too comfortable with their hammocks and no storage space, having to live out of their kit-bags. Food on board was good and there were several lounges for relaxation and which were also used for tombola, concerts, etc. There was also a cinema. In one lounge there was a huge world map, which showed our route to Singapore, and each day the mileage covered was pinned on the board, and the one who could guess correctly the actual mileage received a prize. We had a rough passage through the Bay of Biscay, although the crew told us that it was pretty calm. Most of the boys were sick.

The weather changed dramatically when we passed Gibraltar on our way into the Mediterranean with blue skies and a warm sun. Then we were issued with our tropic attire (shorts, etc). Our first stop was at Port Said, where the ship joined the convoy to go through the Suez Canal. We had to wait in a side water over night, and when we awakened in the morning the ship was moving. On getting on deck we were amazed at the scene which greeted us — there was just sand to see on either side. We were in the canal and on our way, and what a wonderful piece of engineering the Suez was, and not one lock in the whole system. At the other end we entered the Red Sea, which was anything but red and our next stop was Aden where the ship's water tanks were replenished. We were allowed off the boat, but Aden, I thought, was like the warmest place near Hell!

I was glad to get back on board out of the scorching sun. We had seen a lot of marine life, including flying fish and porpoises. From Aden we continued through the Arabian Sea into the Indian Ocean, which at that time resembled a mirror—it was uncannily calm. The downside was that the water we took on at Aden was practically undrinkable and we couldn't get to our next stop — Colombo (Ceylon) — quickly enough to get fresh water. The final part of the journey took us down the Straits of Mallacca where we had our first sighting of Malaya, and it didn't look too inviting. Across the Straits was Sumatra. Finally we reached our destination — Singapore after a journey of some 10,000 miles.



## THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

It might be appropriate at this point to give a brief history regarding the emergency which took place in Malaya after World War II. In 1942 the British Army suffered the worst military defeat in their history when Singapore fell to the Japanese. Singapore is, of course, an island separated from Malaya by the Straits of Johore, but joined by a causeway which carried a water supply to the island. The British forces had been expecting an attack from the Japanese from the sea, but were taken completely by surprise when the enemy practically came down through the peninsula on bikes and over-ran the British Garrison. The gun emplacements on Setanta Island had been bolted down to face the ocean and could not be turned! Troopships arrived at Singapore harbour and had to surrender without a shot being fired.

Malaya at that time was made up of various ethnic groups including the indigenous Muslim Malays. They made up a large proportion of the population and generally accepted British rule, but their loyalty was first and foremost to their Sultans. The Malay Federation was made up of ten States, each ruled by a Sultan—Johore, Pahang, Negri, Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, Kedah, Perlis, Trengganu and Kelantan. The Sultans had limited powers but retained trappings of power and the wealthy life-style. The second group was the Aborigines, who lived deep within the Malayan jungles, and numbered between 50,000 and 100,000. The Chinese population was also strong with around 2 million living in Malaya in 1948. The Indian ethnic group were also well represented in Malaya with about half a million in 1948. The British were also a large ethnic group and certainly the most powerful with political power far beyond the size of their population, numbering only 12,000, being mostly Civil Service, Police, rubber planters, Doctors and businessmen.

Malaya had been effectively under control since 1874. The Japanese occupation had sown the seeds of future unrest by pursuing a policy of divide and conquer by favouring the Malays while persecuting the Chinese. A new constitution was developed for Malaya. Leader of the Communist Party was Ching Peng who had



learned his jungle warfare skills from the British after Singapore fell. Several British officers harassed the Japanese from the jungle. They were eventually supported by the Chinese and the force swelled to over 5,000 and was known as “The Malayan People Against Japanese Army”. The British trained them in jungle warfare and modern weapons, knowing they were mainly Communist, but figuring the enemy of my enemy is my friend at least in the short term.

This gave the rebels a handy striking force that easily changed the name to the “Malayan People’s Anti-British Army.” The men who had fought beside the British in the War were now about to fight against them. The attacks began in June, 1948, with the shooting of

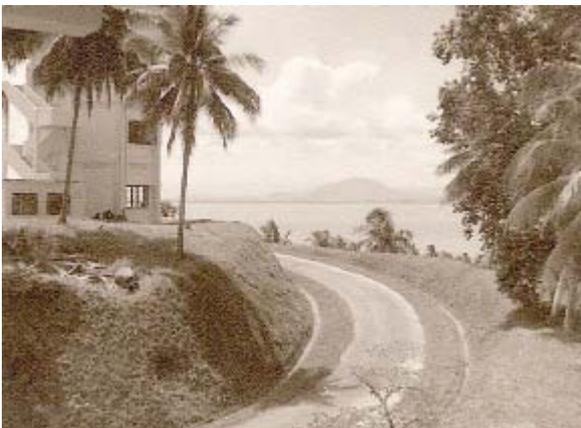
Arthur Walker on his rubber plantation estate, and further attacks forced the High Commissioner, Sir Edward Gent, to declare a state of emergency. The main targets were the rubber plantations (where the trees were slashed) and the tin mines (where production was disrupted) in the hope that the Malayan economy would collapse). However, in 1949 there was a sudden change in the political climate by the appointment of Lt. General Sir Harold Briggs as director of operations, and he soon realised that one of the major resources of recruitment for the communists were the large numbers of vagrant Chinese, so he decided to do something about it. The Briggs plan was to resettle these squatters into new villages surrounded by fences and Police Posts, cutting off the communists from their source of food, supplies, and manpower. These villages were known as Kapongs, and over 500 were established, forcing the insurgents out of the jungles where the British forces could defeat them more easily. The communists still remained on the offensive well into 1951, and in that year assassinated Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner at the time. This backfired as his replacement was General Sir Gerald Templar, who restored moral by ensuring some military successes, and the general population turned against the communists. In turn they pulled back into the deep jungles and stopped the random attacks. By 1953 the communists had lost the initiative and were never to regain it. The British Army, helped by some of its Commonwealth Allies, pursued the “bandits” relentlessly into the jungles and by 1960 had beaten the Communists.



16ft PYTHON, KILLED BY AN R.S.F PATROL AT LENGGONG, 1954

## THE STORY CONTINUES

We were transported to our new home, Selarang Barracks, where during the war at least one Muirkirk soldier had been held captive by the Japanese. Here we were kitted out with our jungle equipment and issued with our new rifle which was a cut down version of the Enfield. It had a shorter barrel with a flash-guard at the end. Then it was over the Causeway to Kota Tingi in the state of Johore to do our jungle training, and this was pretty tough. When this was over we faced a long two day journey by open truck up the Peninsula to Butterworth, where we boarded the ferry to cross over to the island of Penang — known as the “Pearl of the Orient.” What a beautiful island it was, and we were surprised at our next “home” — Minden Barracks — set in spacious grounds consisting of several blocks of two storey accommodation with all mod-cons; and there was an extensive sports ground with a large swimming pool. Penang was to be used as the rest centre for Companies after a spell of jungle activity. Everyone liked Penang. Georgetown, the main town, was a great place for a night out and there was plenty to see on the island, including the famous “Snake Temple” and various other attractions. My own Company had its share of the jungle. Places we were based at included Sungai Siput, Crik, and Ipoh in the state of Perak, and Krow in the state of Kelantan. During our time in Malaya we had a one-week leave in Singapore, which was a marvellous city. I had an extra bonus when I was appointed trainer to the Battalion football team and spent another four days at a competition in Singapore. I do not have the space here to record all I would like to.



MINDEN BARRAKS, PENANG



*Jimmy Taylor and Ian Thomson*

ever saw one wild Elephant, and that was from a great distance. We never saw a tiger, but plenty had been written about the man-eating ones, but we never encountered any. Funnily enough we were more concerned about the smaller insects that thrived in the jungle (now termed the rain forest). The main one was of course the mosquito, and these were ten times worse than the dreaded Scottish midges! They of course could spread that horrible sickness, Malaria.

While we were in that country it was essential to take anti-malaria tablets each day and in the morning we would be lined up and given our tablet. This was jokingly called the “Paludrine Parade,” after the medical name for the tablet. We also had been issued with mosquito sleeping nets and insect repellent. The next menace on the list was ants, and I absolutely hated them, and it was common to be covered in these creatures when patrolling the jungle and it was no laugh getting them inside your shirt. The most abhorrent of all the insects was, I think, the leach. These were more prevalent in the swamps we often came across while on patrol. They would attach themselves to the warmest parts of the body where the blood was near the surface, i.e. neck, armpits, and groin. In no time at all they would be blown to five or six times their original size with blood sucked by attachment through the skin. They had to be very carefully removed—they could not be swiped off as this would leave their heads impaled in the skin, and would quickly turn septic. I must emphasize that while in the jungle any small scratch, if left overnight, would be septic by the next morning, so we had to be very careful. The best way to get rid of leaches was with a cigarette end, a pinch of salt, or with insect repellent. It was unbelievable but these blood suckers could even go through clothing to get to the skin. Then we had the fearsome scorpion (with a deadly sting) — abhorred by everyone. We soon learned to give our boots a “daud” in the morning in case one had crawled in at night looking for sanctuary. I never heard of anyone being stung. Another “crawler” was the centipede, some 4 to 8 inches in length, which could attach themselves to your clothing or skin. They had what looked like hundreds of

The time soon went in, and my mate, Jock Reid, a Stewarton lad, put our names forward for a parachute course, details of which had been pinned on the Co. notice board. Thinking this would get us home early we were delighted to be accepted. During my stay in Malaya several Muirkirk lads joined the Battalion including, Andrew McBride, Peter Hamilton, Michael Dillon, John Graham, Jim Lochhead, and Tom Rorrison, but I never got to meet any of them. Jimmy Davidson (Peachy), who came out with the Battalion, served in Support Co., and I met him several times.

Despite stories that are told about animal life in Malaya, we were never much bothered my any of the larger species. I only

legs with claw-like ends, and one had to brush them off from the rear end, if you tried to do it from the front end the creature would just dig in deeper!

On a nicer note we were always fascinated by the varieties of butterflies seen on our journeys. The same with wild flowers and plants. At night time there were luminous plants which shone in the dark and in the jungle the darkness was complete—you just could not see a finger in front. Many a time we were fascinated with lights coming towards us in the darkness of the night—it turned out these “lights” were indeed, fire-flies. Contrary to stories one hears, snakes were not a great problem, and would normally scurry away when confronted, but if cornered, well that would be a different story. What I did see a lot of was the orang-utans. It was fascinating watching these agile animals swinging about in the treetops.

The troops had to be very careful when out in the sun, and there were quite a few cases of severe sunburn, especially among the fair-skinned and redheaded ones. There was a dress code which made it compulsory to keep shirt-sleeves rolled down after sunset, and this was to try and prevent mosquito bites. The mosquito, of course, didn't bite—they had a long, sharp tentacle which they buried under the skin to reach the blood, and it was when this was withdrawn that one felt the sensation of a bite. Very rarely would you feel a mosquito landing on your skin, and when you felt the “bite” it was too late as the mosquito had already done its job!

Water was a problem in the jungle, not the lack of it, but the quality of it — one never knowing what was in the stream further up. Therefore, all drinking water had to be purified first by the use of tablets. The taste of the purified water was not very pleasant, but at least we were sure of not contracting some awful disease. Jungle rations were surprisingly quite good — tinned soup, meat, and sweets, etc., as well as a bar of chocolate.

A must to be seen on the island of Penang was the Snake Temple, which was full of live snakes of all sizes and colours lying about and hanging from the ornaments on the walls. It was quite safe to wander around, because the natives there would burn incense on the fire which produced a scent which made the snakes drowsy. Of course not all the boys believed this and wouldn't venture far. Another attraction was Penang Hill, a small hill in the centre of the island, and the top could only be reached by a funicular railway. The carriages on this mode of transport had doors and a roof, which I found rather strange in a tropical country, but I soon learned that the apparatus had been purchased second-hand from a Swiss ski resort, never thinking that they would be too warm for Penang. They did strip them down as much as they could. When I returned in 1991 these had been replaced with modern ones, but the ones I had travelled in were still there, rotting away in the under-growth. Also on the island was a very extensive butterfly farm, which is still there to-day, and well worth seeing.

The island was reached from the mainland by a ferry from Butterworth, but to-day it can now be reached over a bridge, which when built was one of the largest in the Far East.



## **THE JOURNEY HOME**

And so in September of 1955, Jock and I started our journey home. Travelling from Butterworth to Singapore by train gave us plenty of time to reflect on our stay in this far off country. I think we both agreed, that overall, it had been an enjoyable and interesting experience, and found the ethnic groups to be very kind and sociable, and at no time did we feel unwanted. In fact it seemed the ordinary people in Malaya were thankful of what we were trying to do for their country. We arrived safely at Nee Soon transit camp in Singapore and we had one more night to have our last look around Singapore, which we thought was a great city. Another adventure would start at first light the next morning when we would board our plane at Changi Airport for our flight back to U.K.

Jock had never been in a plane before, and my only trip had been a holiday flight to the Isle of Man. Anyway, we settled down for a long journey home — the flight would take three days. It was a propeller plane — no jets in those days, and it would require overnight stays at Karachi in Pakistan and Nicosia in Cyprus. There were also two refuelling stops at Bahrain and Rome where we left the plane for breakfast. We landed at London in late September expecting to show off our tan, but little did we know that England had been enjoying a heat-wave and the natives here were more tanned than us. We spent the night at an underground transit station in the Capital, and next morning we were on a train to our next destination, which was Aldershot Barracks, and that is another story!

Jock and I soon found out that it had been a big mistake to try and get home early by doing a parachute course. Aldershot Barracks was an awful place, it being the main training establishment in England — discipline was very rigid and too much spit and polish for our liking. We might have been better off with a couple of weeks in Barlinnie! The course we were doing really was tough and the assault courses were meant for men with a bigger physic than Jock and I. A sample of one of our tasks — six men were assigned to a log about 12 feet long, and had to attach toggle ropes so it could be lifted, and with three men on each side, we had to run a 1-mile race! There was only one command in that camp and that word was “Go!” They didn’t say, for example, “Quick March,” it was “Go!” It got to the stage we would have jumped over a cliff when we heard the word “Go.” Of course, we realised that this would be the command word when soldiers were lining up to jump from the plane with their parachute. Thankfully, my mate and I never made it to that stage, and so it was back to where it all had started two years earlier — Churchill Barracks in Ayr. There we had a couple of weeks to wait until we were demobbed in mid-October, 1955.

## **BACK TO THE REAL LIFE**

It was great to be back in Scotland, to hear a good Scots tongue, and it was nice to get away from the regimental way of life. It had been a good experience, and one I never regretted having been part of. But it had left a sort of void in my life — almost two years away from Muirkirk meant I had lost track of the happenings in the village, and this became more obvious in the years to come when I would be trying to recall events I had not even witnessed. I arrived back in Muirkirk with my kit bag, got off the bus at the Nurse’s Home, and making my way up the Glasgow Road, the first person I met was old Davy Robb (a retired blacksmith) who lived in

the Old Jail, where now is the Bowling Green car park. Davy said, "I haven't seen you for a while—when do you go back?" I just shook my head and walked on.

I had the weekend to myself, and then it was back to the printing office on Monday morning. I cannot really describe how I felt that morning, but when I opened the door and got a whiff of the aroma that only comes from a print shop, I knew I really was home. I settled in at work as if I had never been away, and of course, I was now a fully fledged printer! My thoughts went back to my mentor, old Mr Smith, who had passed away just a year before I was called up. I still remember some of his advice, even to this day. One in particular was "You will learn a lot in your first six years, but you will learn a damned sic more in your second six years." Another one was "No matter how much you learn, always keep a wee bit to yourself." The latter I found in later life to be good sensible advice.

Part of the National Service package was for a certain number of years after full-time service the men would attend a Territorial Camp for re-training to keep them up to date. In 1956 I attended one at Barra Links near Dundee. It wasn't a nice experience, but I was lucky in the respect that this was to be the last one as National Service was being phased out, and I think that by 1960 it was completely finished.

Soon I was back reporting on the Muirkirk Juniors' games, but truth to tell it was never going to be the same. It was at this time that the Juniors started on their downward spiral, with just an odd spark to lighten up the gloom. There were some moments to cherish — in 1958-59 a good run in the Scottish Cup saw Muirkirk reach the 5th Round, only to lose a replayed tie at Ladeside to Parkhead. I'll spare the blushes of a good friend by not mentioning his name when he missed a penalty that would have kept Muirkirk in the tie. The following season Muirkirk reached the 3rd round of the Scottish Cup, only to lose to Rutherglen Glencairn at Ladeside — and this was a landmark as it was the first junior game ever to be televised on ITV. Then there was the final of the Ayrshire Cup when the brand new trophy was up for grabs, but at Somerset Park, Muirkirk failed miserably against Ardrossan, To add insult to injury, as runners-up Muirkirk were presented with the old cup, and that had a hole in it! Muirkirk were destined not to bring any silverware home, and it has been sad watching the decline of a once proud Club, who in its day brought a lot of joy to the village. As a young man I remember in the Juniors' hay-day of joining the crowd at the top of the town every Sunday night awaiting the announcement (by phone) of the next Saturday's fixture. Aye, those were the days! While on the subject of sport, I was privileged to be present at the first open-air boxing contest ever staged in Muirkirk, when a boxing display at Ladeside Park was organised by Larkhall Boxing Club. The event had been promoted by Muirkirk Community Association, and was combined with a sports event.

Talking about the fate of the Juniors, a parallel could be drawn with the village, although this was not so apparent. Nevertheless, it was obvious that the village was in decline. The run down in heavy industry and in the coalfields made for a bleak future. I think it was all brought to a head with the tragic events at Kames Colliery in 1957, when 17 men lost their lives in an underground explosion. I vividly remember the Wednesday morning after the sad event. I was left to man the phone in the Printing Office, and it was not a nice experience. There were calls from all over the United Kingdom with enquiries about relatives and friends, and on one or two occasions I had to be the provider of bad news.

Then there was the closure of the railway network in Muirkirk — the Lanark line, soon followed by the Ayr line — then the big bombshell, the closure of Kames Colliery. Although, with all the men being offered employment at other collieries the

blow was not so severely felt. But nevertheless, it looked like the first nail in the coffin, and to the village's credit, the inhabitants fought back doggedly and had a marked measure of success in attracting employment (mainly for females). All went not too badly until the largest employer, Muirtex, were forced to close, and if we didn't know before, we knew then that the Muirkirk where we had been born and brought up in could never be the same again. It was during this time when the grim reaper was taking his toll in the village that I marvelled how they had all in their own way contributed something to the village. It seemed that in those days everyone had their small part to play in keeping Muirkirk to the fore. Here are just a few names of individuals that come to mind in this respect:

James McKerrow, Farmer
Peter McLuskie, County Councillor
William McKay, Miner and Bowler
Donald McCallum, Farmer
W. H. Martin, Kames Church
Minnie Brown, Fruiter
John Young, J.P., Ironworks Cashier
Elizabeth Hunter, Kirkgreem
Robert Cumming, Ironworks Store
John Shankly, Glenbuck

Anthony DeSykes, Russian War Officer
Alex Woodburn, Farmer
Robert Young, Plumber
Elizabeth McDougall, Teacher
Allan Loggie, Postman
David Shaw, Cobbler
J.F. Gordon, Headmaster
James Clement, Coal Merchant
John Colthart, County Councillor
Jimmy Strickland, Pit Manager

I often wonder what some of these old timers would have thought about the decline of the village. It seems to me that the root of the problem lay at the feet of the local authority, in this case, Ayr County Council, whose reckless policy of demolishing old properties seemed to be a foolish one. Here they were, tearing the heart out of the village with no forward planning in place. Yes, some of the older buildings which were in a deplorable condition had to go. But surely not the fine red sandstone properties, and some of the grey ones, too, of which there were several. These could have been saved and renovated into modern flats. The process of demolishing the others should have been done in an orderly manner, and would it not have been a good idea when the first one was razed to the ground to rebuild on the site before demolishing the next one. When the Council finally agreed on a building programme it was to split the village in two (for the second time) with the demolition of almost the entire Southside. And so was born the Scheme and the Town! The Councillors led us to believe that the development of Lovedale Crescent would join up with Furnace Road at Morton Place (Day Centre) — and that seemed a good idea—but it never happened. Later we were told that Wellwood Avenue would be extended along the top of the Victory Park, and in time would join up with the Smallburn Housing Scheme. Most people didn't see anything wrong with this idea, but it never happened. How the Council could justify the building of flats in a rural community like Muirkirk, where there is plenty of ground about, we will never know. So in the present day, are we going to see a continuation of knocking down houses and leaving empty spaces? Could this happen in the Housing Scheme? There are already empty spaces where the flats were! As a lad, just after the War, I joined Muirkirk Golf Club, and played on the course at Auldhouseburn, and what a challenging wee 9-hole course it was. It had been established in 1910, and was a very successful Club, and many a pleasant

hour I spent there. The course had been set out without too much trouble, and as it was to be constructed and maintained by the members, this was kept in mind with the layout. The first tee was set up on the top of a coal bing, still there to-day, but the rest of the tees and greens were simply marked off in the fields, and the grass cut — there were no banks or built-up greens. There was only one bunker, which was situated near the Ash Bing, and this was a grass bunker with railway sleepers supporting the backend. This was good thing, and as a result the course was easily maintained. I must add that the greens were first class. The Club had a good set of fairway mowers and a tractor was hired to cut the fairways; and the green mower was of the man-power variety, and it was quite heavy to push. It was transported from green to green on a two-wheeled iron trolley. By the time I had joined, the course was in tip-top condition. The members were all very friendly, and many a good social gathering took place in the Clubhouse. We as boys liked nothing better to listen to the tales of the older members who recalled with nostalgia the happenings at the Club. Some of the older playing members then were Hugh Hamilton, Bobby Hamilton, Tom Steven, Andrew Ross, John Taylor, Norman McDougall, Robert Hodge, James Ford, Father Moriarty, and Robert Masterton, to name but a few. There used to be inter-Club visitations with Douglas, Cumnock, New Cumnock and Sorn Clubs. The home and away fixture with New Cumnock was still “on the go” when I joined. There was no Sunday golf.

The Club had seen some rough times, especially with the effects the two World Wars had on its membership, but this was not to be the cause of its closure. In the 1950's, farmer Little of Auldhouseburn, from whom the ground was leased, started to put grass-cutting restrictions in force, and it got to the ridiculous state of members losing balls on the fairways, the grass being so long. Despite repeated requests to Mr Little, the situation got worse, and in the end the Club had no other option but to close. It was a sad day for Muirkirk when they lost their Golf Club and course. The Committee did try to get a lease of Kameshill, but failed. I was a member of the Club some years later when we approached Mr Walter Borthwick of Wellwood with a view to leasing ground at Kameshill, but he firmly refused. Later it was suggested that had we went to the landowners, the National Coal Board, we might have had a better result. The Club donated the Clubhouse to Muirkirk Old Folks Cabin, and it was removed to Smallburn, where it is now the Angling Clubrooms, although the outside of the building is now a bit of an eye sore. In 1991 it was nice to see the 9-hole golf course opened at Southside, and it has become a good asset for the village.

Another occasion which brought back memories to me of a former era was in 1963. I was going down the Main Street from my home in Co-operative Buildings in Bridge Street, when Willie Rowe emerged out of the garage in his car, and stopped and asked me if I would like to see something special. He invited me to jump in and before I knew where I was the car drew up at the Railway Station. And what a scene we witnessed there. The place was absolutely crawling with people, mostly with cameras. It transpired that a well-filled train had just drew up and the passengers had dismounted to take photographs of an old and colourful Highland Engine, backed up by a former Caledonian engine which used to run on the Muirkirk-Lanark line. It turned out that this was a Three Summit Tour of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, who had set off from Leeds City Station and travelled to Carstairs, thence to Auchinleck and back via Dumfries and Carlisle. The stop was made at Muirkirk for water. The Lanark to Muirkirk passenger service was withdrawn the following year. This was probably the last steam engine to use the Lanark line.



HIGHLAND ENGINE AT GLENBUCK DAM, 1963

All this certainly stirred my memory of the days of steam (some times referred to as the days of travel). Many times as a boy, along with my parents, we travelled by this means to the Capital City for a day out, when the first place visited was Edinburgh Castle, and then out to Corstorphine to spend the rest of the day at Edinburgh Zoo. On other occasions it would be into Glasgow on a shopping expedition. Later in life, I remember being taken to Lanark races with my Uncle Bill, the race course having its own Station. A bit older still, saw us using the late train to Lanark for a night at the dancing — we had a choice of three venues, the Market, Memorial Hall, or the Loch, the train arriving back in Muirkirk just before midnight, and this gave us plenty of time for a fish-supper before boarding the train for home. The other “steam” road out of Muirkirk was to Ayr, and a highlight was the “Woolie Special” taking us down for a day at the shore. This line closed in 1951.





FURNACE ROAD AND IRONWORKS

## THE IRONWORKS

The district of Muirkirk is covered by the scars of its industrial past, some of which I remember, some from writings of local historians, and other stories come from the thoughts of our forebears. It seems only right that some of these should be mentioned here, if only to give future generations an insight into our past life. Where do we start? What better place than Muirkirk Ironworks, which was situated just south of the Furnace Road Bridge. Looking at the site to-day it is difficult to imagine what the ironworks really looked like. Work started on this massive development in 1787, and it had a long history. Because it depended on the natural resources from the immediate countryside, its future was always in doubt, and finally stopped production at about the time of the First World War, and by 1920 most of the workforce had been paid off. However, the demolition process took place over a long number of years. I can remember the last of the chimneys being blown down in the early 1940's, as well as the railway bridge which crossed the Furnace Road just past the Higher Grade School, which was used to transport the debris from the iron-making process to be dumped in an area which was then to become "The Slag Bing," For a long time the only recognisable object left was the castle-like remains of the blast Furnaces, and much later this was also to disappear with the complete landscaping of the entire site. This was a great pity. Would it not have been nice to keep something of the Ironworks as a reminder to future generations of what our heritage was all about?

The Ironworks, in its heyday, employed over 1000 workers, and as well as producing top-quality iron there was also a chemical works, producing ammonia, pitch, and various oils, etc. A lade (or small canal) was led from the Garpel Water just above the old Sanquhar Bridge about three miles across the moor, roughly following the road, and traversing the Coutburn via an aqueduct to the rear of McAdam's Cairn, past the Cairntable side of Ladeside Park and down into a catchment lade. This water was used to run machinery to drain and ventilate the various near-by coal and ironstone mines, and later for machinery in the

ironworks, itself. To reach the outlying mineral fields a canal was built from the ironworks to Ashieburn.

From the ironworks basin it roughly followed the direction which the mineral railway line later took, and later still the main railway line to Lanark. This canal was 8 feet wide at the bottom, 16-17 feet at the top, with a depth of four feet. It was quite an ingenious undertaking. Opposite where the sand quarry is situated a basin was formed where the canal boats could load up with sand. From here there was an aqua-duct over the Auldhouse Burn and then on towards Bankhead, with facilities for loading coal from Bankhead Colliery. At this point the canal crossed the Auldhouseburn Road, and before reaching the Crossflat Road took a detour to allow it to cross over at road level, and then round about on to open countryside and a more or less straight route to Ashieburn, past the Waukmill. At this point raw material (coal, ironstone, and lime) would be loaded on to the barges. Just past Lightshaw Farm was situated Lighshaw Pit, from where a road ran down the hill and crossed underneath the main Muirkirk-Douglas road and over the River Ayr by a bridge. This was the route the coal travelled and it was here it was treated before being loaded for its the journey to the Ironworks. The canal was fed with water from the River Ayr. There are still signs to-day of the sluice gates, and if looking carefully one can see the old roadway down from Lightshaw Pit. The barges were pulled along the canal by horses using the adjacent towpath. Later on, with the advent of steam a mineral railway line was laid alongside the canal, and this speeded up the process of transporting the minerals to the furnaces.



IRONWORKS AND CO. STORE

Then in 1875 the main railway line was laid from Muirkirk to Lanark. Later still a branch line was built to Coalburn joining the main line at Crossflat with a huge viaduct at Torhill (but this line was never opened to regular traffic) and one in Ponesk Glen.

The Ironworks Company had its own store to see to the needs of its workers, and a very popular place it was, but this closed in 1946. The Co. also built the Ironworks Institute, which still stands to-day, but in private ownership, and next to it was the picturesque little Kames Mission Church which served the Southside community well, but because of dwindling attendances, was closed in 1952. Baird & Dalmellington also built a handsome mansion for their manager, called Kameshill House, but this too never survived. It was situated opposite the Works, where now is Muirkirk Caravan Park.

It is not difficult to see how the Ironworks played such a big part in the history of Muirkirk, and they did take an interest in the affairs of the village, such as sponsoring the Southside Flower Show. My parents said when the blast furnaces were “blown at night” they lit up the entire village, but they also said the noise coming from the Works was deafening, the “Big Hammer” clanging away consistently all day. Mr Shaw Smith, the founder of the “Advertiser” told me personally on many occasions that when he came to Muirkirk in the early 1880’s, Muirkirk was a black and bleak place. He said there was hardly a blade of grass to be seen from Ashieburn all the way down near the foot of Cairntable to the Skew

Bridge — the entire area being covered with old coal bings and dirt bings, etc., the price to be paid for the extraction of minerals!

Of course, the Ironworks were responsible for the retention of many of the coal mines in the district, including Kames, Wellwood, Lightshaw, Bankhead and many others. The countryside was riddled with old mines, many small ones, and their bings can still be seen, especially on the southside of the village near the Garpel Water. Sad to say, in the end only one survived the turmoil in the industry, and that was Kames Colliery, but as it turned out that was only a stay of execution.

Many, many stories are told of the days of the Ironworks, which had a kind of cosmopolitan look about it, with an influx of foreign workers, including Irish, Spaniards and Italians. Some of their families even survived well into the 20th Century, they having made their home here in Muirkirk.



## OF A SPORTING NATURE

Previously I have mentioned junior football and the impact it had on the local community. It might come as a surprise to some that in the early years of the 20th century Muirkirk boasted two teams — The Athletic and the United, who were unfortunately overshadowed by that other legendary team in the district — Glenbuck Cherrypickers. In 1889 the Ayrshire Junior Cup was inaugurated and it was won by the Cherries, as they were affectionately known, and lifted this cup in the two following years — 1890 and 1891. They were a force to be reckoned with and in 1906 won three cups, Ayrshire Charity Cup, Cumnock Cup and the Mauchline Cup. The Ayrshire Charity Cup was again won in 1910 and the Cumnock Cup in 1901, 1903, 1904, 1905, and 1921. In their closing year they won the Ayrshire Junior Cup in 1931. In addition just over fifty players from Glenbuck Cherrypickers went into the senior ranks, the most famous being Bill Shankly who, as manager, took Liverpool to the forefront of English football. The record of the Cherries for a village of its size will never be equalled. Can I add that my own father was the last goalkeeper to be signed by Glenbuck Cherrypickers.

I should mention here also that football in Muirkirk was first played at Kameshill Holm sports ground, which also had a fine cycling track surrounding the field. Here also was the venue for the Muirkirk Sports which were held annually and attracted a good deal of outside attention. In 1909 this venue had to be abandoned because of the encroachment of the Slag Bing. It was situated roughly across from the Filling Station in Smallburn, and until recently the banked-up track of the Cumnock end of the cycle track could be seen. Then the football games were played at Toll Park which was situated on the Strathaven Road in a field just past the Cemetery on the left, and later Ladeside Park was built and provided a good home for Muirkirk Juniors when they were formed just before the Second World War.



KAMESHILL HOLM PARK

The romance of Glenbuck Cherrypickers should in no way distract from the achievements of another son of that well-known mining Ayrshire village. I refer to the legendary Thomas Bone, who rose to the heights of the Quoiting world. Tom Bone departed this earth in 1916, but not before he had become the Quoiting Champion of the World. Tom Bone's career was cut short following an accident at his work which resulted in him losing the sight of one eye. He never really recovered from this.

He played his first match in 1888 when he beat the renowned James McMurdo by 61 — 42. From that game he never looked back and he had few if any equals, having defeated all who came before him. He first won the Scottish Championship from Watters of Lochgelly in 1889 at Glasgow, defeating the Fife man 61 — 58. Watters was undoubtedly his most notable opponent and many a historic battle they had. In other championship matches he played with Andrew Connel (Darvel), Robert Kirkwood (Banknock), and the Champion of Scotland (the title having been relinquished by Tom Bone owing to ill health )— Richard McBride of Galston, meeting the latter in four big matches, winning three times and losing once, this at East Calder, by 61—58. One of the most historical matches ever

played in Scotland was that for the Championship of Great Britain, between Tom Bone and James Hood of Liverpool (the English Champion). The match took place at Motherwell in 1908. In such deadly form did the Glenbuck marvel play that day that the English Champion was seldom allowed an opportunity to score, and the Englishman was defeated by 61—27. Tom Bone held the record for the Ballochmyle Silver Quoit, having won it no fewer than 14 times — a record that was never equalled. His name was also engraved on the Howard-de-Walden Cup no less than six times. In the premier quoiting tournament of Scotland held annually at Darvel, he competed for four medals, which must be won twice before becoming one's own. Of these he won two outright, and on the last occasion he beat his opponent, Robertson, by 15 shots to nil in the final.

It was said that Tom Bone was so accurate with the quoits that he could throw them to within a paper width.





Muirkirk was not to be outdone in the quiting world, and between the two World Wars produced its own champion in the person of John Kilpatrick. John had a long and distinguished career, and some of his performances included:—

In ten years he was six times Scottish Champion, winning the last four years in succession; He won three Scottish Cup Badges with three Clubs — Greenock, St. Rollex, and Cowlairs: He won the A. G. Hales Shield competition (open to Scotland) three times in five years, winning the trophy outright; He won the Darvel annual tournament eleven times, six times in succession, competing against all the

crack quoters; He won the Wyllie Challenge Cup for the Glasgow Competition so often that he was requested to keep it!; He won 18 Championship matches in succession; He defeated the English and Welsh Captains in every International match in which he played, and captained the Scottish team on several occasions. In 1944 he won the Scottish Championship for the eleventh time. At the start of his career he won twelve of his fourteen money matches, his biggest money match was for £200 against R. McBride, Larkhall, and John won. Quite a record, indeed. This sport was very popular in Muirkirk, with Clubs at the Mason's Arms, Southside, Bankhead, and Kames Row. The Southside Quoting Green was in the Quarry just below Ladeside Park. The remains of Bankhead Green can still be seen today. Muirkirk Cairntable Club won the Ayrshire Championship in 1925.

Another favourite sport in earlier times was the game of draughts, sometimes called the "silent game." And here, too, Muirkirk was able to produce a Champion. Mr Hugh Henderson was a power in the draughts world, and to mark his achievements a portrait of him was hung in the Baird Institute, where he spent many an hour in his younger days. He was born in Muirkirk in 1872, but emigrated to America in 1907. He was twice a finalist in the Scottish Championship. The peak of his career was reached when he won the Championship of America in 1912, and successfully defended it till his death in 1918. Another Muirkirk draughts expert was Mr Hugh Bell. He was a member of the Baird Institute team that won the Ayrshire Championship, and such was his prowess in the silent game that he could take part in several games at one and the same time, one of the boards being unseen to him.

In the winter months curling took up the attention of the local sports minded. Muirkirk Curling Club was reputed to be the oldest in Scotland (being instituted in 1784). Other Clubs were the Ironworks and Greenock Water. There were rinks at Airdsmill, Greenockmains, Ironworks, Victory Park (old tennis court, now the putting green), and one at the Sware Brae (Strathaven Road).

Another sporting Club in Muirkirk that has managed to survive to the present day, is of course, Muirkirk Bowling Club. The club was formed in 1874, and over the years has produced many fine bowlers, but I always thought that the Muirkirk Green was more of a place for entertainment and enjoyment. Muirkirk members nevertheless did well in away tournaments. The local Masons won the Ayrshire competition several times, as well as the Co-operative rink, and the ladies

NCB Rink. The fact that the Club is still functioning is a credit to the office-bearers who have kept it going throughout the years.

While on the theme of Sport it is only right that I should include Schools Football. The year 1933 will be remembered by older residents as the year Muirkirk Higher Grade School football team swept all before them. Indeed they were being hailed as heroes to stand side by side with the efforts of Glenbuck Cherrypickers. In the Bute Competition Muirkirk met New Cumnock in the final at Rosebank Park at Lugar. About 700 Muirkirk supporters travelled by special train to cheer on the local lads. A 2,000 attendance set a good atmosphere, and they were not disappointed. Muirkirk dominated the first half, but had only a Boland goal to show for it at half-time. New Cumnock applied some aggressive pressure in the second half, but Muirkirk did not weaken and a hat-trick from Boland and a single goal by Wilson capped a memorable performance, and the Cup was on its way to Muirkirk. The Higher Grade boys had a great season and went on to win another Cup by running away with the League tournament.

There will not be many individuals left who were at that game, but guess what, I was there! Yes, it's true. My mother often related the story of taking me in the shawl to the game, and I was only six months old! The exploits of the school team did a lot to lift the gloom which was prevalent in the village at this time, through short-time working at the pits and the high unemployment in the district. It also in its own way, by reviving local interest in football, did a lot to ensure the resuscitation of junior football in Muirkirk.

The Muirkirk team was:—J. Loggie, J. Walker, G. Bradford, J. Hodge, T. Hazle, T. Wallace, T. Dempster, C. Wilson, W. Boland, T. Brown, W. Hogg

The team coach was the Janitor of the School, Mr James McCartney.



MUIRKIRK HIGHER GRADE SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Another favourite winter pastime was indoor carpet bowling, and this was taken very seriously in the village. Hardly a week went past without a challenge match taking place, and although these games were very competitive they were always played in a friendly atmosphere. There were a few local Clubs, including Wellwood, Ironworks Institute, Baird Institute, Middlefield (known as Men of the Mosshaggs), Greenock Water, Glenbuck, Inches, and Townhead Wanderers. A summer pastime was the game of pitch and toss, and there were several venues in the village where this was played, but the one I remember was near "The Rabbit's Ring," adjacent to the top of Wellwood Avenue.

The building of the new tennis courts in the Victory Park revived this sport locally, and when weather permitted the courts were kept busy, and produced some good local talent. Among the enthusiasts I remember Douglas Crosbie and his wife (Jenny Young), Jean Holden, Joyce Dempster, and Duncan Thain (who won the Ayrshire Junior Tennis Championship before coming to Muirkirk).

Muirkirk had a very healthy Angling Association in those times and produced arguably one of the finest anglers in Scotland in the person of David Beck. During one season, and for the 28 days he ventured forth with his rod, no fewer than 1,275 trout were caught by his deadly rod. There were none less than seven inches. In 1945 my father and I were going fishing one Saturday morning, and we had collected the motor bike from the workshop through the close at the rear of Victoria Buildings, and were just about to proceed on to the Main Street when Mrs Mitchell (Bell Shankly, who cleaned at the Police Station) ran over the road to tell my father that news had just come in that David Beck had been killed in a road accident near the Sorn Roadend. My father immediately returned the bike to the garage, and there was no fishing that day. The sad news soon spread, and a great loss was felt in Muirkirk. David Beck was only 40 years of age.

There seems to be no end to the sporting side of Muirkirk, and here's one that might surprise a few people. It concerns the sport of rifle shooting, and the man who made a name for himself in this pastime was none other than Jim Love, Manager at Kames Colliery. He won the coveted Queen's Prize at Bisley in 1957. He took the Scottish Open Championship in 1962 and held the Ayr Championship three times from 1950. When he was 16 years of age he won the Scottish Small Bore Championship. But there was another man from Muirkirk who was also a good shot. He was Captain William S. Pirrie. Captain Pirrie had come to Muirkirk from Aberdeen University in 1907 and took up teaching of the Supplementary Class at Furnace Road School. He was one of the best shots in the country, and on several occasions competed successfully at Bisley and Darnley. Captain Pirrie was interested in the local Territorials, and showed his skills often on the rifle range at Ponesk. He left Muirkirk with his Company in 1914 and saw much fighting in Gallipoli. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in the field. He was later stationed in Egypt, where he met his death.

There was also in existence at this time Muirkirk Cricket Club, but I could find little evidence of its activities. Two cricket teams, The Antediluvians and the Wellwood Nomads played games at Wellwood and Kameshill, but they did not appear to be established clubs.

## MUIRKIRK CYCLING HISTORY



I will close this sporting episode with some information about a sport which has been very prevalent in Muirkirk over the years — Cycling. And one cannot speak of cycling (locally, at least) without mentioning the name of David B. Greenwood. As a young boy Davy Greenwood started work in Maidenbank Pit, Glenbuck, and for some years produced coal at Kames Pit, Muirkirk, for eighteen pence per ton. Davy yearned for a brighter outlook in life, and, like many other good men, he took unto himself a wife (in 1892), and started a cycle agent's business in a small way in Harkness' Buildings, removing later to new premises in Victoria Buildings, where he launched out as a full-blown cycle manufacturer. The

“Wellwood” cycle was his speciality, the machine being actually made on the premises. When motor cycling was in its infancy Davy took to the sport, and was the first man in the district to own a motor cycle, later turning his attention to motor cars, of which he owned quite a fleet. However, as a cyclist in his younger days in the second half of the 19th century, he was a power in the land, and feared no foe on the track or road. On tracks in Glasgow he had several bouts with Vogts (the well-known Scottish cyclist) and other demons of the day, starting from scratch, sometimes winning and sometimes losing. In the closing years of that century the annual Muirkirk-Douglas-Muirkirk road races caused a deal of excitement, and not a little heat amongst the partisans of the different school of cyclists, and in 1894 Davy Greenwood won the cup offered in a time of 59 minutes 1 second from Muirkirk Post Office (Glasgow Road corner) to Douglas post Office and back—some 20 miles. At the time of his death in 1924 his record still stood! It is not a little creditable to Davy Greenwood this rising by his own individual effort from pit-boy, with a scanty education, to proprietor of a flourishing motor-hiring establishment. Davy Greenwood was fond of various sports and was Chairman of the Muirkirk Cycling Club and Sports Committee which sponsored the Annual Sports in the early 1900's.

### KAMESHILL HOLM

This Muirkirk sports venue was located just across from the present Filling Station and was the mecca for all things sporting, including cycling, and it was unique because the football pitch was encircled by a cycle race-track. The track was opened in 1898, when a silver marmalade dish, presented by Mrs Baird, Wellwood, was won by Mr Forbes Marshall on the opening day. Mr James Williamson, Glasgow, wrote to say that from the diary belonging to his late brother, George, who was a member of the Muirkirk Cycling Club in those far-off days, he notes that the late Mr David Greenwood offered to make the track for £49, and that the work was started in December, 1895, and finished 9th May, 1896. However, the Scottish Cycling Authority did not approve of the track—the banking had to be raised — and that the actual cost would probably be double the sum.

In 1909 a letter was received from Mr John Angus, Manager, Baird & Dalmellington Ltd., that this would be the last year the Holm Park would be available for the sports, as the site was required for the depositing of slag. The letter also stated that Wm. Baird & Co. had for some years been put to considerable inconvenience and expense in avoiding the football pitch, and there is no doubt of this, as, had they cared, football could have been stopped three years previously. It was to be hoped that another field will be secured in which children may conduct their games with safety. What about the field of which the Bowling Club forms a corner?

And so, on a warm August Saturday afternoon a large crowd assembled to witness a sad occasion for the village — the last Muirkirk Sports to be held at Kameshill Holm, indeed, it was to be the last gathering of any kind at this popular venue.

The cycling results that day were as follows:—

Half-Mile Cycle Rae Handicap (Open) — (1) J. McCall, Dalserf, (2) J. Barr, Muirkirk, (3) H. Smith.

One Mile Cycle Race Handicap (Open) — (1) J. Girdwood, Muirkirk (2) Robert Stevenson, Benhar (3) H. Pillars, Lanark.

One Mile Cycle Race (confined) — (1) J. Girdwood, (2) D. Ross, (3) A. Clark.

Consolation Cycle Race — (1) D. Sloan, Benhar (2) J. Calderwood, Larkhall, (3) J. Caldwell, Benhar.

However, in the years between 1912 and 1929 no mention was made of cycling in the files. It should be stated that during the First World War quite a few of Muirkirk's young men paid the ultimate sacrifice, and after the war many decided to seek their fortunes abroad. Also the miners' strikes in these two decades had an adverse effect on local organisations which depended on youth for its members. We can only guess that the Cycling Club fell by the wayside in those years.

In May, 1930, Muirkirk Cairntable Cycling Club was formed, with an initial membership of about twenty, and it was an enthusiastic concern. In July that year the club took part in a joint run to Dumfries when 44 members representing: Cumnock Ramblers Cycling Club; Muirkirk Cairntable Cycling Club; Ayr Road Club; and Kilmarnock Berry Cycling Club took part. In 1931 the membership numbered 24. That year Muirkirk members started to make their mark in the competitive side of cycling. In a 25-mile time trial under the auspices of Kilmarnock Gold Berry Cycling Club, over western roads, Alex. Wardrop had the distinction of finishing fifth in the scratch list. His time was 1 hour 10 minutes 38 seconds.

Another club appeared on the scene in 1932, namely Muirkirk Wellwood Cycling Club. Members of this Club took part in a 10-mile race at Ayr, and the local riders times were:—D. Greenwood, 27-45 (second). A. Wardrop, 28 minutes (third), James Stacey, 29-16 (eighth); and William Mitchell, 30-7 (twelfth).

In addition Muirkirk were placed second in the team event. Wellwood members also took part in 25-mile race organised by Kilmarnock Goldberry Club, and the second fastest time of the day was returned by Alex. Wardrop (1-7-54). James Stacey (1-9-28) took first place in the handicap section. D. Greenwood (1-9-

54) annexed the prize for the fastest time with steel rims. Muirkirk were placed second in the team event. That same year Wellwood Club took part in a 50-mile trial organised by Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire Association from Greenock Mains to Hyndford Bridge (Lanark) and back. The fastest times were recorded by:—

- 1 Alex. Wardrop, Wellwood (2-27-47)
- 2 David Greenwood, Wellwood (2-37-48)
- 3 G. Park, Cumnock (2-41-15)

A road race between Glespin, Douglas and Muirkirk enthusiasts has held over the course of Muirkirk P.O. to Douglas P.O. and back (a distance of twenty miles), The event was won by D. Young, Glespin, in a time of 51-40.

Also in 1932 Alex. Wardrop of Wellwood Club won the Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire Association 100 miles road race in a time of 4-36-32. Later the same year Alex. won a 50-mile road trial under the same auspices in a time of 2-24-23. Strangely enough no mention was made of the Cairntable Club in 1932!

In 1933 three members of Wellwood Cycling Club took part in a 10-mile road trial, open to Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire, held by New Cumnock C.C. Twenty-six cyclists competed, and the event proved a triumph for Muirkirk, A. Wardrop winning the trial in 24-18, while T. Barrie was second in 26-8.

In December, 1937, Muirkirk Clarion Cycling Club acquired a substantial looking wooden hut for a Clubhouse. The hut was erected on a site adjoining the Victory Park.

Further light on cycling in the district around the turn of the century, 1900, was shed by Mr A. McConnell. For the uninitiated, Sandy McConnell was one of the stalwarts who made the name of Glenbuck something to conjure with in the field of sport. Sandy took up football as a profession after being capped for Junior Scotland against England in 1897, and thereafter played for Arsenal and Everton. An all-round sport, he was well to the fore in the cycling world, and his record of 23 miles 1553 yards for one hour on Muirkirk track was never lowered on that track. This he accomplished on 25th September, 1897 The late Mr David Greenwood maintained that at that time it was a record for Scotland, and so confident was he in Sandy's ability that he entered him for several open events, paying all expenses. In the Novice Three-Mile Open Race open to Scotland, at Hampden Park, Sandy was an easy winner; in a five-mile event at Kilmarnock, and receiving only 30 yards from the champion of Scotland, he was second, beaten by half-a-wheel length; and over a similar distance at Ayr he was third after being shut in. A local race which caused keen competition at that time was from Torhill to Glenbuck Station and back for medals presented by cycle-makers, per Mr Greenwood, for riders of their machines, and Sandy McConnell won a gold medal in that event for second prize. The winner was a packman—riding a heavy machine, and who got a handicap which allowed him to start at the Bridge at Lightshaw Scree! He also received a clock with an inscribed gong for his one-hour cycling record. Sandy also had a Yorkshire County Bowling Cap gained in inter-county matches. He also won three medals for golf; and two for shooting at long and short range, one a Life Member's Medal of the Rifle Club. And these were only part of his collection! Surely few men can boast a greater all-round sporting record than this son of Glenbuck.

A popular racing fixture in bygone days was the cycle road race from Muirkirk Post Office to Douglas Post Office and back. The Muirkirk Post Office in those days was situated where now is the Bookmaker's Office in Main Street. The

course measured 20 miles. As mentioned earlier, David Greenwood set up the record time of 59 minutes 1 second in 1894. This time stood for almost 53 years, when in 1947, local cyclist Jock McKay, broke the record, clocking 52 minutes 29 seconds. This one stood till 1956, when Jim Scott, Law Wheelers, claimed the record with a time of 50 minutes 24 seconds—a record which still stands to-day.

Local cyclists did well competitively, and in 1936 Jim Stacey (son of Harry Stacey the Postman), won the Ayrshire 50-mile record. There were others too.

Cycling in Muirkirk had a rather up-and-down history, there being many years not recorded. The earliest record I have is of Muirkirk Cycling Club in 1912. Muirkirk Cairntable Cycling Club was formed in 1930, and in 1932 Muirkirk Wellwood Cycling Club came into existence. Then in 1937 Muirkirk became a part of the nation-wide Clarion Club, and was known as Muirkirk Clarion Cycling Club. Muirkirk Road Club was formed in 1947, but changed its name to Muirkirk Cycling Club in 1949. Finally, in 1952 The Cycling Club amalgamated with Muirkirk Athletic Club to form Muirkirk Cycling and Athletic Club. They had their Clubrooms in Aird's Building in Smallburn (British Legion Hall).

Muirkirk had quite a few athletes at that time, and in long distance and track events, Jim McLatchie made quite a name for himself. So much so that he won a scholarship to America. In 1959 Muirkirk Community Association formed a new Club, called Muirkirk Welfare Athletic Club, and so it would seem that the relationship between the Cyclists and Athletes had ended. At the a.g.m. later that year this was confirmed, and the Club's name was changed back to Muirkirk Cycling Club. I could find no record of the Club being in existence in 1965, and had to assume that the Club was no longer in existence at that time.



EARLY CYCLISTS AT HAYSTACKHILL

## ECCLESIASTICAL

There cannot be many inhabitants in the village during the 20th century whose lives in some small way or another, were not affected by the church. Much has been written about the history of the Parish and its relationship with the church. Suffice it to say that the district of Muirkirk played an active role during the events of the 17th century, when people were prepared to give their lives for their religious beliefs. We will all have heard about the sacrifices made by locals in their fight against religious persecution, and culminating in the supreme sacrifice. Muirkirk will always be remembered in history for the heroism of Doctor Richard Cameron and his followers who fought to their deaths at the hands of the oppressors on Airdsmoss in 1680. Then in 1685 John Smith was shot dead in the open field across from the Parish Church for voicing his religious views, and how many have not heard of the murder, in cold blood, of William Adam, in 1685, while awaiting a rendezvous with his fiancée near Upper Wellwood Farm. He was shot dead by Government forces, while caught reading his bible. In that same year the Christian carrier, John Brown, was shot dead in front of his wife and family at Priesthill, by John Graham of Claverhouse. This dark episode in Scottish history is now part of Muirkirk's heritage. In 20th century Muirkirk there were no fewer than six Churches in Muirkirk, namely:—

Muirkirk Parish Church (1631)  
 United Secession and United Presbyterian Church (1824—1915)  
 The Free Church (1845—1949)  
 The Evangelical Union Church (1878—1965)  
 Kames Mission Church (1904—1950)  
 St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church (1906).

The United Secession Church joined with the Free Church in 1915, who later themselves joined with the Parish Church. And so to-day we are left with only two Churches. The Protestants and Roman Catholics. In those days we also had the Plymouth Brethren (The Dippers) with their Hall in Glasgow Road. Then there were the Friendly Societies, which included Muirkirk Friendly Society (1790), St. Thomas Masonic Lodge Friendly Society (1810), and St. Andrew's Masonic Society (1800). Later there was the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds. There were also various temperance societies (at one time Muirkirk had ten ale houses) which included:

Women's Temperance Association	Independent Order of Rechabites
Glenbuck Yearly Friendly Society	Order of Good Templars
Covenanters' Lodge of Good Templars	Juvenile Rechabites
Band of Hope	

One could say that Muirkirk had been well catered for in the way of religious instruction in those days. Even in my young days the Church still played a big part in the life of the village. Sunday really was a day of rest, and everything was centred round the Church. The Parish Church was of course, the hub of the religious life in the village, with about 700 members on the roll at one time. There was still a bit of strictness then. Like it or not, we had to attend the Sunday School, and we remained dressed all day, which meant we were restricted to less

energetic activities. Older schoolchildren had to attend the Bible Class in the afternoon. For adults there was morning service at 11 a.m. and back to the Church for the evening service at 6 p.m. The stability of the Parish Church was in no small way due to the efforts of the Rev. John Henderson, who was inducted into the charge in 1910, and faithfully carried out his duties as Parish Minister for 36 years—the longest serving Minister in the history of the Church, and I think we can confidently predict that this record will never be exceeded. Rev. John Henderson's whole-hearted endeavours in the First World War made Muirkirk the most generous Parish in Ayrshire for War Charities; and in the Second World War his leadership of the Woman's War Guild helped them to achievements of which the village of Muirkirk could be justly proud. He became a figure-head in our community, respected by all, irrespective of religious inclinations. Taking an active part in the affairs of the village through the various local bodies, Rev. John Henderson served on the School Board; was Chairman of the Parish Council; was Convener of the Education Committee of the County of Ayr; was District Councillor and County Councillor; and he played his part fearlessly, and with heart and soul in all he did. John Henderson had a path in life — a path from which he never deviated. His was a forceful personality — he was blunt and brusque, a man of passion, if you like; his word was his bond; he was a fighter and a mixer — no Minister could get closer to the ordinary man like you and me; but within he had the qualities we looked for in a Minister. I will never forget the grief and affection shown when his mortal remains were laid to rest in Muirkirk Cemetery

The other Churches in Muirkirk also played their part in their own way. I can remember the children's organisation set up by the E.U. Church when Rev. Arthur Robertson was the Minister just about the end of the First World War. It was called "Christian Endeavour," and was very popular with the younger generation. I also remember some fine shows put on in the E.U. Church by the Dramatic Club.

Pleasant memories in my early days was the annual Sunday School Picnic organised by the Parish Church, when the pupils were conveyed in horse-drawn vehicles to various destinations, including Greenock Mains, Auldhouseburn, and Crossflat. Later cattle trucks were used for transportation of the children. Then there was the annual Sunday School Soiree, which was usually held in the Masonic Hall, and Rev. John Henderson was never happier when in the midst of the younger generation of the congregation.

The Kames Mission Church I also remember with great fondness, and the work of the preacher there — Mr William Martin. It was he who was responsible for the establishment of the Life Boys and Boys' Brigade Companies in the village.

In 1910 Rev. Robert Montgomery resigned as Minister of the Parish Church to go to Canada. A story was told frequently in the "Advertiser" Office and always brought out a smile. Mr Shaw Smith, the then Editor of "The Advertiser," on reporting the departure of Mr Montgomery, said in his report, that although he (Mr Montgomery) was not a great preacher he was liked by his parishioners. The next morning the said Minister came into the Office in an awful state, saying to Mr Smith, "What will my friends in Canada think when they see what you have written." But the Editor soon rectified the position. The issue of the Advertiser was still on the bed of the printing press, and Mr Smith duly altered the paragraph to read "Mr Montgomery was a great preacher . . . ." and printed a dozen copies for

the Minister to send to Canada! A sad end to the tale was that Mr Montgomery died the following year in Canada.

In 1949 Muirkirk Parish Church was ravished by fire. It was completely rebuilt and re-opened in 1955. But since then the Church has failed to hold its ministers for any length of time, and at present we are without one, and the future does not look too promising.

The Free Church (Wellwood Church) joined with the Parish Church in 1949. Then in 1965 it was the turn of the E.U. Church to join forces with the Parish Church, and so for the first time in Muirkirk's history we were left with only two Churches—the Parish Church and St. Thomas' Church. How time changes many things. Just before printing I learn that the Parish Church has joined forces with Cumnock Trinity Church, a move which might help to extend the life of the local Church. The decline in Church attendances not only reflects the fall of the population over a long period of time but also changing attitudes, and with so many other distractions of entertainment, especially television and computers, it would appear that the only two places of worship left in the village will have a difficult job in keeping their congregation totals at the present level.

It must be said that St. Thomas Church have been working well in this respect, and their social hall in Kirkgreen has proved a great asset, not only to the Church, but to the village generally.

I was very pleased to be involved with the 50th anniversary of the Kames Colliery disaster in 1957. A very touching and impressive ceremony took place in the Parish Church, with St. Thomas clergy also taking part, and the Church was packed to capacity. Then there was an exhibition of photographs, etc., and a buffet meal in the Community Hall, when quite a few friendships were rekindled. I understand that there will be no more occasions like this.



PARISH CHURCH



ST THOMAS CHURCH

## HOME COMING SCOTLAND

2009 being the year of celebration for the Scottish Homecoming with the Scottish culture being exposed at every opportunity, and coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the birth of our National Bard, Robert, Burns, I thought it would be appropriate to recall a Burns Supper of the past. This one was under the auspices of the Muirkirk Lapraik Burns Club, and was held in the Masons Arms Hotel in January, 1911, and here is how it was reported in the "Muirkirk Advertiser" at that time:—

### BURNS ANNIVERSARY

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#### LAPRAIK BURNS CLUB CELEBRATION

On Friday evening last over fifty comrades met at the Masons Arms Hotel to commemorate the birth of Robert Burns. Captain James Clark of Crossflat occupied the chair, Mr A. Pringle and Dr. Marshall acting as croupiers. After an excellent supper had been disposed of, including the "haggis," which was brought in with ancient Celtic honours, the programme was at once commenced.

The Chairman remarked that he was highly gratified to meet with such a numerous and representative band of citizens and friends. This was a record meeting, and might be partly accounted for by the zeal and interest of their secretary, (Mr H. Bell) and other members of the executive, but it could be fully accounted for by the fact that Mr A. B. Todd, the veteran Cumnock journalist and Burns worshipper, was with them that evening. And they were right to turn out in such numbers to hear his speech. In years to come many of them might yet recall with pride that on that night they, as individuals, became living veritable links on a chain of time third in number from Burns himself.

The usual loyal patriotic toasts were then disposed of. In this Captain Clark was ably seconded by Messrs A. Pringle and W. S. Pirrie in clever speeches, and in suitable song by Doctor Barbour.

Mr Todd was then called on to propose the "Immortal Memory," and, springing to his feet with the alacrity of a young man, that gentleman promptly obeyed. "Before speaking to you more directly on Robert Burns," said Mr Todd, "let me say a few words as to the unique position in which I stand with regard to the Poet whose memory to-night we have to honour. I am perhaps the oldest man of all those who this week have met to speak of the greatness of the genius and world-encircling fame of Burns, the over-topping bard of Scotland, for in less than two weeks — if spared — I shall have entered upon the ninetieth year of my age; and I am also, perhaps, the only man living whose father knew Burns personally. A farmer himself, and in the same Parish of Mauchline, my father had at least one business transaction with the Poet, although that was before he came to that Parish. He had also met and seen the Poet occasionally on market days in Kilmarnock, and I have heard my strict old Cameronian father say that never did he see him intoxicated, and never did he hear him give utterance to an oath. This, I think, may be considered a very convincing reply to the blustering and unguarded assertion of the late Rev. George Gilfillan to the contrary, and of the more recent depreciatory attacks of Mr Henley. My father, I may say, was only nine years younger than Burns, having been born in 1768, Burns was born in 1759. My maternal grandfather, again, James Gibb, a small laird in Mauchline Parish, whom I remember seeing, was born in Prince Charlie's year, 1745, or

fourteen years before Burns, and knew the Poet well, and had frequently tough arguments with him on religious questions when he came with his horses and carts to the limeworks at Auchmillan; and my mother, as a girl, well remembered how kindly Burns would pet and treat his horses when he came with them to the lime kilns, of which my grandfather had charge. My own connection with these Burns Clubs' celebrations will, I think, in some measure stand alone. Thus I was Chairman at Cumnock at the celebration of the Centenary of the Birth of Burns in 1859, when seventy-five of the leading gentlemen of the town and Parish sat down to dinner in honour of the event. I was Chairman again in 1896, the centenary year of the Poet's death, and when I stood up to propose the 'Poet's Memory,' in the same hall, it moved me not a little to find there, in that company, not one of all the seventy-five gentlemen whom I had addressed thirty-seven years before. Most of those who composed that goodly company on the former occasion had passed away from the walks of living men to the land of deep forgetfulness, and of the few who still remained all save myself had left the district, most of them for foreign lands where they were either tilling the virgin soil of Australia or New Zealand, sweltering beneath the scorching suns of South Africa, or struggling with fate and fortune far up in the north-west of the great dominion of Canada; while here was I, left alone of all that bright enthusiastic band, left like a solitary withering tree in a decaying forest.

I was Chairman again in 1909—two years ago—being my jubilee as chairman of the Club, and again gave 'The Immortal Memory,' the flight of fifty years having quenched none of my enthusiasm for the Bard. I think, therefore, that you will not dispute the uniqueness of the links which, through my parents and myself, connect me with the glorious Robert Burns, his times, and the celebrations of his natal day; and yet I am here to speak to you for a little of the great immortal Bard who closed his bright but brief career away over yonder in the valley of the Nith, at Dumfries; closed it, too, not only in poverty, but in mortal fear of a paltry account of five pounds due to a miserable, stony-hearted haberdasher.

"The starving poet, when he asked for bread,  
Was coolly told to wait till he was dead;  
And when the grave had decomposed his bones,  
His soul would have a feast of chiselled stones!"

In the estimation of some there may have been greater poets than Burns, but there never was, and never likely will be, his equal as a song-writer. His songs are popular the world over, and they are sung wherever waves the British flag or the English tongue is spoken. Lyrics so universally popular, and which breathe the most exalted sentiments of truth, honour, love, and patriotism, must have an incalculable influence for good, whether sung among the mountains, moors, and water-springs of Muirkirk, or far away where the Scottish exiles sigh for 'Caledonia stern and wild' amid the many settlements of the far Western World where their evenings are serenaded by the wolf's long howl from out those old forests unplanted by the hand of man. Such songs as 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace Bled,' have nerved the arms of our soldiers, not only on the plains of Waterloo, and in the inhospitable Crimea in the past, but in all the lands where they maintain the honour and protect the interests of this great empire of ours on which, I am proud to think, the sun of heaven never sets! The immortal melody of 'Auld Lang Syne,' by recalling to the mind the loves, friendships, and partings of former days, causes the lips of every man and woman who have passed middle life to quiver with

emotion, and eyes unused to weeping, to glisten with tears, especially when sung in a foreign land. How comes it then that such is the case, now more than a century after the great warm heart of the poet has become but a clod of the valley? Other poets we have had, great masters of the poet's lyre, like Milton, who soared high up into the blue epyrean heaven of song; Shakespeare, who ranged all nature through; Scott, who revived the age of chivalry; Byron, who moved every passion of the human soul; Hogg, the poet shepherd of Ettrick, who peopled the woods and desert wild with beings too pure for earth; like his inimitable 'Kilmeny;' and Tennyson, whose poetry sounds like music o'er a summer lake at the golden close of day; and many other bards have sung well of love, friendship, peace, and war, and all of that can move and thrill the soul of man, and of the finer feelings of woman; but not one of them all has secured the same deep and abiding place in all hearts as Robert Burns. The most unlettered worker in a factory or in field hears in Burns the voice of a brother. The artisan amid the whirling of wheels, the stunning clang of hammers, is cheered and animated with the thought of what Burns has told him, that

"A Man's a Man for a' That."

No less, however, do the wonderful poems and songs of Burns possess the power to please and to captivate high dames, noble lords, learned philosophers, and all large-hearted preachers of righteousness. Most of the songs of other authors—especially those of the present time — have only their little day and are forgotten; but not the songs of Burns — because, like the Psalms of David, they are suited for all ages and for every clime, are immortal. It is these things, therefore, which year after year bring thousands of pilgrims from many distant lands to worship at the poetic shrines of Burns, and to gaze enraptured on the scenes that have been immortalized by his muse — on 'Auld Hermit, Ayr,' still sweeping grandly by beneath the wood-crowned braes of Ballochmyle, and the red belting cliffs which lie along that poetic stream and that other mansion of immortal song — 'The Castle of Montgomery' — with the moving, thrilling memories of 'Highland Mary;' or 'The Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon,' where the birds still sing as blithely and carol as sweetly as when the large lustrous eye of the poet glowed with delight to hear their wood-notes wild ring along the banks of that ever-living stream so dear to love and song. The green brae of pellucid Afton, and the silvery Nith, still attracts the pilgrim's steps, as do also the 'crimson tipped daisies,' away over yonder on the learigs of Mossgiel, every wood and furrow of which have become hallowed ground for evermore, from having been trod by the footsteps of the bard who mourned the daisy's fate, who took pity on a timorous little mouse, and who could pen such noble exalted strains as 'The Cottar's Saturday Night,' and the lines 'To Mary in Heaven.' I will not, however, enter upon any critical analysis of the poems and songs of this great and original son of song. The world has long confessed their charm and has been influenced by their beauty and their power; we all feel both tonight, and are convinced of their immortality, for never while the wild flowers wave on the crest of Cairntable, or the blue lakes of our native land tremble in the summer breeze or leap beneath the wintry storms, shall the songs he sang be forgotten or his winged inspiring words fade away from the memories of men. Generation after generation shall pass away from the stage of time to the land of forgetfulness, but in every generation there shall be multitudes to cherish the memory of the departed poet, and to be delighted, cheered, and benefited by those undying productions of his which have secured for Burns an exalted and an abiding place in the Temple of Fame." - *(Loud Applause).*



MASON'S ARMS HOTEL

## THE LAPRAIK CONNECTION

Mention of Robert Burns and Muirkirk immediately brings our thoughts to the village's own John Lapraik, who was of course, a well-known contemporary of the Bard, and we have been told on several occasions how they were good friends, and although there is no doubt that Burns thought a lot of the "Bald Lapraik." We also know that Burns had made arrangements to meet the Muirkirk poet, whether this be at Muirkirk or Mauchline leads to a lot of conjecture; and the same goes for the question — Did this meeting ever take place? I cannot answer in the affirmative, and some writers have gone to great lengths to make us believe that this meeting did in fact take place. John Lapraik, in his Epistle to Robert Burns starts the fifth paragraph thus "Or when I met a chiel like you." So, it is for you the reader, to make up your own mind, and to help you with this question I reprint Lapraik's Epistle in its entirety, in the hope that it will give you an answer!

### LAPRAIK'S EPISTLE TO ROBERT BURNS

O far fam'd RAB! my silly Muse,  
That thou sae prais'd langsyne,  
When she did scarce ken verse by  
prose,  
Now dares to spread her wing.

Unconciuous of the least desert,  
Nor e'er expecting fame,  
I sometimes did myself divert,  
Wi' jingling worthless rhyme.

When sitting lanely by myself,  
Just unco griev'd and wae,  
To think that Fortune, fickle Joe!  
Had kick'd me o'er the brae.

And when I was amaist half-drown'd  
Wi' dolefu' grief and care,  
I'd maybe rhyme a verse or twa,  
To drive away despair

.Or when I met a chiel like you,  
Sae gi'en to mirth zan' fun,  
Wha lik'd to speel Parnassus' hill  
An drink at Helicon,

I'd aiblins catch a wee bit spark  
O' his Poetic fire,  
An rhyme awa like ane half-mad,  
Until my Muse did tire.

I lik'd the Lasses unco weel,  
Langsyne when I was young,  
Which fortunes kittled up my Muse  
To write a kind love sang,

Yet still it ne'er ran in my head,  
To trouble Mankind with

My dull, insipid, thowless rhyme,  
And stupid, senseless stuff;

Till your kind Muse, wi' friendly blast,  
First tooted up my fame,  
And sounded loud, through a' the  
Wast,  
My lang forgotten name.

Quoth I, "Shall I, like to a sumph,  
"Sit douss and dowie here,  
"And suffer the ill-natur'd warld  
"To ca' RAB BURNS a liar.

"He says that I can sing fu' weel,  
"An through the warld has sent it—  
"Na; faith I rhyme a hearty blaud,  
"Though I should aye repent it."

Syne I gat up, wi unco glee,  
An snatch'd my grey goose quill,  
An cry'd, "Come here, my Muse,  
come,  
"An rhyme wi' a' your skill."

The Hizzy was right sweer to try't,  
An' fearce wad be persuaded:  
She said, I was tum'd auld an' stiff,  
My youthfu' fire quite faded.

Quoth she, "Had ye begun langsyne,  
"When ye were brisk and young,  
"I doubttna but ye might hae past,  
"And sung a glorious sang:

“But now ye’re clean gane out o’ tune,  
 “Your auld grey scaulp tum’d bare:  
 “Mair meet that ye were turning douse  
 “And try’ng to say yowur pray’r.

“The folk’s a’ laughing at you, else,  
 “Ye’ll gar them laugh aye father:  
 “When ye gang out, they’ll point and  
 say,  
 “There gangs the Poet after.”

“Devil care,” said I, haud just your  
 tongue:

“Begin and nae mair say;  
 “I maun maintain my honour now,  
 “Though I should seldom pray!”

“I oft when in a merry tift  
 “Have rhym’d for my diversion;  
 “I’ll now go try to rhyme for bread  
 “And let the warld be clashin’.”

“Weel, weel,” says she, “fin ye’re fae  
 bent,

“Come, let us go begin then;  
 “We’ll try to do the best we can,  
 “I’m sure we’ll aye say something.”

Syne till’t I gat, an’ rhym’d away,  
 ‘Till I hae made a Book o’t,  
 An though I should rue ‘t ‘a my life,  
 I’ll gie the warld a look o’t.

I’m weel aware the greatest part  
 (I fain hope not the whole)  
 Will look upon’t as senseless stuff,  
 And me’s a crazy fool.

Whether that it be nonsense a’  
 Or some o’t not amiss  
 And whether I’ve done right or wrang,  
 I leave the warld to guess:

But I should tell them, bye the bye,  
 Though it is may-be idle,  
 That fint a book scarce e’er I read,  
 Save ance or twice the Bible.

An’ what the learned folk ca’  
 grammar,  
 I naething ken about it;  
 Although I b’lieve it be owre true,  
 Ane can do nought without it.

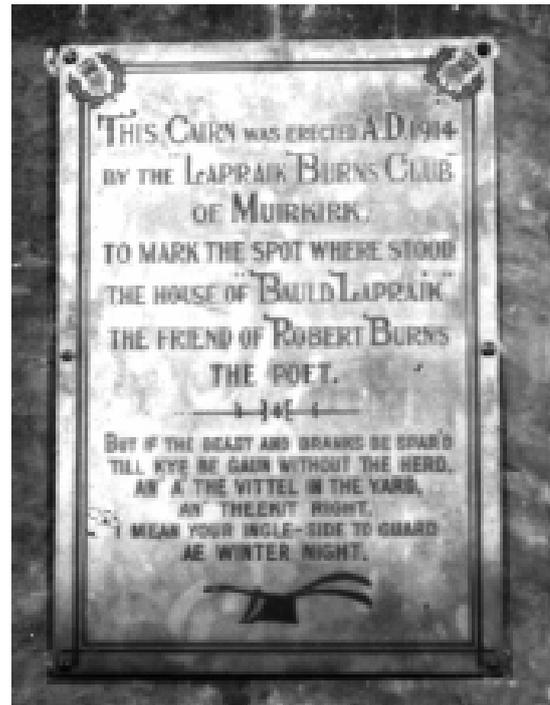
But maist my life has just been spent  
 (Which to my cost I feel)  
 In fechtin fair wi’ luckless brutes,  
 Till they kick’d up my heel.

Now fare-ye-well, my guid frien’ RAB,  
 May luck and health attend ye;  
 If I do weel, I’ll bless the day  
 That e’er I came to ken ye:

But on the tither han’, should folk  
 Me for my nonsense blason,  
 Nae doubt I’ll curse th’ unlucky day,  
 I listen’d to your fraisin.

May that great Name that ye hae got  
 Untainted aye remain!  
 And may the Laurels on your head  
 Ay flourish fresh and green!

The LORD maintain your honour aye,  
 And then ye needna fear,  
 While I can write, or speak, or think,  
 I am your frien’ sincere!



JOHN LAPRAIK

1727 — 1805

## THE LAPRAIK FAMILY IN MUIRKIRK

(I.)

In my search for articles of Muirkirk in bygone days I came across a history of the Lapraik family in Muirkirk, compiled by Charles P. Bell, a teacher at Muirkirk School in the middle of the 20th century, and somewhat of a local historian. In 1914 Muirkirk Lapraik Burns Club erected a memorial to the memory of John Lapraik near Dalfram, and it was decided that a compilation should be formed relative to the Lapraik family in Muirkirk, and this and a following article are the outcome. Although great care has been taken to get the simple truth, it is possible there are several mistakes. The writer is indebted in this article to the authors named and the "Works of Robert Burns" — Blackie & Sons, 1977. In the article yet to come, he relies mainly on the testimony of old residents in Muirkirk, such as Mr Thomas Whyte, Mr Thomas Weir, and others.

In August, 1561, Mary, Queen of Scots, landed at Leith after her long sojourn in France, and with her came a goodly train of French retainers and servants for whom she had a preference, doubtless quite natural, but displeasing to some of her Scottish subjects. Tradition has informed us that a certain person named La Privick belonged to Mary's French retinue. Doubtless he flourished about the Court while fortune smiled on Mary, but it is also likely that when evil days came to the Queen her friends would suffer many unhappy changes in place and position. After the battle of Langside in 1568, Mary became an exile in England, and La Privick found himself Laird of Dalfram. From *Muirkirk in Bygone Days* (p.14), we learn that in 1643 the population of the Parish was certified as 145, between the ages of 16 and 60. As Lapraik came to Dalfram fully seventy years before this date, the population must have been very small indeed, and it is every way likely that the lively Frenchman came to this locality impelled by religious or political changes. Be that as it may, he was the only "incomin'" body of his family, and he and his direct descendants dwelt in Dalfram for the space of more than 200 years.

In 1661, exactly 100 years after La Privick came to our shores, we learn from Mr Baird's book, already referred to, that "John Leckpryke presentit a bill of complaint against William Broun, his wyfe, and his daughter for the sclandering of him with thift, and consigned fortie shillings in the handis of the treasurer" (for details see p. 32). This John Leckpryke would be the grandson or more likely, the great-grandson of the Frenchman. We also see from the book (p.24) that another John Leprivick (a son of the "sclandered" man) aspired to an eldership in the parish, but was not chosen by the session for fear of giving offence to the congregation. He had at some former period of his life taken the "test," a Scottish Act of 1567, an Act, as Mr Baird explains, hated extremely by the Presbyterians of the 16th century. This John Leckpryke was (judging by date) the grandfather of the poet who was born in Dalfram in the year 1727. He was thus over 30 years of age when Burns was born, so that the great poet was well entitled to term John Lapraik a facetious (i.e good-natured) old fellow, and yet the Muirkirk poet spent about a dozen years in this world after Burns was taken away. In the year 1788 Lapraik published at Kilmarnock a volume of poems entitled "Poems on Several Occasions by John Lapraik." In an address to Burns, he confesses that he never thought of troubling the world with his dull, insipid, thowless, rhyme:

"Till your kind muse, wi' friendly blast,  
First tooted up my fame,

And sounded loud thro' a' the wast  
My lang forgotten name.

There are very few copies of Lapraik's poems now in existence, and if any person owns one, he could easily sell it for several pounds. One copy is on view in a glass case at Burns Cottage, Alloway, and a copy changed hands some years ago in London for the sum of fifty shillings. Burns had published his own poems in 1786 in Kilmarnock, and in 1787 another edition in Edinburgh. Burns went to Mossgiel in 1784, and in 1785 the poets first became personally acquaint. Burns distinctly says about Lapraik's best song ("When I upon thy bosom lean") — "He (Lapraik) has often told me that he composed this song one day when his wife had been fretting over their misfortunes." Nor is this statement necessarily at variance with another which declares that Lapraik composed the poem in Ayr Jail, to which he had been sent by his creditors. What more likely than that his wife had visited him in prison? Burns first heard this beautiful song at a "country rocking" near Mauchline, we presume, and it was in consequence of the song's effect on Burns that the poet (so to speak) hunted Lapraik up. Burns says:

"There was ae sang among the rest,  
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,  
That some kind husband had addrest  
To some sweet wife:  
It thrilled the heart-strings through the breast,  
A' to the life.  
I've scarce heard aught describe sae weel  
What generous manly bosoms feel;  
Thought I, can this be Pope, or Steele,  
Or Beattie's wark?  
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel  
About Muirkirk.

Burns, also in speaking of Lapraik terms him "late of Dalfram," and it is known that Lapraik left Laigh Dalfram in 1773. The story of the failure of the Ayr Bank under the title of Douglas Heron & Co. is fairly well known. It was the old story of mismanagement, and perhaps fraud, too, on the part of the directors. More notes were issued than the Bank was able to repay in gold, and it lent money to its patrons, giving them so long credit that the Bank could not recall the cash to build up a new trade or pay over falling-in accounts. One statement is that Lapraik as a shareholder answered the first call by selling the main part of his property — Laigh Dalfram. At the second call, however, he had to sell his newest building — Hall of Lapraik, and even then he was still in debt. This is incorrect, and is mentioned here because it is current in the parish. Lapraik was not a shareholder at all. Speculation was very popular in these times, and the poet had not only borrowed largely from the bank, but had signed heavy accommodation bills for other people. His speculations were unsuccessful, and when the bank broke he found himself very soon in financial difficulty. He sold Laigh Dalfram, his chief possession, and lived at Muirsmill not far from Dalfram, which also belonged to him. Next he dwelt in Netherwood, and later returned to Muirsmill. He was now so hard pressed that he sold everything he had, and this being insufficient, he was actually (as Mr Hodge states, p. 51 in "Through the Parish of Muirkirk") "torn from his loving wife and family and cast into prison." His imprisonment seems to have been a strategic movement on the part of his creditors, some friends evidently

becoming cautionary for him. In 1785 Lapraik seems to have been farming at Muirsmill, and it was to this address Burns despatched his "First Epistle to Lapraik," in the first verse of which Burns nominates himself as an "unknown frien'." It is dated April 1, 1785. His second bares the date of April 12, but betwixt these dates "honest-hearted auld Lapraik" had written his kind letter to Burns. The third address is dated Sept. 13, 1785, and in it Burns says "I mean your ingle-side to guard, ae winter nicht." Lapraik's answer to two of these epistles are lost, yet in Lapraik's own book of poems we have one reply to Burns containing the verse quoted above. Lapraik and Burns did meet. Burns says, as we saw above, "He often told me," &c., but was this in Mauchline or in Muirkirk parish? The answer is — in both. One of Lapraik's sons several times acted as postman for his father from Dalfram to Mossgiel. On the first trip with a letter young Lapraik found Burns busy sowing corn. "I'm not sure if I ken the han," the poet remarked as he possessed himself of the note. As he read the contents of the "kind letter" he became so interested that he involuntarily let go the sheet containing the seed, and did not seem to notice that the corn was all spilt until he had read the letter through. According to promise in the "Third Epistle to Lapraik," Burns visited him towards the end of 1785. Lapraik was then living in Muirsmill, and his daughter, to whom reference will be made later on, and who afterwards became Mrs McMinn of Nether Wellwood, vouched for the truth of this visit which she remembered distinctly. Burns got his dinner, supper, and breakfast at Lapraik's house, he spent one merry evening there and next day he returned to Mauchline. A relative of Mr James Anderson, now in Nether Wellwood, also saw Burns on this occasion. Tradition confirms that Burns spent a night in Muirkirk, and that he slept at a "public" on the South Side of the water, at a place now represented by the Office Close. Burns thought very highly of Lapraik, and it is said that the great poet had the minor poet in view when he wrote "A Man's a Man for a' That."

Lapraik did not come to Muirkirk until he was an old man of 70 years, a period when he was past active farming. His son, James, who was farmer in Darnhunch, had built a house for his parents in Kirk Street, and there the poet lived the remaining ten years of his life. He kept a "public," one authority states. This may be, although another says he kept a grocer's shop. Both might be correct. Through some local influence he also got the management of the Post Office—the first real Post Office in Muirkirk it is alleged. As an erroneous prevails that this house was near the corner of Kirkgreen and Main Street, we take the privilege here of stating that the poet's house stood now where stands the Catholic School (now St. Thomas Hall). It was the only house in Kirkgreen at that time, and the Kirkgreen itself was then a green in reality. The poet died, much respected by all, in the year 1807, on the 7th day of the month of May. He was buried in the churchyard across the way, where his monument is still an outstanding feature of the place. Lapraik was twice married — first in 1754, to Margaret Rankin of Lochhead. She unfortunately died after giving birth to her first child. The poet again married in 1766. The maiden name of his second wife was Janet Anderson, and she was a daughter of the farmer in Lightshaw. She was 14 years younger than Lapraik, and it is of her the song was composed — "When I Upon Thy Bosom Lean." In Mr Hodge's book, p.53, there is printed a "Copy of Receipt, dated 1810, by Janet Anderson, Widow of John Lapraik, for £17, being balance of her late husband's subject." She was much beloved by the poet, and was a rather superior woman. She kept on the business in Kirkgreen for some years after the poet's death. She bore a large family to Lapraik, and nine of them lived till they

were men and women. Her death took place in 1826 when she had reached the great age of 85.

## **THE LAPRAIK FAMILY IN MUIRKIRK**

(II.)

In the last article the Post Office in the Kirkgreen was mentioned, and it may be interesting to know that about the commencement of the 19th century the mail came to Muirkirk from Kilmarnock, via Mauchline and Sorn. It then passed on through Douglas, and two miles farther on reached Douglas Mill, on the great trunk road connecting Edinburgh and Glasgow with Carlisle. This was the last Company Road in Scotland. At Douglas Mill, then, the Ayrshire mail waited until due transfers were made betwixt it and the great stage coaches running south and north to and from London. In 1812, five years after her husband's death, Mrs Lapraik seems to have given up the Post Office. In 1815 the McCaul family were installed in the Post Office, and they kept the management of it until the year 1887. Whether it was in the McCaul property (opposite Temperance Hall in Main Street) all that time the writer is not aware. It certainly was in the year 1840.

To return to the Lapraik family, however, it was seen that the poet had a son named James, who was farmer in Darnhunch, his laird being the owner of Douglas Castle. After leaving Darnhunch he came to Muirkirk, and settled in his own house (his father's), where he dwelt several years until his death. His sister, Mary Lapraik, married Mr John McMinn, of Upper Wellwood. She survived her husband more than thirty years, and died in 1848 at the age of eighty. There are still descendants of this family remaining. The poet had another son, John Lapraik (known to the aged residents still living in Muirkirk as Cooper Lapraik), who came through some strange adventures. We are tempted to outline some of these, because they illustrate phases of the early history of the 19th Century, when all Europe, as at present, was locked in horrid war. The history of war makes splendid reading, but it is a grim and grisly reality to those who come within its practical operation. The Cooper having learned his trade (quite common in every village then), and gone forth and had been employed at Ayr, Troon, and lastly at Irvine, when a sad fate befell him. The wars of Napoleon were in full swing, and so was the British press-gang. One fine afternoon John was taking a walk near the shore when he was suddenly pounced upon by some armed men, and that same night he found himself a unit of His Majesty's Navy. Misfortune still dogged footsteps, for a little later he became a prisoner of war, shut up in loathsome French prisons. Those who have read how the French treated their prisoners can only form some idea of what the poet's son suffered. But everyone can understand to what straits a man has come when he looks forward with delight to his turn of eating the candle-end when a new one was allowed to the prisoners. Lapraik often related this to his neighbours after he came home. On the other hand, the French prisoners in Britain were at first very well treated, much as shipwrecked men would still be. When the nation learned of the cruel lot to which the British unfortunates were doomed in France, a great reaction soon took place. The British lion is generally a respectable, dignified, magnanimous animal, but at times, especially if he gets nervous, he can become as mean and cruel as any common tiger. Any kindness or even toleration shown to French prisoners was now a crime punishable by law, and poor Lapraik had even yet to suffer at the hands of his fellow countrymen. After long years of imprisonment, when the exchange of prisoners took place, John found himself dumped at Leith, so broken in mind and body that it took him over a week to reach Darnhunch, where his brother was still

farmer. All along the way he was taken for a Frenchman, for he could scarcely speak a decent phrase in his native tongue, although he spoke French pretty well. Nor is this to be wondered at. David Livingstone had great difficulty in expressing his ideas in English after a long sojourn in Africa, whilst Darwin says of Jemmy Button, who was expected to interpret betwixt the crew of the *Beagle* and the Fuegians — We had already perceived that Jemmy had almost forgotten his own language. I should think there was scarcely another human being with so small a stock of language." Jemmy was quite useless, and his savage brethren understood him not. Poor Lapraik was despised by all, and any little food or shelter he received by the way was given him by stealth. Had it not been that he was so done out and helpless he would probably have suffered assault on several occasions. He got a surprise when he arrived at Parishholm, then known by the less euphonical term of Paddock-home. A large lake lay before him now where no such lake should be. The reservoir, which is overlooked by Glenbuck House, is entirely artificial. Mr Hodge says of it (p.29)—"This is one of the Catrine's Coy reservoirs, formed in 1802, for storage of water when water-power was more in use." The date is given here to show that Lapraik's imprisonment might have been any length of time between twelve and twenty years. Although the lake is deep, a road formerly ran right through it, and when the eastern and western banks were made it is said that a house, trees, road, and everything were covered up with Ayr's water. It was dark when Lapraik arrived at his brother's house, where the farmer informed him that, on account of instructions issued by the Government and also by his landlord, he dared not harbour a French refugee. A sister of the farmer, Mary Lapraik (the same who in 1841 certified that Burns had visited her father in Muirsmill, and who afterwards married Mr McMinn, farmer in Wellwood, was smarter than he, for she discovered that the seeming worn-out Frenchman was no other than their long-lost brother. Needless to say, he received a hearty welcome. The Cooper never fully recovered his health either of body or mind. Two years later Mr McMinn, now his brother-in-law, built him a workshop at the corner of Kirkgreen, in close proximity to another house of his, where the last Lapraik in Muirkirk dwelt. Here then the Cooper worked out his days in peace and comfort. Every boy in the village was welcome in his workshop, and although many took advantage of this privilege, not one was ever known to abuse it in the least degree.

It is said that the Cooper had a mortal hatred of any form of imprisonment, and people had to keep their eye on him if he entered a house where any bird was encaged, for Lapraik always promptly proceeded to set it at liberty, unless restrained by some one. The Cooper was never married.

The last of the Lapraiks dwelling in Muirkirk was John, a grandson of the poet, and a son of James, the farmer in Dernhunch. He was locally known as Baker Lapraik, and had his oven in a workshop up behind the Head Inns. His dwelling-house and shop have already been referred to as at the corner of Main Street and the Kirkgreen. The house is said to have been built by the McMinn, and John Lapraik, the baker, married his cousin, Lizzie McMinn, and was thus uncle to Thomas McMinn, late of Wellwood. At a later period of his life he was employed about the magazines at the Ironworks. Very many of the inhabitants of Muirkirk remember well his thin, tall, somewhat stooping figure with the white hair, as he walked the street night and morning, or went up the aisle of the Parish Church, of which he was an elder. This John Lapraik died in his house in the Kirkgreen about the year 1890. He was survived by a son, James Lapraik, who

followed his father's trade in Muirkirk—that of a baker. The son, who had left Muirkirk for Glasgow long before his father's death in the Kirkgreen, married a Miss Davidson. He died suddenly in the Church he was wont to attend in Glasgow. Mrs Lapraik and family are still alive.

Baker Lapraik had also a brother named David, who would thus be a grandson of the poet. At one time he was farmer in the Hall. He died in 1865, aged 62 years.

This David had a son James, and at least two daughters, one of whom married Mr Smith, an engineer in Dalmellington. Mrs Smith is now a widow, and is presently living with her family in Canada.

As was intimated last week (August, 1914), the compiler of the two articles is indebted to four old friends in Muirkirk — Mrs John Laidlaw, Miss Scott, Mr Thomas Weir, and especially to Mr Thomas Whyte. The latter gentleman is the chief author. His stock is merely touched upon. It is almost inconceivable the amount of pabulum — written and printed — Mr Whyte has in store.

C.P.B.



JAMES LAPRAIK  
(1836—1883)  
Direct Descendant of the Poet



ELIZABETH LAPRAIK  
(Nee Henson)  
(1841—1921)  
Direct Descendant of the Poet

## GOLDEN MEMORIES

I have always enjoyed researching the history of Muirkirk, and I am constantly amazed at the amount of information that can be obtained from the reporting of anniversaries, etc., and this was the case when I came across the Golden Wedding of a Muirkirk couple in the person of Mr and Mrs James Reid. The occasion was marked by a celebration in the Masonic Hall in November, 1912, and I quote:—

“Mrs Reid was a native of Glasgow, having been born in the Tradeston district, and she came here by the Strathaven Moor, there was no railway then when she was a young girl ten years of age. Her father, James Yuill, was precentor in the U.P. Church in Rev. James Garrett’s time — 1824-1832, but he had gone to live in Glasgow, where he died. By trade he was a cabinet maker, and amongst other work he did in Muirkirk we may mention that he fitted up old Kaimshill. At his death, Margaret (Mrs Reid) came to live here with her maternal grandmother, Mrs Lees, wife and widow of David Lees. Old Mrs Lees died at the great age of 88 years, and Margaret lived with her great uncle until she married Mr Reid. The Lees family gave the name of Leeses Brae (Temperance Hall Brae) to the rather steep part of Main Street opposite the houses at present owned by Mr George Harkness (adjoining the sheltered houses). Old Mr Lees broke in the wild and boggy ground behind his house (the field behind the Temperance Hall), and planted it with corn and potatoes alternately. But as an enterprising neighbour disputed his right to cultivate this ‘No Man’s Land,’ a feu was obtained for it by Mr Lees from the representatives of the Duke of Portland.

“Mr James Reid is Muirkirk born and bred. He first attended the Burnside School, and his teacher was John Gray, son of Dr. Gray, who at that time lived where the premises of Mr W. Weir, Stationer, are now situated (The Bunkers). Young Mr Gray (the teacher) intended to come out as a surgeon and doctor, but unfortunately met his death through blood poisoning at a post-mortem case in Glasgow. Later on Mr Reid attended the Parish School, at that time presided over by Mr Thomson. But his school days were few in number, and he was early sent out to earn his living. He herded cattle and sheep at Waterhead, in Avondale, then he went over the hill into Galston Parish, and worked at a place named Burnhead. Returning to Muirkirk to work in the pits he attended an evening school kept by Mr Thomas Hogg, in the hall behind the Free Church. He made good progress at this school, and the teacher told him he might make a good mathematical scholar. Mr Hogg (an elder brother of our respected townsman, Mr William Hogg) became head teacher in Glasgow Industrial Schools. But Mr Reid was not destined to shine as a wrangler. He had plenty of manual work to occupy his attention, sometimes rising at 3 o’clock in the mornings. He was first a drawer in a gin-pit a little past the Coutburn Row (Springhill district). It was 7 or 8 fathoms deep, and James had to draw hutches, crawling along like a horse to the pit bottom. The hutches held about 14 stones, and ran on plates (no rails then). This pit was owned by Mr David Ross. He next worked in the North Muir Pit, up by the side of the Smallburn plantation. John Anderson, father of John Anderson (lately manager at Glenbuck), superintended this and many other pits. At one of these pits, No. 10 Wellwood (above the present Wellwood Pit), his career nearly came to a sudden close. He was working the six-foot coal, which was very ‘prood.’ Six men who were sitting at the place went away, and scarcely had they gone than the coal, with a side rush, came away, and knocked Mr Reid

betwixt the block and the wagon he was filling. This saved his life. He was completely covered with coal. He cried with all his might, but the rescuers had to break the block to get him out. No bones were broken, but his back was strained, and he was taken home in a cart. Mr Reid first commenced to take a man's work in Maidenbank Pit, and this was under the present Company. He joined the Evangelical Union Church many years ago. Their first Church was built by voluntary labour by the members of the congregation. Mr Reid was long a church-officer, and has also acted as a manager and an elder.

## WELLTREES REMEMBERED

When searching through the old files I found the obituary in 1914 of Mr James McCulloch, blacksmith, of Fleming Cottage, Smallburn, Muirkirk, and I quote:—Though all his life connected with Muirkirk, for about thirty years he was employed in Cumnock, where he was very highly respected, During all the time he was in Cumnock he came home on Saturdays to visit his parents, and as regularly as the days came he walked down to Cumnock on the Sunday evenings to be in time for his work. In later years he was employed in Muirkirk, but retired a few years ago. Mr McCulloch was a man of sterling worth, upright in all his dealings, a good tradesman, and a most conscientious workman. He took no part in public affairs, but was not the less interested. In church matters Mr McCulloch was a Congregationalist, a regular attendee and a staunch supporter, but of late, owing to his impaired hearing and failing health, he had not been able to attend the services regularly. His was the true, voluntary spirit: he never allowed his left hand to know what his right hand did. In another way he was a connecting link with the grim and tragic past. He was probably the last survivor of the Welltrees tragedy in 1867, through which the driver and fireman (two Muirkirk men) of the ill-fated train lost their lives — an event now relegated to history. Mr McCulloch was a passenger in the train, and assisted in the fruitless endeavour to save the fireman. The large attendance at the funeral was evidence of the wide esteem in which Mr McCulloch was held.



TORHILL

## WELLTREES DISASTER

Further to my comments in "Welltrees Remembered," I would like to reproduce this poem by Margaret Park, Glespin, re the railway disaster near Welltrees, not far from French's Garage—

### ON THE MOURNFUL OCCURRENCE IN AIRDSMOSS (NEAR LUGAR), 1867

'Twas night, and nature's blackest dyes  
Were floating o'er the western skies.  
The plover had lain down to sleep,  
In dark Airdsmoss, among the sheep,  
But hearts far blacker than the night  
Were plotting murder out of sight.  
Lay watching for the coming train,  
While heavy fell the sleet and rain;  
They did their work with wicked skill,  
Intending everyone to kill.  
Faithful Hunter and Blyth came on,  
Thinking of loving friends at home;  
The murderers see the engine turn,  
And fall a wreck in Welltrees Burn.  
The trucks were smashed midst spray  
and wave.  
Twas this the passengers did save.  
Hunter lay scorched above with fire,  
The waters rising high, yet higher;  
And fair-haired Blyth to all could speak  
Yet none could save him from the deep.  
Strange in a moss so far away,  
Two ministers were there to pray  
That all their sins might be forgiven,  
And Angels guard their souls to Heaven.  
All wrought most valiantly to save  
The orphan from the watery grave,  
Cordials of every kind were brought  
To gratify each wish or thought.  
Hunter once more passed Cameron's  
stone  
And reached in agony his home,  
Heard the sweet voices ever dear,  
His father, mother, standing near,  
And with fond looks of pale despair,

His wife and four sweet children there  
And his dear brothers from afar,  
Come but to see the setting star;  
That night of death and grief is o'er,  
Hunter and Blyth will come no more  
Murderer! you have fulfilled your vow,  
And heavy is your conscience now!  
The debt of blood now on your head  
Sooner or later must be paid.  
Do you expect your soul will shine  
In Heaven with the great sublime?  
What gloating spirits will convey  
Your never-dying soul away!  
Hunter and Blyth, your pains are past,  
You did your duty to the last;  
Little you knew the heavy cross,  
Lay in your path in dark Airdsmoss,  
Now murderer! it does with you dwell,  
The secret of their doom to tell.  
No police serves our gracious Queen,  
More cute than Captain Young has been  
His men have searched both day and  
night,  
The cruel deed to bring to light.  
Tho' Provins left his death-struck home,  
In Cumnock, through the moss to roam  
Sneddon and Ferguson on the trail,  
Their utmost search has no avail.  
Betrayed! may you be betrayed,  
Who such a desolation made,  
O! view the work with shuddering  
thought,  
The pain, the pangs yours hand have  
wrought.

This railway disaster was a deliberate act of sabotage, the reason being unknown, and the perpetrators were never found. The victims were both Muirkirk men — Blyth and Hunter, being the enginemen on the ill-fated train.

## A FAMOUS FLOCKMASTER

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Mr JAMES CLARK, J.P., CROSSFLATT

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Muirkirk has always been well known and admired for its achievements in the world of agriculture and sheep-rearing, and I was very interested when reading a copy of the "Kilmarnock Standard" published in 1913. It contained an excellent photographic reproduction and word sketch of Mr James Clark, J.P., Crossflatt. By way of introduction the writer says that a few years ago, on the occasion of the wedding of his son, the late Lord Ardwall, the eminent judge of the Court of Session, gave a great reception at which was gathered all the beauty and the chivalry of Scotland's capital. The name of a late-arriving guest was announced, whereupon Lord Arwall, moving forward to meet the newcomer, ejaculated pleasantly, "Ah! Here's my good friend, the black-faced man!" Visions of a dusky potentate from the Far East, or an illustrious descendant of some Uncle Tom from ole Virginny, or a princely piece of smiling ebony from Central Africa immediately suggested themselves to the guests. They turned round to view the dark-skinned gentleman for themselves. But lo! No Ethiopian was there to make the complexion of the ladies seem more dazzling fair in contrast with his own night-hue. Instead, the guests beheld their host shaking hands with and cheerily greeting a tall, well-built Scottish gentleman in the prime of life. There was a subtle air of distinction in his appearance; he might have been an eminent lawyer or man of business. The guests raised their eyebrows in polite wonderment. "Who is he?" they whispered, "and why strange appellation?" And then the knowing ones explained that that was Captain James Clark of Crossflatt, Muirkirk, and of a round dozen other farms, famed in agricultural circles throughout the world as a breeder of blackface sheep and one of the most successful farmers in Britain. And there were murmured requests to meet him, and subsequently much joyous talk and laughter over their host's jocular manner of introducing his guest.

The sketch gives particulars of the geography of the parish as well as some interesting history which, if some of us ever knew it, has long been forgotten. The house (Crossflatt), a substantial and comfortable square building of grey stone, stands 800 feet above sea level and part way up Cairntable, a hill which, rising to an eminence of 2000 feet, has the distinction of being the highest mountain in Ayrshire and of forming the boundary line between the counties of Ayr and Lanark. The approach to the house is by way of a steep avenue bordered by ancient trees, and in this savours of gentility not common to farm steadings. This luxury of environment arises from the fact that for nearly two and a half centuries the steading of Crossflatt has occupied the same site, and during all that period, save for the last few years, has been the residence of the owners of the farm. From the latter part of the seventeenth century until 1863 Crossflatt was owned and farmed by the Aird family, whose name is written large in the agricultural annals of the South of Scotland, and in that year it was taken on lease by Mr Charles Howatson of Glenbuck, whose wife was a member of the Aird family. After referring to the fact that it was Mr Howatson who first brought the Crossflatt blackfaced sheep into prominence by their superlative excellence, the sketch deals with Mr Clark's lease of Crossflatt and the transfer of the stock.

Dealing with Mr Clark's history, "The Standard" says that somewhere between forty and fifty years ago (1783-1883) Mr Clark was born and brought up

at Common Farm, in the parish of Auchinleck, of which his father, the late James Clark, formerly of Auchenlongford, was then the tenant. Mr Clark, sen., died while the boy was yet a child, but the farm was continued by his widow with the assistance of a manager. Mr Clark's schooldays are referred to, his determination to be a farmer as his forebears for generations back had been, of his mother's desire that he should go in for the ministry or law, of Mr Clark's work two years in a law office in Ayr, and of his leaving that work for the farm. What's bred in the bone will out! For the first two years he ploughed a team and took part in all the multifarious duties of the farm. Besides the sheep and cropping land there was a large herd of dairy cows on Common Farm, superintended by Mrs Clark, so it was no one-sided experience that the boy got. Looking back to-day Mr Clark can say that there is practically no labour of the farm which he has not undertaken at some time. He was intensely eager to learn, and nothing was too difficult or laborious or wearisome for him to attempt if thereby he might learn something. At the end of two years the manager of the farm left and it was proposed to appoint another. Young Clark pleaded with his mother to give him the job—to try him for a few months anyway. She doubted his ability for the work, but eventually decided to give him a trial. He took hold of the reigns of management, and since that time he has never looked back. Success has followed on success.

It was not as a breeder of blackface sheep that Mr Clark first came into prominence in the agricultural world, but as an exhibitor of Welsh ponies. Gradually, however, his attention turned more and more to the hardy Scots mountain sheep, and he resolved to devote his energies entirely to them — to the improving of the breed, to the production of something really good. He disposed of his stock of ponies, many of them becoming the property of Miss Anderson of Barskimming, who has since achieved many successes with them in the show yard. His holdings have grown until now they number a dozen, i.e., Common, Crossflatt, Ashieburn, Nether Whitehaugh, Chapelhouse, Middlefield, Waterhead, Linburn, Blackside, Dippol, Priesthill, and Burnhead. The total extent of these is about 16,000 acres, supporting something between 8000 and 10000 sheep, and Mr Clark is under no fewer than six landlords, namely:—Mr J. G. A. Baird, Wellwood; Mr Charles Howatson, Glenbuck, Sir Claude Alexander, Ballochmyle; Mrs Tuffnell, Dollars; Mr Cayzer, Lanfine; and Hon. James Boswell Talbot, Auchinleck. The relations between Mr Clark and these have ever been of the pleasantest nature and coloured by a mutual satisfaction.

While at three of these farms there are good-sized herds of dairy cows, it is of course as a breeder of blackfaced cows that Mr Clark was won renown. His successes at the bigger shows have been almost innumerable, and the prices that he attains to-day in the open markets for his stock would have seemed incredible a few years ago. Four times he has won the gold medal for blackfaced sheep at the Ayr Show, and twice he has secured the championship at the Highland Show, being reserve for the latter honour on other two occasions. He had the honour of breeding St. Patrick, the sire of St. Columba, for which Mr Howatson of Glenbuck paid £250, the highest price ever paid for a blackfaced sheep.

Mr Clark is unmarried and resides with his mother and a cousin, Miss Murray, at Crossflatt. Mrs Clark, though advanced in years now, still retains an astonishing measure of sprightliness, and impresses the observer as an unusually clever and capable lady. That she is a charming kindly hostess the writer testifies, and a day spent in her company and in that of her genial and gifted son is one to be long remembered.

The sketch, which is excellently written, then deals with what to most in this district is common knowledge, but one sentence shows Mr Clark's abilities in another sphere, and which probably comparatively few know here, and that is that he won the Highland Society's gold medal in 1899 for a paper on the reclaiming of bog land.

## **JOHN BROWN OF PRIESTHILL**

### **GENEALOGY**

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The following is a list of John Brown's descendants, taken from the family records:

JOHN BROWN, carrier, born 1640: shot at Priesthill, Muirkirk; by order of Claverhouse, 11th May 1685.

JOHN BROWN, his son, born 1680; died 1765 at Kailzie, Peebles.

JOHN BROWN, his son, farmer at Ingraston, Peebles, born 1744; died 4th February, aged 71, buried in Traquair. Mary Lambert, his spouse, born 1747; died at Traquair 26th September, 1792, aged 45, buried in Traquair.

WILLIAM BROWN, their eldest son, born 1772, farmer at Ingraston, Peebles; died 11th January, 1830, aged 58, buried in West Linton, Peebles.

JOHN BROWN, a son, born 1779, farmer in Auchencorth and Harley Moor for 32 years; died at Penicuik 7th March, 1841, leaving four sons and one daughter. Joan Kirsop, wife of last named, born 1812, died at Penicuik, 1874, aged 62, buried in Penicuik, their children being:—

JOHN BROWN, Port Surveyor, Inland Revenue, London, born 6th January, 1833 at Auchencorth, Peebles; died 9th June, 1884, buried in Abbey Park, Cemetery, London

WILLIAM BROWN, born 17th June, 1834, at Auchencorth; died 16th September, 1885, aged 51; buried in Salford Cemetery, Manchester.

JAMES BROWN, born 1st December, 1835, at Auchencorth, engineer and inventor; died 7th November, 1892, aged 57, buried in Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool.

ELIZABETH BROWN, born 1837, Auchencorth; died in Edinburgh.

THOMAS BROWN, born 1840, at Penecuik; killed by rebel natives at Opolikie, New Zealand.



# THE GREAT WAR

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## The Sacrifice of Captain James Pirrie

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Over the years much has been written of the Great War, mostly in general terms, so I thought my readers might like to get a different aspect of that terrible conflict through the eyes of a Muirkirk man himself — William S. Pirrie, who was a teacher at Muirkirk Furnace Road School, but chose to enlist to play his part in the War. In 1915 in the Dardanelles, Coy. Sgt. Major W. S. Pirrie, “even though three times wounded refused to leave his post, his determination at a critical time being of the utmost value,” and Major Egerton, commanding the Battalion, has recommended the immediate issue to him of the Distinguished Conduct Medal. The latter has also received a commission and has been promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant. Here is a letter he wrote to the founder of the Muirkirk Advertiser,” following this incident:—

Dear Mr Smith, — In fulfilment of my promise I’m now giving you a few notes from the Front. As you know we are operating in the Gallipoli Peninsular, our immediate object being the taking of Achi Baba. To go back to the commencement of operations here, I may state that the act of landing must have been one of the most difficult tasks ever undertaken by any body of troops. Steep cliffs, bristling with machine guns and lined by a brave and intrepid enemy, protected in front by a perfect network of barbed wire extending well into the sea, presented obstacles which seemed impregnable to even the finest troops. Yet our lads—the Australians, the R.N.L.I., the R.N.D., the Essex, Dublins, Munsters, Enniskillins, and Worcesters under galling artillery fire from front and flanks, carried the position at the point of a bayonet.

When we landed the Turks had been driven two or three miles nearer Achi Baba, the summit of which is about seven miles from the landing point at the extreme end of the Peninsula. Since our landing the enemy has been driven under the shadow of that frowning hill, which spans the Peninsula with outspread arms as if to forbid our advance. I am glad to say that the Ayrshire lads had a hand in driving them back.

In peace time this must have been a land of plenty. Vineyards abound, and water is plentiful. The farmsteads, now in hopeless ruins, must have afforded a cool retreat from the broiling sun, as they are invariably thick-walled. The despoiling hand of war has now altered the appearance of the landscape. Trenches and communicating saps form a network over the whole scene of operations. One may easily lose one’s way in these trenches, especially in the proximity of the firing line. The trenches are all named, and it is possible to have a stroll from Regent Street along Oxford Street to Piccadilly Circus. There is also a Sauchiehall Street.

Let me now give you some idea of our doings since our arrival here. As you know, we dug ourselves in under shell fire. A couple of days after, we went to the firing line, where we remained three days. We then came back to the reserve trenches, where we were employed on fatigues, and so well did the Fusiliers dig that they earned the highest praise of the engineers in charge.

Early in the morning of the 12th we moved into firing line. Some trenches were to be taken, and our Brigade had a certain frontage to take. About 7 a.m. a terrible bombardment commenced, and at 7.35 a.m. the order came to go. It was grand to see the boys go up, and out, and over. Many fell as the attack developed, but the remainder pushed on and took the trenches allotted to them. Then followed the consolidating party, whose duty it was to dig saps leading to the captured trenches. It was the acme of heroism to stand under withering shrapnel and dig in, yet "C" Coy. (The lads from Cumnock and Maybole) did it.

Then came the counter attack. The Turks came on in force, but were mowed down by our machine guns and rifle fire. My old pal, George Higgins, of the 4th Batt., distinguished himself by leading his Machine Gun Section in the attack, capturing a part of the trench, and getting his gun into action in record time.

After the action came the sad duty of attending to the wounded and burying the dead. The latter duty could only be performed at night. For three days we remained strengthening our position, and on the night of the 15th we returned to the rest camp to receive the congratulations of our General on the manner in which the Brigade had carried out the work allotted to it. This Battalion was singled out by our Brigadier for its steadiness.

Now, battles can be won in modern warfare without grievous losses, and I'd like you to point out to the eligible lads in Muirkirk the absolute necessity of their rallying to the call to fill the gaps in our ranks. Are they afraid? Has the blood of their Covenanting forefathers dried in their veins? Can they read of the gallant deeds performed by their defenders and remain unmoved? Are they not ashamed to be seen in "civilians" while their former comrades are facing the music in Flanders and Gallipoli? Do they not blush when they see the posters proclaiming the fact that men are urgently needed? Is it possible for them to discuss the war at all?

In conclusion, let me say that the Muirkirk lads in Gallipoli are quitting themselves like men. The boys I once taught in Furnace Road are soldiers every inch of them.

W. S. PIRRIE.

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Shortly after this letter had been sent, Lieut. Pirrie was promoted to the rank of Captain. In April, while serving in Palestine, he met his death, and it took some time before the details of his untimely end were made public, and even then there seemed to be some conflict of opinions. According to his Commanding Officer, in a letter to Pirrie's mother, it was recorded that Captain Pirrie, when trying to rouse his men in a battle against the Turks, was shot through the head. It is also stated that Captain Pirrie was one of the bravest men he had met.

Captain Pirrie's loss was genuinely felt in the village. William S. Pirrie came to Muirkirk direct from Aberdeen University, nearly ten years ago, and took up the teaching of the Supplementary Class at Furnace Road School. From his advent there he took a conspicuous part in the life of the village. He was a prominent official and player of the Athletic Football Club, and was the R.W.M. of the local Lodge of Freemasons. As a shot he proved himself to be one of the best in the country, and on several occasions competed successfully at Bisley and Darnley. He was interested in the Scout movement and from its inception Captain Pirrie took an interest in the local Company of Territorials. Captain Pirrie left Muirkirk

with his Company in August, 1914, but was retained on the staff of the School Board. Volunteering for Foreign Service, Captain Pirrie knew no fear, and that perhaps has proved his undoing.

Muirkirk paid a terrible price for this effort in what was named the Great War. In this present day it is almost unimaginable that a village the size of Muirkirk provided 275 volunteers (11 women included) to fight the freedom battle in the fields of Europe and the deserts of Egypt. Of that total 87 men made the supreme sacrifice. In their memory a handsome memorial was built at the entrance to the Victory Park. And for this reason too the Cairn was erected at the top of Cairntable — and what better place to go (in the solitude of the hills) to think about and thank those who gave so much for us.

## THE MEMORIAL GATES



OPENING CEREMONY, 1922



## MUIRKIRK HERO

While digging out the information of the previous article, there came to the surface another piece which really took my eye, and here is the gist of it.

It will doubtless be news to many residents in Muirkirk to learn that the village can boast of being the birthplace of, if not a hero of the Victoria Cross, a man who had the choice of one. In the "Aldershot News" of 1904, the news of the death of Major and Quarter-Master William Stirling Paton, Royal Horse Artillery, is recorded, he having passed away in Cambridge Hospital, after a long and painful illness, in his 55th year. The deceased officer, the print says, had a very distinguished career, and was known throughout the Army for the gallant part he took in saving the guns of his battery at the terrible disaster of Maiwand, during the Afghan War of 1879-80. Paton enlisted in the Royal Horse Artillery early in 1869, and by his fine soldierly qualities he quickly rose in his profession, and gaining successive promotion until, when the Afghan War broke out in 1879, he was Battery-Sergeant Major of E. Battery, the Royal Horse Artillery, then quartered

in Bombay. The story of his bravery is related at length.

In a sharp engagement while marching to Kandahar, one after the other of the officers fell, until the command was taken by Paton, and through his coolness and encouragement, the guns were saved and the enemy beaten off. Kandahar, 56 miles distant, was at last reached, and that without



food or water. Two nights and a day were spent on the march, continually harassed by the enemy in the rear, and shot at by the villagers en route. The gallantry of Battery-Sergeant-Major Paton was mentioned in despatches, and he was given the choice of the Victoria Cross or the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the promise of a commission. He took the latter, and was gazetted Lieutenant and Quarter master in May, 1882. He also took part in the great march from Kabul to Kandahar, under Lord Roberts. He gave a special sitting to G. D. Gillies, the war artiste, for his famous picture entitled "Saving the Guns at Maiwand," the hero appearing in the picture in the right forefront. A picture with the same title appears in one of the school books used in Furnace Road School. Major Paton (who took his mother's name when he enlisted and stuck to it to the end) was a son of the late Alexander Clark, feuar, Muirkirk, and a brother of the late James Clark, Clark Place, Main Street, and of the late Alexander Clark, for many years in the Glenbuck Inn. Paton has three sons in the Army, also three grand-nephews, the latter from this Parish.

Note.—Clark's Place was the storeyed building which stood at the foot of The Style, where Tom Symington's Cairn was erected.

## MUIRKIRK IN OLDEN TIMES

It is always interesting to learn something about the village in days gone past, and a directory, published in the year 1837, does just that, and I quote:— In 1983 the blackfaced sheep in this parish carried the Highland Society's Prize. At the Muirkirk Iron Co.'s Works there are three blast furnaces constantly in operation for the manufacture of pig iron; the malleable description is also produced here, both in a rolled and hammered state. There are besides, extensive lime and tile works belonging to the Duke of Portland, who, with Lord Douglas and the Hon. Colonel Cathcart, are the principal proprietors of the land of the parish.

In the village there are two libraries, which are well conducted, and the like number of good Inns — the Black Bull and the Masons Arms. Fairs are held in the months of July, August, and December. Adam McCaul, Post Master. English and South letters arrive from Douglas every afternoon at half-past one, and are despatched every morning at half-past eight. Letters from Kilmarnock arrive every morning at half-past eight, and are despatched every afternoon at half-past one. There were no railways in these days of course.

### ***Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy***

Alex. Aird of Crossflatt  
Rev. John Aird  
Rev. James Symington  
Andrew Allison, Tardoes

### ***Innkeepers and Vinters***

Mary Begg  
James Gibson  
John Johnstone  
Robert Kay (Black Bull)  
Samuel Taylor  
Arch. Thomson (Masons Arms)

### ***Schools***

Robert Callan  
Ironworks Coy. School  
William Johnstone  
James McCartney  
James Muir

### ***Shopkeepers and Traders***

William Aird, Miller and Sawyer  
John Begg, Smith and Farrier  
James Blackwood, Joiner  
David Gray, Surgeon  
James Harkness, Bootmaker  
Arch. Kennedy, Surgeon  
John Lapraik, Cooper  
Adam McCaul, Merchant & Stamp Dist.  
John McKerrow, Ironmonger  
James Meikle, Blacksmith  
Joseph Muir, Grocer & Spirit Dealer  
Alex. Reid, Tailor  
Daniel Robertson, Draper  
Hugh Smith, Jas. Smith, & Wm. Smith

### ***Boot and Shoe Makers***

James Whyte, Manager, Duke of  
Portland's Tile Works

### ***Carriers***

#### ***To Ayr—***

John Lambie from Black Bull, every  
Monday and Thursday

#### ***To Old Cumnock—***

John Kerr from Black Bull every Tuesday  
and Thursday  
Robert Latta (From his house), every  
Monday and Thursday

#### ***To Kilmarnock—***

John Kerr from Black Bull  
Every Tuesday and Friday

#### ***To Mauchline—***

George Reid from Samuel Taylor's  
Every Monday and Thursday

#### ***To Ochiltree—***

John Lambie from the Black Bull  
Every Monday and Thursday

Latta arrived in Edinburgh every  
Monday and left on Tuesday.  
Headquarters, Sharp's 100 Grassmarket

Ronald arrived in Glasgow on Monday  
and Thursday and left the same days.  
Headquarters, 182 Gallowgate.

### ***Muirkirk Iron Company***

Thos. Carswell, Wm. Falconer, Resident  
Partners

It is interesting to see a comparison in 1915, and that the James Gibson mentioned amongst the innkeepers and vintners occupied the premises at the corner of Glasgow Road and Main Street (then Pearson's drapery establishment and the Post Office, and latterly Trotter's) as a licensed grocer. It appears that the shop in Main Street presently occupied by Messrs J. S. Weir & Co. was for generations an apothecary's (now the Bunkers); this was Dr Gray's shop. Dr Gray was followed by Dr Morrison. Dr Kennedy resided in Kateshall. John Lapraik (brother of the poet) resided in Kirkgreen. Daniel Robertson, draper, was the father of the late Daniel Robertson, baker, and resided where then stood the shed of the new playground of Main Street School. Adam McCaul, stamp distributor, resided opposite the Temperance Hall. The establishment of Mr Cook, grocer, occupied the site of Joseph Muir, grocer and spirit dealer. Samuel Taylor's licensed grocer's shop was in the property immediately west of the U.P. Church (Dundas Hall) where now is the Co-operative car park.

With regard to the schools, Mr Thomas Weir (to whom we are obliged for at least the explanatory notes) says he was at Robert Callan's. It was situated in Main Street where the houses known as "Mossend" then stood (just above the old folks complex, down from the Working men's Club). Callan was a helpless cripple and lay in bed on the "breid o' his back." He had a rope affixed to the ceiling above him, and when any of the pupils were disobedient he cried Auld Betty ben, and she brought the one to the front of the bed, the while Callan drew himself up by the rope to administer the tawse. Asked if he could do this disagreeable (?) work, Mr Weir said "Fegs, he could lay on. An' if it wis a terrible faut o'o had tae lay oor hauns on a brod." (How's that for Scots?). The Ironworks School was on the site of the Furnace Road School, but it stood on a hollow (now Mitchell's Garage). McCartney's School was in the old Independent Church where Mr Blackwood's Furniture shop was, then a single-storey building (now Muirhead's Shop). James Muir's School was over Mr Cook's and Mr Da Prato's shops, and there was a stair and a cart road at the end (Crosbie's Property). The James Whyte mentioned as Manager of the Duke of Portland's tile works, was also the local Banker (immediately preceding the late James Gibson), and he was also the farmer in Kames Farm. Latta, the carrier, resided in Old Cumnock, and Ronald, where what was then known as Ronaldo Place, Main Steet (the site of Muirkirk Working Men's Club).



DA PRATO'S

CLARK'S  
BUILDING

MAIN STREET, MUIRKIRK

## LEVEL CROSSING

Did you know that Muirkirk had a level crossing at the Southside of the village? This was the case as I discovered when reading a report of yet another Golden Wedding in Muirkirk, this time that of Mr and Mrs James Hamilton of the Toll Cottage in Smallburn. It is interesting to note the details. Mr Hamilton was an Edinburgh man, as was his good lady. James was a cabinet maker to trade, and continued his occupation for ten years after his marriage, when his health gave way. By way of a change he visited the seaside, only to return worse than when he went. He tried the Muirkirk air, and his health so improved that he made Muirkirk his home. That was in 1876. Since Mr Hamilton's advent to the place he has been connected with the G. & S. W. Railway Company. The only remnant left to tell the tale of his first job is the road in front of the Red Row. Instead of the roadway that now passes under the railway, before the tunnel was made, access to the Southside was got by means of a level crossing, and the road in front of the Red Row went straight ahead. Mr Hamilton was first employed in opening and shutting by hand the gates in connection with the railway traffic at the Ironworks, while there was another set of gates just parallel, wrought with a wheel from a signal box, controlling the G. & W. S. Railway lines, and Mr Hamilton dwelt in a sentry box there. Some four years later the tunnel was opened, and Mr Hamilton's services were requisitioned on the platform of the old station (presently the station house, and now the Clubhouse of East Ayrshire Car Club) as a porter. After another four years of service in this way the position of joiner and wagon inspector at the station became vacant, and Mr Hamilton worthily filled this post from then until till about 1913, when he retired through failing health — rheumatism principally.

Of course, this was not the only level crossing in Muirkirk. I remember well the one at Bankhead which crossed the pug line and canal. Then of course there was the one called Palmer's Crossing over the main Ayr railway line opposite the head of the rows. This was later replaced by an iron foot bridge. Another crossing was up past Torhill where the mineral line crossed the main Muirkirk-Douglas Road to gain access to Ponesk Pit.



THE RED ROW

## A SECLUDED MONUMENT

In the early 20th century Muirkirk had a thriving Ramblers' Club, which organised monthly rambles to places of interest, near and far, and there was always an expert alongside to keep the members enlightened with the history of the places visited. Mr Charles P. Bell was secretary at one time and regularly published articles of a local interest, and here is just one of his many reports:—

There are many lovely spots in our parish, and a few little beyond its immediate confines. One which is known to only a very limited number of our citizens may be mentioned here. The hill which slopes gradually from the Dipple Valley reaches an elevation of 1650 feet. On the survey map it is termed Goodbush Hill, and here the parishes of Muirkirk, Lesmahagow, and Avondale meet at a point. A good way of getting to this place is by following the main channel of the Dipple Burns until the hill is reached, and soon the march fence is visible. As we approach it, a splendid view of the Nethan valley is obtained. Green fields, cultivated land, lakes, rivers, and woods suddenly take up the eye's attention, in strong contrast to the rather mournful shades of heather and withered-looking grass around and behind us. Crossing the fence into Lanarkshire, a quick descent can be made into the Clyde Valley, for the hills that bound Muirkirk parish on its north-eastern side appear from Lesmahagow district as a long brown-coloured wall.

Following the march fence betwixt the Lanarkshire parishes for 200 yards or thereby, a monument is seen still lower down. On reaching this the pedestrian finds that it is built on a high natural mound of earth set in the midst of a deep glen. Behind and about the mound hundreds of people might be hidden from all view for miles in front, and yet a sentinel on the mound can see for miles around. The monument is 10 or 11 feet high, is square built, with suitable ornamental work on its summit, and at a distance looks like some grey giant standing in the moss.

The valley around is of green grass, and two branches of the Beck Burn pass the mound on its right and left. But the grass and the streams are not noticed until the traveller is close at the spot. There is a well of clear water here, and it would be a model place for a picnic party. It was used by the Covenanters for other purposes. One side of the stone reads:—

Erected  
By the Countrymen in  
memory of the Presbyterians  
in Scotland, who were frequently  
compelled to seek safety  
from persecution in the  
reigns of Charles II. and  
James II. by holding their  
meetings for preaching the gospel  
and other religious purposes  
in this sequestered placed and  
whose patriotism and piety  
they record with admiration  
and gratitude.

The opposite side informed us that:—

This Monument  
which was generously executed  
by the gratuitous labours of a  
few friends of the Scottish  
Reformation was occasioned  
by a sermon delivered here on  
Sabbath, the 16th of July, 1834,  
by the Rev. William Logan,  
Lesmahagow, from Rev. vii., 14—  
“These are they which came  
out of great tribulation, and  
have washed their robes, and  
made them white in the blood  
of the Lamb.”

The remaining two sides of the monument were originally left blank, but they are now well filled with the names of that class of visitors to all monuments who deem it a duty to themselves, their king, and their country, to inscribe their own names and initials in print of varied size and every shape. Perhaps the wise men of Lesmahagow anticipated this failing (or is it a virtue?), and left two sides blank for the sole benefit of the amateur engravers. There seems to be something in it, for legitimate text on the first mentioned sides is almost unstained by vandal types of print.

The monument is about 7 miles from Muirkirk, and can be reached in about three hours easy walking. Tourists should take something with them to satisfy the inner man, for Logan House, the nearest dwelling to the monument, is nearly two miles away as the crow flies. This shooting lodge and several houses beyond can plainly be seen, and although they are in one sense near, they may yet appear far away when it comes to walking to them.

C.P.B



KYPE MONUMENT

## LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF OLD MUIRKIRK

---

### O'ER THE MOOR AMANG THE HEATHER

Comin' thro' the Craigs o' Kyle,  
 Amang the bonnie blooming heather,  
 There I met a bonnie lassie  
 Keeping a' her yowes thegether.

*O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 There I met a bonnie lassie  
 Keeping a' her yowes thegether.*

Says I, my dear, where is thy hame  
 In moor or dale, pray tell me whether?  
 She says, I tent the fleecy flocks,  
 That fed amang the blooming heather.

*O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 There I met a bonnie lassie  
 Keeping a' her yowes thegether.*

We laid us doon upon a bank,  
 Sae warm and sunny was the weather;  
 She left her flock at large to rove,  
 Amang the bonnie blooming heather.

*O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 There I met a bonnie lassie  
 Keeping a' her yowes thegether.*

While thus we lay she sang a sang,  
 Till echo rang a mile and farther;  
 And aye the burden o' the sang  
 Was—o'er the moor among the heather.

*O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 There I met a bonnie lassie  
 Keeping a' her yowes thegether.*

She charm'd my heart, an' aye sin syne,  
 I couldna think on ony ither:  
 By sea and sky she shall be mine!  
 The bonnie lass among the heather.

*O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 O'er the moor amang the heather,  
 There I met a bonnie lassie  
 Keeping a' her yowes thegether.*

Burns communicated this song to Johnstone's Scots Musical Museum; and in his "Remarks on Scottish Songs and Ballads," he states, in language somewhat rude, that it "is the composition of a JEAN GLOVER, a girl who was . . . .also a thief; and in one or other character, has visited most of the correction houses in the west. She was born, I believe, in Kilmarnock: I took the song down from her singing as she was strolling with a slight-of-hand blackguard through the country." Though the song alluded to has long been popular, and copied into

numerous collections, this is all that has hitherto transpired respecting Jeanie Glover. That the song was her own we are left in no manner of doubt; for it must be inferred, from the positive statement of the Poet, that she had herself assured him of the fact.

It is well that Burns expressed himself in decided language; for otherwise it would scarcely be credited that one of our sweetest and most simple lyrics should have been the production of a person whose habits and course of life were so irregular. When at Muirkirk, we were fortunate enough to learn a few particulars relative to Jeanie Glover. A niece of hers still resides there, and one or two old people distinctly remember having seen her. She was born at Townhead, Kilmarnock, on the 31st October, 1758, of parents respectable in their sphere.

She was remarkable for her beauty—both of face and figure—properties which, joined to a romantic and poetic fancy, had no doubt their influence in shaping her future unfortunate career. She was also an excellent singer . . . Jeanie unhappily became enamoured of the stage; and in an evil hour eloped with one of her heroes of the sock and buskin. Her subsequent life, as may be guessed, was one of adventure, chequered, if Burns is to be credited, with the extremes of folly, vice, and misfortune.

About the time the Ironworks commenced, a brother of Jeanie (James Glover) removed from Kilmarnock to Muirkirk; and there, in the employ of “the Company,” continued until his death, which occurred about 14 years ago, leaving a daughter (the niece formerly mentioned), whose husband is one of the carpenters employed at the Works. This individual, as well as several others, recollects having seen Jeanie and the “slight-of-hand blackguard”—whose name was Richard—at Muirkirk, forty-three years ago (about 1795), where they performed for a few nights in the large room of a public house called the “Black Bottle,” from a sign above the door of that description, kept by one David Lennox. During her stay on this occasion she complemented her brother with a cheese and a boll of meal—a circumstance strongly indicative of her sisterly affection, and the success that had attended the entertainments given by her and her husband.

Those persons who recollect her appearance at this time, notwithstanding the many vicissitudes she must have previously encountered, described her as exceedingly handsome. One old woman with whom we conversed, also remembered having seen Jeanie at a fair in Irvine, gaily attired, and playing on a tambourine at the mouth of a close, in which was the exhibition-room of her husband, the conjurer. “Weel do I remember her,” said our informant, “an’ thocht her the brawest woman I had ever seen step in leather shoon!” Such are our Muirkirk reminiscences of Jeanie Glover — From “The Ballads and Songs of Ayrshire,” published in 1846, quoted from “Contemporaries of Burns.”

[For the use of this little volume we are in debted to Mr Thomas Weir, and as well as being interesting in itself the above forms a valuable page in the collection of lights and shadows of old Muirkirk. We are always pleased to receive such contributions].—William Shaw Smith, Founder and Editor, of the “Muirkirk Advertiser.”

## CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

During the First World War, when so many of our young men were enlisting to fight for their country, and indeed many made the supreme sacrifice, there came to the surface the “Conscientious Objectors” — those who felt their conscious could not let them fight in such a conflict. Naturally, this caused a great deal of concern and animosity in the country, and the topic was never out of the headlines. Without going into the pros and cons of the subject, I thought readers might like to hear a local story which was told often during that time. Our beloved and well-respected Parish Minister, the Rev. John Henderson, B.D., who did so much for the war effort here in Muirkirk, was honoured by having one of his sermons published in the “Glasgow Evening Times.” Following this Mr Henderson was sent an anonymous letter, and a pamphlet from a conscientious objector, the letter stating that the preacher was wrong in his ideas and hoping for his conversion to the C.O.’s views. The writer did not sign his name, the proffered reason given that he was a C.O. And the Minister had two pence to pay for the letter, the package being under-stamped. The unknown hero had evidently also conscientious objections to paying the full whack of the postage. Mr Henderson was of course paying the penalty of fame. I know of one Muirkirk Conscientious Objector who spent a year in jail for standing up for his beliefs.



LINKIEBURN AND IRONWORKS COTTAGES

## WHERE DID THEY LIVE?

How often have we heard that question asked when arguments crop up (and they usually do) about things local in a time gone past? In 1920 a Committee was formed to raise money to erect the War Memorial. Each contributor, where he lived, and the amount given was published locally. As a matter of interest and perhaps a help to those seeking information about Muirkirk at that time, I append the subscription list, but, to save embarrassment, perhaps, I have omitted the £sd.

### Kirkgreen and Bridge Street

William Dempster  
Charles Hibberd  
Patrick McGarey  
John W. Dempster  
John A. Dempster  
Thomas Ross  
Mrs Kirk  
William Samson  
William Gilfillan  
David Loggie  
Thomas McDonald  
Alex. Anderson  
Mrs William Anderson  
Mrs Caldwell  
Robert Jack  
John Jack  
Neil Buchanan, Sen.  
Thomas Hazel  
Joseph Thomson  
William Wallace  
Alexander Simpson  
Frank Marshall  
William Hunter  
Robert Smith  
Hugh Dempster  
Mrs George Anderson  
James Fisher  
Mrs Isa Samson  
James Dempster  
David S. Stitt  
Mrs William Brown  
Robert Caldwell  
Alex. McCartney

### Burnside, Garronhill, Holmhead, Burnbrae and Isle

William Loggie  
James McIntyre  
George Thorburn  
William Cannon  
Alexander Cannon  
William Barrie  
John Kerr  
Thomas Barrie  
John McKinnon

James Gilchrist  
Thomas Robb  
William Archibald  
Hugh Vallance  
James Donaghy  
Hugh Caldwell  
James Caldwell  
James McCall  
William Gilchrist  
Miss McIntyre  
James McIntyre, Jr.  
Miss J. McIntyre  
Mrs Gilbert McKay  
Hugh Hamilton  
George Loggie  
Miss Sunderland

### Masons Arms to Kateshall

Mrs G. Smith  
John Gold  
Robert Barrie  
Salvation Army Officers  
John Watson  
John Millar  
David Samson  
John Pollock  
Thomas Nelson  
James Burns  
Andrew Park  
William McCall  
Chris. Crosbie  
Mrs Gibney  
William McMillan  
Miss H. J. Blythe  
Miss Annie Blythe  
James Love  
John Mathieson  
Charles Wilson  
Mrs McMurdo  
Hugh Hamilton  
F. J. Gordon  
Mrs Joseph Baird  
Samuel Rae  
Leap Year Dance Committee

### Mr Rowe's to The Stile

Thomas Rowe  
Richard Gibson

James Gibson  
Archibald McDonald  
John Taylor  
Mrs William Wilson  
Daniel Cook  
David Wilson  
Andrew Clark  
James Millar  
William Douglas  
James Mathieson  
James Anderson  
Daniel R. Harkness  
Thomas McKinnon  
James Edmiston  
Thomas Hogg  
Mrs McSkimming  
John McSkimming  
Gavin Logan  
Allan Loggie  
Henry T. Inkster  
Mrs John Samson  
Thomas Welsh  
William Ross  
Mrs Boyce  
Gilbert McBride

### Stile to Glasgow Road Corner

William Shaw  
Thomas Symington  
William Haugh  
Charles Anderson  
John Clark  
John McCallum  
William Henderson  
Miss J. W. Murray  
W. S. Smith  
John Andrews  
Mrs T. Alston  
James Gibson  
Mrs Charles Baird  
Matthew Dickson  
William Dickson  
Andrew Murdoch  
Alexander Ross  
John McKenzie  
John Hogg  
John Loggie  
John A. Geddes  
Walter Weir  
Richard Bain  
James Williamson  
James Lyle, Jr.

Misses J. & A. Gibson  
Robert F. Gibson  
James M. Law  
William Angus  
John Kennedy  
John Halliday  
James Dunbar  
William Hodge  
Misses Blackwood  
James Steele  
James H. Mitchell  
Joseph Hastings

### Brown's Building to Bank

George W. Millar  
Robert Reid  
James Brown  
N. Da Prato  
James Cook  
John Ramsay  
William Samson  
John Murphy  
William Bone  
William Davidson  
Fred Wright  
John Devine  
Miss Burnie  
William Alston  
Joseph Mansfield  
James Short  
John McCall  
Thomas Murray  
George Goldie  
John Colthart  
Mrs Wallace  
Alex. S. Templeton  
John H. Preston  
D. B. Greenwood  
Mrs T. H. Wilson  
Andrew Rae  
Alex. Pollock  
James Weir  
Thomas Jackson.  
John Meikle  
William Weir

**Bank to Morton Place**

Thomas Samson  
 Robert Jack  
 Andrew Findlay  
 William Mitchell  
 John L. Armstrong  
 Alex. Little  
 Andrew Welsh  
 Thomas Wharrie  
 James McCall  
 George Taylor  
 James M. Brown  
 James McKie  
 C. P. Bell  
 Mrs Hendry  
 John Ross  
 James Girdwood  
 John Smith  
 Robert Thomson  
 Miss Findlay (London)  
 James G. Hodge  
 David Hamilton  
 James Vallance  
 Gilbert Wilson  
 Robert Gibson  
 Muirkirk Co-op. Socy.

**OldSmithy to Gas Works**

Thomas Burnie  
 Robert K. Wilson  
 Peter Brown  
 John Hodge & Sons  
 John McCulloch  
 Drs Barbour & Cameron  
 Andrew Pringle  
 John D. Dunbar  
 Adam Whyte  
 Miss Sharp  
 James M. Hodge  
 Mrs Scott  
 James Smith  
 William Caldwell  
 John Armstrong  
 Matthew Thomson  
 John Young

**Smallburn (South Side)**

Mrs Fettes  
 Miss Sunderland  
 James Clement  
 Andrew Clement  
 Charles Wilson  
 Mrs Lochrie  
 David Dalziel  
 James Robb  
 William Little  
 David R. Dodds  
 George Vallance  
 William Logie  
 James Lynn  
 James Lochrie  
 Baird Institute Dance Com.

James Paterson

**Smallburn (North Side)**

Rev. Jas Greenshields  
 Richard Murray  
 Thomas Murray  
 William Lochrie  
 Robert Gilchrist  
 John Oliver  
 William Oliver  
 Thomas Henderson  
 Thomas Wilson  
 Thomas Irvine  
 John McCall  
 James Weir  
 Misses Aird  
 James Young  
 Mrs Grant  
 John McDonald  
 Robert Symington  
 George Harrison  
 Robert Samson  
 John Murdoch  
 Robert Rennie  
 David Forbes  
 Andrew McSkimming  
 Arch. D. McCluckie,  
 Glespin

**Glasgow Road to Heathfield**

N. Da Prato  
 Henry Murray  
 James McCaw  
 Charles Johnstone  
 William Smith  
 Thomas Wilson  
 James Bain  
 Rose Murray  
 Richard Wilson  
 Henry Wilson  
 Mrs Shields  
 William Hogg  
 Robert Gibson  
 Samuel Alexander  
 Thomas Thomson  
 John Ross  
 James Heron  
 Peter Smith  
 Malcolm Ross  
 William Nisbet  
 Miss Nisbet  
 John Callan  
 William Anderson  
 John McCartney  
 Thomas Gray  
 John Hunter  
 George Hunter  
 Miss Weir  
 Hugh Samson

**Wellwood Street**

Mr and Mrs William  
 Pearson  
 Miss Wilson  
 Mrs Wyper  
 James G. Richmond  
 Francis McKerrow

John McWhinnie  
 John Wyllie  
 Mrs & Misses Hutchison  
 William Brown  
 Hugh Bell  
 William Patrick  
 Daniel Loggie  
 James Loggie  
 Hugh Wilson  
 Neil Buchanan, Jr.  
 James Caldwell  
 Archibald Mitchell  
 Rev. W.C. Connacher  
 Miss Smith  
 Miss Bruce  
 Miss Ross  
 William Blackwood

**Catcheyburn,  
Bankhead  
Crossflatt,  
Auldhouseburn**

Duncan Robb  
 Hugh Miller  
 John Adamson  
 David Murray  
 Alexander Brown  
 David McFegan  
 Quinton Anderson  
 Hugh Murdoch  
 David Murray, Jr.  
 John Young  
 J. & W. McGillivray  
 Mrs McGillivray  
 David Ferguson  
 George Thorburn

**Burnbank, Manse,  
Torhill, Lightshaw,  
Tardoes, Crofthead**

Mrs Fearon  
 John Ross  
 Robert Taylor  
 John Robb  
 Campbell Wilson  
 Thomas Floyd  
 Rev. John Henderson  
 James Barrie  
 Misses Floyd  
 Thomas Wilson  
 James Stitt  
 William Leslie  
 Thomas Leslie  
 William Stitt  
 Andrew Loggie  
 Arch. McNally  
 Mrs Haugh  
 Thomas McNally  
 George Pickering  
 John Wilson  
 James Lawson  
 T. & A. Semple  
 Misses Pearson  
**Airdsmill to  
 Beaconhill,  
 Wellwood Kennels and**  
 Miss Murchie

**Kames Farm**

James Anderson  
 Thomas Irvine  
 Mrs Irvine  
 John Kay  
 John Whyte  
 Alexander Graham  
 Miss MacDougall  
 Andrew Carmichael  
 Arch. Frairbairn  
 George Harvey  
 William Buchanan  
 Walter Buchanan  
 Miss Buchanan  
 Margaret Murdoch  
 Alex. Laidlaw  
 Miss M. Laidlaw  
 James McCulloch  
 Mrs Hadden  
 Robert McLean  
 William Nicol  
 James Nicol  
 Robert Moffat  
 John Moffat.

**Dalfram to Upper  
Whitegaugh,  
Aitkenleuch  
and Netherwood**

William Scott  
 Thos. Gardiner  
 William Murdoch  
 Gavin Gemmell  
 Andrew Murdoch  
 William Davidson  
 John Foster  
 James Blackwood  
 Hugh Anderson  
 Andrew Williamson  
 Mrs Findlay  
 James Craig  
 Mrs Craig  
 Miss Jean Craig  
 Mrs Forsyth  
 John Mitchell

**Kirkburnhead Toll to  
Water-  
head, Middlefield,  
Burnfoot  
and Bankend**

John McClymont  
 Thomas Rae  
 James Auld  
 Neil McKenzie  
 Duncan McCallum  
 Samuel Thomson  
 Mrs Thomson  
 Andrew Lambie  
 Robert McKay  
 James Baird  
 John Wright

**Kameshill,  
Stableyard,  
Station House,  
Linkieburn  
House, Railway Bdgs,  
Kames Pit Row,  
Wellwood Pit**

Dugald Baird  
Thomas Jack  
William Lindsay  
Gavin Dalziel  
George Campbell  
William Wardrop  
William Cranston  
Edgar Anderson  
Mrs Gibson  
Thomas Morton  
William Laidlaw  
Archibald Young

**Kames Row No. 1**

William McCormick  
Bernard Gibney  
John Kay  
H. Campbell  
Thomas Fleming  
Robert Hannah  
James Hill  
William Bradford

**Kames Row No. 2**

William Dodds  
William Dodds, Jr.  
Hugh Parker

**Kames Row No. 3  
Railway Terrace No. 2**

John Bradford  
Peter Steele  
Thomas Brown  
William Kennedy

David Woodburn  
George Wilson  
Peter Findlay  
John Johnstone  
John Scobie  
John Hamilton

**Railway Terrace No. 1  
Midhouse, Midhouse  
Row  
and Springhill**

John Henderson  
Henry Hastings  
John Fleming  
Andrew Moreland  
Daniel Easton  
Robert Dempster  
William Baird  
Robert Bradford  
James Samson  
Hugh Samson

Matthew Forsyth  
James Murdoch  
Robert Luke  
Robert Steele  
Hugh Williamson  
George Williamson  
John Williamson  
John Mitchell  
Hugh Samson  
George Willock  
J. Findlay Porter

**Linkieburn Square,  
Old  
Linkieburn, Ironworks  
Cottages, Ironworks  
Institute and Kames  
Manse**

John Caldwell  
James Martin

## MORE NAMES

Whilst on the subject of people and where they lived, I found the following list of patrons who attended an "At Home" in the Ironworks Institute in 1921. It was held under the auspices of the ladies of that establishment.

Miss Nellie Allan, Auldhouseburn.  
Mr John and Miss Alston, Sornlea.  
Messrs James and Hugh Anderson, Nether Wellwood.  
Mrs James and Miss Armstrong, Furnace Road.  
Misses Jean and Jenny Brown, Station House.  
Mr Neil Buchanan, Wellwood Street.  
Mr Alex. Carnduff, Townhead.  
Mr J. & Miss Jean Craig, Netherwood.  
Miss Agnes Collins, Douglas.  
Miss Dunbar, Glasgow Road.  
Mr Alex. Fulton, Springhill Terrace.  
Mr Douglas Henderson, Cairnhill.  
Miss M. Holden, Ashbank.  
Misses A. W. and J.W.J. Hutchison, St.Bride's.  
Mr William and Miss Jack, Elmdene.  
Mr Thomas Johnstone, Airdsgreen.  
Messrs John & Rbt. Kennedy, Main St  
Mr Jas & Miss Maggie Lyle, Main St.  
Mr William Gillivray, Auldhouseburn.  
Mr Frank and Miss McKerrow, Burnfoot  
Misses E. & B. McDougal, Midhouse.

Miss J. Maxwell, Kilmarnock.  
Miss B. Millar, Catcheyburn.  
Miss Kate Morton, Station Buildings.  
Nurse Osman, Glenbuck.  
Mr and Miss Pearson, Ardenleigh.  
Mr J. Findlay Porter, Springhill.  
Miss Ramage, Bridge Street.  
Mr David and Miss Rennie, Smallburn.  
Mr Robert & Misses Elsie and Jessie Rodger, Glenbuck.  
Messrs George and John Robb, Royal George.  
Messrs Thomas and Alex. Semple, Tardoes.  
Dr. George, Mr W.S. Smith and Miss Smith, Bona Vista.  
Mr D. Taylor, Cunningham House.  
Miss Jessie F. Taylor, Main Street.  
Mr Sam & Miss Thomson, Blackside  
Mr George Willock, Midhouse Terrace  
Mr Alex. Wilson, Wanlass Place.  
Mr & Mrs John Young, and Mr James Young, Auldhouseburn

# 1931 RAILWAY TIME-TABLE

Public Notices.

London, Midland, and Scottish Railway.

## CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS

### Cheap Day Tickets

on 24th, 25th, 26th, and 31st December, 1931, and 1st, 2nd, and 4th January, 1932, from

MUIRKIRK, CRONBERRY, and GLENBUCK.

TO	3rd Class Return Fares from					
	Muirkirk		Cronberry		Glenb'k	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
ANNAN .....	7	0	6	0	7	0
*AYR .....	2	2	—	—	—	—
BRIDGE OF WEIR .....	5	2	4	6	5	2
CARLISLE .....	8	0	7	0	8	0
CASTLE DOUGLAS .....	7	6	6	6	7	6
DALBEATTIE .....	6	6	6	0	7	0
DUMFRIES .....	5	6	4	6	5	0
EDINBURGH (Princes Street) .....	5	6	6	0	5	0
GIRVAN .....	5	0	4	6	5	6
GLASGOW (Daily) .....	4	0	—	—	—	—
GREENOCK .....	5	8	5	6	5	8
KILMACOLM .....	5	2	5	0	5	2
*KILMARNOCK .....	2	0	—	—	—	—
MIDCALDER .....	4	0	5	0	4	0
THORNHILL .....	4	0	3	0	4	0

\*At or after 12 noon on Saturdays, and on 25th Dec. and 1st Jan.

CHEAP FARE TICKETS are also issued to a large number of places daily, for Particulars please see separate Handbill.

Similar Cheap Tickets at proportionate rates are issued at all L.M.S. Stations.



### Holiday Return Tickets

at Single Fare and a Third.

TO STATIONS IN SCOTLAND on 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 30th, and 31st December, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd January, available for return any day until 11th January inclusive.

TO STATIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES on 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th December, valid for return on any day until 6th January inclusive, and on 30th and 31st December, valid for return on any day until 11th January inclusive.

TO STATIONS IN IRELAND on 23rd, 24th, 30th, and 31st December, for return any day until 16 days.

### Additional Trains.

On 1st and 2nd JANUARY, leaving Muirkirk at 12.20 p.m., Cronberry 12.30 p.m., for Kilmarnock and Glasgow.

On 1st JANUARY, leaving Muirkirk at 3.15 p.m., Cronberry 3.25 p.m., for Ochiltree and Stations to Ayr.

On 31st DECEMBER AND 1st JANUARY, leaving Muirkirk at 8.35 p.m., Cronberry 8.45 p.m., changing at Auchinleck for Kilmarnock and Glasgow.

On 31st DECEMBER AND 1st JANUARY, leaving Auchinleck at 9.40 p.m. calling at Stations to Muirkirk (connection off 8.15 p.m. from Glasgow (St. Enoch), Kilmarnock 8.55 p.m.

On 1st JANUARY, leaving Ayr at 9.50 p.m., for Cronberry and Muirkirk.

On 1st JANUARY, leaving Glasgow (St. Enoch) at 11.12 p.m., Kilmarnock 11.50 p.m., Manohline 12.11 a.m., for Cronberry and Muirkirk.

On 2nd JANUARY, leaving Glasgow (St. Enoch) 11.20 p.m., Kilmarnock 12.2 a.m., for Cronberry and Muirkirk.

On 31st DECEMBER, 1st AND 2nd JANUARY, leaving Muirkirk at 7.19 p.m., Glenbuck 7.26 p.m., for Lanark and Carstairs.

On 31st DECEMBER, 1st AND 2nd JANUARY, leaving Lanark at 9.10 p.m., for Glenbuck and Muirkirk.

The L.M.S. have a Cheap Fare and Comfortable Service  
Everywhere You wish to go.

Get a Programme of Cheap Railway Fares at Stations, and if in any doubt consult the Station-Master.



## SUCCESSFUL BOWLER

During my time as a member of Muirkirk Bowling Club, I was led to believe that no Muirkirk bowler had ever won a Scottish Championship. So, during my research work I was pleasantly surprised to find a small article in the "Advertiser" files of 1925, which should shed some light on the matter. While it might be the case that no member of Muirkirk Green has ever won a National title, members of the bowling fraternity might be surprised to learn that at least a Muirkirk man has had this honour. Mr Thomas Duff, Airdrie, won the Scottish Singles Championship at Glasgow. Tom was born in the Red Row. He won the final 21-20, and he had to fight all the way to fulfill this achievement. Along with the Championship went the Roseberry Trophy, a Gold Medal, and £20. Not bad for a Muirkirk man, and no doubt the question will no be asked — Where was the Red Row? The answer can be found on Page 75.

## MUIRKIRK AND THE GAS DETECTOR

The early 1930's saw the patenting of the McLuckie Gas Detector, which was an important step towards human safety in many branches of industry, but mainly in the coal mines, and it enabled any person of average intelligence to detect and measure accurately the percentage of combustible gas and vapours in the atmosphere. Davy's discovery of the flame safety lamp provided the colliery management with a simple and reliable means for the detection of inflammable gases in the air, but the amount present could not be accurately estimated and several attempts and much research was done to try and evolve a simple apparatus that would detect and measure accurately on the spot the presence of fire damp in mine air. All practical men realised the difficulty in estimating accurately, and in a short time, the presence of  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of fire damp in the air, and as these definite maximum percentages were specified in the Coal Mines Act, 1911, the colliery official was presented with an apparatus at his command which, in the short space of six minutes enabled him to accurately determine the percentage of firedamp in the air.

Where, might you ask is this leading to. Well, the answer is that the inventor was a Muirkirk man, Mr Colin McLuckie, who at the time was a lecturer at the Wigan Mining and Technical School. He was the elder son of Mr and Mrs Alex. McLuckie, then residing at Glespin. Colin started as a lad in the pits at Muirkirk, receiving his early training in mining at Furnace Road School, Muirkirk, and the Saturday classes at Kilmarnock Technical School. He took an exceptionally keen interest in mine gases and their detection. This interest he maintained while a student at the Technical College, Glasgow, and the apparatus is the result of his study and research. The detector is widely used in other fields, including gas works, petrol refineries, garages, oil tankers, and ships burning oil fuel, etc. The apparatus is made by J. H. Naylor, Ltd., of Wigan, and is an all-British safety invention

I am sure not many miners in Muirkirk would be aware of the local connection to this invention.

## LEAP YEAR

Here is another small piece of information I came upon by accident. The length of a year is a little less than 365¼ days. Julia Caesar, in re-forming the calendar, arranged that in every fourth year February should have 29 days instead of 28. The calendar takes a leap on one day every fourth year to make up for its ordinary year being a quarter-day too short. Every year is a leap year which is divisible by 4 without remainder, except the concluding years of centuries, every fourth only of which is a leap year, thus the years 1800 and 1900 are not leap years, but 2000 and 2400 are.

## THIRTY-THREE SIGNS OF RAIN

The hollow winds begin to blow,  
 The clouds look black, the glass is low,  
 The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,  
 The spiders from their cobwebs creep;  
 Last night the sun went pale to bed,  
 The moon in hallows hid her head,  
 The boding shepherd heaves a sight,  
 For, see, a rainbow spans the sky.  
 The walls are damp, the ditches smell,  
 Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.  
 Hark, how the chairs and tables crack!  
 Old Betty's joints are on the rack.  
 Loud quack the ducks, the peacock cry,  
 The distant hills are looking nigh;  
 How restless are the snorting swine,  
 The busy flies disturb the kine.  
 Low o'er the grass the swallow wings,  
 The cricket, too, how loud it sings.  
 Puss on the earth, with velvet paws,  
 Sits smoothing o'er her whiskered jaws.  
 Through the clear stream the fishes rise  
 And nimbly catch the incautious flies.

The sheep are seen at early light  
 Cropping the meads with wagger bite.  
 Through June, the air is cold and chill,  
 The blackbird's mellow voice is still;  
 The glow worms, numerous and bright,  
 Illumed the dewy dell last night.  
 At dusk the squalid toad is seen  
 Hopping and crawling o'er the green.  
 The frog has lost its yellow vest,  
 And in a dingy suit is dressed.  
 The leech, disturbed, is newly risen,  
 Quite to the summit of his prison.  
 The whirling winds the dust obeys,  
 And in the rapid eddy plays.  
 My dog, so altered in his taste,  
 Quits mutton bones on grass to feast.  
 And, see you rooks how odd their flight  
 They imitate the gliding kite,  
 And seem precipitate to fall ,  
 As if they felt the piercing ball,  
 'Twill surely rain—I see with sorrow,  
 Our jaunt must be put off to-morrow.

## THE GREAT FREEZE

Muirkirk has always been famed for its cold climate, and this was borne out in 1933, when there was a spell of continuous frost for sixteen days. The highest number of degrees registered was on 25th February, when there were 16 degrees of frost, while on the 26th there were fifteen degrees.

The frosty spell came to an end on the last day of the month when two degrees were registered, and this was followed by an inch of rain the following night and Wednesday morning. It is interesting to note that while 16 degrees of frost were registered at Muirkirk, there were seventeen degrees at Glasgow, and eighteen in Paris. And yet Muirkirk is considered a cold place!

## GLENBUCK OLD FOLKS

It was interesting to read a report of the Glenbuck Old Folk's Re-Union held there in 1935, when the Chairman for the evening was Councillor M. McWhirter, J.P., Larkhall. Mr McWhirter was, of course, a Glenbuck man, and in his address he spoke nostalgically about former times in the village. Glenbuck in those far-off days was an industrious mining village. Maidenbank, Grasshill, The Lady, The Davy, and latterly Galawhistle and Auchinstilloch pits provided abundance of employment. While on the topic of mines, the speaker also compared old-time and modern conditions in the pits. He spoke of the tragedies sometimes associated with the life of a miner, recalling several in his early days, and said that the grief in the stricken homes had always been shared by the entire population of the village. Village life was not of the individual, but of the big family, who shared alike the hopes and despairs, the joys and sorrows, the aspirations and regrets, and even the humour of the individuals.

Mr McWhirter referred to the once-popular hobby of making rings, vases, and ornaments from gas coal, and said he wondered if there were still in the village any of the productions of a hobby which had provided many hours of useful labour some fifty years ago.

Recalling personalities of his boyhood days, the Chairman mentioned the names of William Bone, Dan Gibson, Sandy Vass, Granny Blyth (clever with the needle and shears), Gavin Dalziel and his wife Jenny, John Dempster, Sandy Johnstone of Airdsgreen. Tam McKerrow of Spireslack, McKersie of Clunbuck, Cork Lawrie, Pa Brown of Newmains, and Andersons, Blyths, Weirs, Bones, etc.

The speaker also mentioned the names of his own great-grandfather, Tam McWhirter, and his grand-father, Hugh. He had learned that Tam had an "ingau e'e," and also owned a race-horse. The horse was engaged drawing the tubs at the mine, and competed at race meetings at Cumnock and elsewhere.

Mr McWhirter said that the Gavin Dalziel he had mentioned was a cousin of Gavin Dalziel of Lesmahagow, a travelling merchant, who had invented a bicycle made of wood. The road from the Douglas and Muirkirk highway leading up the glen to Glenbuck had no bridge in those days, and the burn, which is the source of the River Ayr, wended from side to side of the glen, and had to be forded at several parts. "When it was 'Dalziel's day' to enter the village, the people took up a vantage point on Brown's Hill to witness what was to them the wonderful sight of Dalziel taking the fords on his 'wooden horse'." This wooden bicycle is at present in Kelvingrove, Glasgow.

In his progress through life, Mr McWhirter said he often paused and allowed his mind to dwell on the village of his childhood, and he could in fancy hear the snorting of the winding engines at Grasshill and Lady Pits, and see the endless rope from the Davy Pit to the burn side, the bogie road to the loch, the elevator at the furnace wall, the hutch road from Grasshill to Maidenbank, each and all engaged in transporting the wealth of the glen to supply the general needs of the outside world.

In the summer time, when the day's work was done, men and youths engaged in all classes of sports — quoiting, football, jumping, and running. "Oh, could the cock yard but speak," said Mr McWhirter, amidst laughter. Every ounce of energy and skill was put into their sport, and it was small wonder that the

village had produced doughty champions. In quoting, Mr McWhirter said he need not make more than reference to the high place as marksmen of the brothers Bone, and in a lesser degree, his own father. There were also others of the Bone family, and Bains, Tait, Davidsons, all skilful exponents of the game. Then in football, Glenbuck had created a record in winning the Ayrshire Cup the first three years of its existence. This record was all the greater because eight of the players belonged to three families. The team was composed of three Tait, three Menzieses, and two Bones, with Devlin, Wallace, and Blythe.

Mr McWhirter also referred in passing to the feet-washings, weddings, and creelings of the good old days.

What of the future of Glenbuck. Had the village a future in industry, or would the people migrate; leaving the houses to crumble into dust and the land to resume its former state? Or would new industries arise to renew the life of the village and improve its amenities?

In conclusion Mr McWhirter gave his view what could be done to help Glenbuck survive as a community, but alas, that was not to be. It wasn't even left to die in dignity, and it is a sad fact that coal which the Glenbuck miners dug for a living was to be the same coal which would eventually wipe Glenbuck off the map, but this time it would be the coal-hungry machines of the opencast coal companies which would do the extracting, ensuring that nothing would be left, and at time of writing this state of affairs still continues, and we can only wonder what the end result will be, and where will it all finish!

## **HARRY LAUDER'S VISIT**

In the early 1930's Harry Lauder, that worldwide Scottish entertainer, paid a visit to the annual re-union of Muirkirk Old Folks in the Ironworks Institute. When Sir Harry and his niece, Miss Greta Lauder, arrived they were given a great ovation. Sir Harry immediately took the stage, and for about an hour he kept the large audience keenly engrossed with his songs, jokes, and antics. His vocal number were —“I love a Lassie,” “Roamin' in the Gloamin,” “Flower o' the Heather,” and “Keep right on to the End of the Road,” and each was enthusiastically applauded.

Sir Harry spoke of his last visit to Muirkirk, about 1899, and said that when he was coming across the moors from Maybole to Muirkirk he wrote the first verse and chorus of “I've Loved Her Ever Since She was a Baby,” and he had never forgotten the song. He was very pleased to be present, and his only excuse was that he liked to come and see old folks who couldn't come to see him. Before leaving, Sir Harry was asked by Mrs Gibney (92 years of age) to accept a small meerschaum pipe as a memento of the occasion, while Mr C. P. Bell handed over a box of chocolates to Miss Lauder. Sir Harry returned thanks, and said that each time he “pu'ed and puffed” at his pipe would remind him o' that nicht. The famous comedian and his niece departed amidst three ringing cheers.

## **THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY — THE BEGINNING**

I mentioned earlier about the part that Muirkirk Co-operative Society played in the life and well-being of the village. Originally (in 1885) business was commenced in a small shop at the foot of the Glasgow Road, and for the first quarter, with less than fifty members and one employee, the sales amounted to £507 and the profit of £55. Members' share capital at the end of the first quarter was £79. The Store gradually came into public favour, and in 1893 the business demanded larger premises, with the result that the Main Street (South Side) premises were built. In 1887 a branch was opened in Kirkgreen, and in 1898 the Society's building at Kirkgreen was erected. This ended the building until 1928, when the Society built their fine suite of shops at Main Street (North Side), where now is the Miners' Memorial. The Store had made gradual but steady progress, and during its first 50 years of life had never experienced a real set-back, That was not to say that they hadn't had opposition. Indeed, when they started up business no Muirkirk tradesman would make and paint a sign for them, for fear of being victimised by the other traders. Eventually, a Douglas tradesman made it, and it was left at a house at the east end of the village and carried after dark to the Society's premises by Committee men.

Through time, however, the people learned that the Co-op. had come to stay; that it paid trade union wages to its employees, and the members got 2/- worth for their £1 every time. The result was that for the 200th quarter, with 923 members and 52 employees, the sales amounted to £17,105, yielding a profit of £2,851, while the Society had a reserve fund of £4,893. The total sales for the first 50 years were £2,075, 317, and during that period dividend paid or credited to members totalled £295,249, while interest paid on members' share and loan capital amount to £32,312. The amount lying at the credit of the members at the end of the 200th quarter was £388,312. In the following years Muirkirk Co-operative Society went from strength to strength. The fact that the Co-op. in Muirkirk is still trading (albeit in a different form) in its original premises tells us something. It is of course, the longest-established business in Muirkirk.

## **THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY AT GLENBUCK**

At about the same time when the formation of a Society was first thought of in Glenbuck, the coal-owners were very much the masters, and the workers were more or less forced to support the Company's own stores. However, a few enterprising Glenbuck men met and decided to interview Muirkirk Society with a view to getting a branch opened at Glenbuck.

Muirkirk Society could not see their way to open a branch, but, still undaunted, a public meeting was called at Glenbuck in the Hotel, better known as "The Inns," which was occupied at that time by Mr A. Clark. Mr Barclay and Mr Marshall, manager of the S.C.W.S. at that time, attended the meeting, and it was decided to form a Society, and a date was fixed for the enrolment of members and collection of share capital. As a result fourteen members were enrolled with a share capital of £69. Premises had to be secured, and this presented a great difficulty, but eventually Mr James Callan, the farmer at West Glenbuck, agreed that if Mr Robert Anderson (who was later to become Secretary) cared to vacate his house, the Society could have it for a shop. Mr Anderson allowed the Society to take life by removing to Grasshill Row, and representation was made to the S.C.W.S. for a supply of goods, the shop being opened on 7th May, 1887. The

membership increased, and the Society progressed throughout the years, weathering difficult times and industrial disputes, and still it remained the Glenbuck Society. Unfortunately, the mines immediately around had been closed, and the powers that be had condemned many houses and decreed that the people remove elsewhere to live (shadows of the "Clearance"), but it was pleasing to know that the village had still prospects, and perhaps in a few days they might have official intimation of the recommencement of work at Glenbuck. In spite of the misfortunes the membership, which was 14 at the start of the Society and 140 at its highest peak, was 117 in 1937. The sales for the ten years previous totalled £98,949 10s 5d, and £5,985 19s 4d had been paid or credited to members in dividend and interest. The Society had also been liberal with donations for public functions. However, as most readers will know, it was then all down hill for the village of Glenbuck, and in 1953 a special meeting of members of Glenbuck Society voted by 7—1 that the stock, property and other assets and all engagements be transferred to the Muirkirk Co-operative Society. As a result the Co-op. at Glenbuck was closed, and the village was served by a shopping van from Muirkirk.

### **AUSTRALIAN AIR MAIL**

Roundabout 1935 great strides were being made with the Post Office delivery service, and it was recorded that a letter posted in Lanark on 7th December was delivered in Brisbane, Australia, on 22nd December — not bad for that far-off time! Interestingly, it was the first Air Mail letter to arrive at Brisbane, and the recipient of the letter mentioned, was a Glenbuck man, Mr William Kerr, who with his sister, carried on a draper's and clothier's business at Kerr's Building before leaving for Australia in 1926. The letter arrived during the celebrations of his daughter's marriage, and is now treasured as a memento of the double event.

### **ADDER IN GARDEN**

That same year, an adder was discovered in a garden in Smallburn. It was of the common variety, and measured nineteen inches in length. The local paper reported the incident, stating that the bites of these reptiles were poisonous. Their tusks or fangs are hollow, and there is a poison at the root of the fangs which escapes when under pressure. When a bite occurs the wound should be sucked, spitting out the blood, etc., especially the etcetera, and then (said the informant) see a doctor. A cow in the district was bitten by an adder, and gave a great deal of trouble, and eventually the services of a vet were requisitioned.

### **DOUGLAS GAS**

In 1934 mention was made of the gas supply in Douglas — I was always led to believe that Douglas had no coal gas. I must have been wrongly informed, although I don't think there was Coal Gas in Douglas when the North Sea supply was connected.

## MUIRKIRK ESTATE ON THE MARKET

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Copied from the Files of the "Muirkirk Advertiser," 1942

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The following is a copy of a notice, dated "Air, July 18, 1828," and which will probably be interesting to our readers after a space of over 100 years.

"A valuable estate in Airshire for sale. The lands and estate of Muirkirk are to be sold by public roup within the Royal Exchange Coffee House, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 27th day of August next, at one o'clock afternoon, in the following lots, if not previously disposed of by private bargain, viz.:

"Lot First to consist of the farms of Upper and Nether Tariochs, Muirmiln, Dalfram, Nether and Middle Wellwood, Entryhead, Marchhouse, and Wellwood parks, and Wellwood House and garden. This lot contains about 2236 acres, of which about 76 acres are thriving plantations. The present rental is £643 12s 6d, and they will be exposed at the upset price of £20,000.

"Lot Second to consist of the farms of Upper Wellwood, Kames, and Midhouse of Kames, Springhill, Kameshill, the two eastern parts of Wellwood, part of Burnfoot South Muir, Bankend North Muir, Irondale Inn, also the parks about the village of Muirkirk, the whole feu duties of the village, and feu duties and mineral lordships payable by the Muirkirk Iron Co. This lot contains about 6547 Imperial acres. The present rental is—for land, £731; for feu duties and long tack duties, £242 6s 6d; and for minerals on an average of the last seven years, £691 5s 2d. It will be exposed for sale at the upset price of £35,000.

"Lot Third to consist of the farms of Grasshill, Glenbuck, Priesthills, Stottencleuch, and part of Linnburn east of the Water of Greenock. This lot contains about 4751 Imperial acres. The present rental is £562 8/-, whereof £23 18/- feu duties, and it will be exposed to sale at the upset price of £17,000.

"Lot Fourth to consist of the farms of Netherwood, Burnfoot, Lamontburn, Middlefield, and the remainder of Linburn west of the Water of Greenock. This lot contains about 3934 Imperial acres, of which the present rental is £564 10/-, and it will be exposed to sale at the upset price of £17,000.

"These lots comprehend the whole of the Muirkirk estate, and will be sold either together or separately as purchaser may incline. This estate extends along the waters of Air and Greenock for several miles, and is at a distance of twenty-two miles from Glasgow and twenty-five from Air, with which, as well as with Edinburgh and Dumfries it communicates by excellent roads. The lands, which consist partly of arable and partly of sound sheep pasture, are all let to substantial tenants, and on the expiry of the current leases a considerable rise of rent may be expected.

"The first two lots are intersected with thriving plantations, which afford shelter and give a good return from the sale of thinnings. The lands in these lots abound in coal, lime, and ironstone. A flourishing Iron Work, having three blast furnaces, has been long established of Lot Second, and on which also is the thriving village of Muirkirk.

“At Glenbuck of Lot Third the coal and ironstone formerly wrought for the Glenbuck Ironworks are almost inexhaustible.

“There is an abundance of game on the different lots, which, although let in cumulo at £80 annually, is not included in the foregoing rentals. Some of the streams afford excellent trout fishing.

“The public burdens are very moderate.”

For plans and rental of the estate, of the different lots, and for further particulars application may be made to Messrs Charles Selkrig and Pat Cockburn, accountants in Edinburgh, who have power to treat by private bargain, to Messrs Young, Ayton, and Rutherford, writers to the Signet, and Mr Robert Brown.”

For the purpose of informing those readers who are sufficiently interested, we give the present (1942) rentals of various farms mentioned for comparison:—

Nether Wellwood	£171 13/-
Upper Wellwood (incl. Midhouse)	£499 10/-
Dalfram	£186 13/-
Netherwood (Mr Robert Woodburn now Proprietor)	£200
Priesthills, Linburn, Blackside, and Dippol (Mrs Gordon now Prop.)	£545
Greenside and Mansefield	£97 17/-
Kames	£153 1/-.
Bankend	£80 19/-.
Middlefield and Waterhead (Mr R. L. Angus now Prop.)	£357 18/
Grasshills	£112 6/-.
Middle Wellwood	£109 8/-.
Woodlands	£55
Burnfoot (Mr Frank McKerrow now Proprietor)	£224 12/-

It may be explained that the Upper and Nether Tariochs are now included in Nether Wellwood Farm, Muirmiln in Dalfram, Lamontburn in Middlefield, and Stottencleuch is at the head of the River Ayr

## SOME NOTES ON OLD MUIRKIRK

(Reprinted from the Files of the "Muirkirk Advertiser, 1924)

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We are indebted to Mr John Taylor, Cunningham House, for the following notes of a paper on old Muirkirk given at a recent meeting of the Adult Education Class. Many of these are of a historical nature, and should prove of interest.

Prior to 1845 the relief of destitution (like many other matters) was in the hands of the Heritors and Kirk Session.

In 1845, however, Parochial Boards were formed to attend to the affairs of the Poor, under the guidance of the Board of Supervision. The Board of Supervision may be likened to the Department of Health in Edinburgh to-day.

Accordingly, in 1845, the Heritors and Kirk Session of this Parish were requested to meet in the Session House for the first meeting of the Parochial Board. The following persons appeared at that meeting—Thomas R. Scott, Factor for the Right Hon. Lord Douglas; Mr Gemmell, Garpek, for the Hon. Col. Macadam Cathcart of Craigingillan; James Allison, Esq., of Tardoers; Alexander Aird, Esq., of Crossflat, for himself and as Mandatory for Thomas Anderson, Esq., of Waterhead; The Rev. James Symington, Minister; Messrs Officer, Anderson, and Dalziel, Elders. Mr Aird presiding. A distinction is made between the Landowners or Heritors by calling them Esquire, and the Elders just Messrs.

At this meeting Mr J. D. Thomson, Heritor's Clerk and Parochial Schoolmaster, was appointed Inspector of Poor at a salary of £15 a year.

Among other names appearing on the list of those present at Parochial Board meetings about this time (97 years ago) were — Col. John Dickson, Esquire, of East Glenbuck, William Brown, Esquire, of Greenockmains; and Henry Cadell, Esquire, for the Muirkirk Iron Company.

The Funds for the support of the Poor were raised by Assessment—the one half on the Heritors according to their real rental, and the other on the whole inhabitants according, as the Statute puts it, to their "Means and Substance" if in excess of £30 of annual value.

Poor Relief Allowances at this time ranged from 2/6 to 8/- monthly with, in some cases, a payment for house rent — £1 - 30/- half-yearly.

In 1845 £198 was needed for the support of the Poor for the half-year, £96 on Heritors and £96 on inhabitants (The figure jumped to £240 per half-year in 1846).

Mr. J. D. Thomson, Inspector of Poor, and also Parochial Schoolmaster, appears to have been a very capable person. His books were carefully kept, and the wording of his minutes was excellent and clear of meaning. The following is an extract from a letter written by the above mentioned Thomas Anderson, Advocate, Edinburgh—"Your letter of 11th Feby. states the point so clearly and interprets the Statute so accurately and distinctly that it is impossible for me to add anything. I cannot help congratulating the Parochial Board of Muirkirk in having an Inspector of so much talent and acuteness.

The Heritors at this time were as follows—

	Rental	Rated
His Grace the Duke of Portland	£3476	£57 2 0
Col. Macadam Cathcart	582	9 11 2
Lord Douglas	481	7 18 0
James Allison, Esq., of Tardoers	300	4 18 6
Jas. Swann, Esq., of Auldhouseburn	264	4 6 8
Wm. Brown, Esq., Greenockmains	260	4 5 5
Alex. Aird, Esq., of Crossflat	232	3 16 2
Col. John Dickson of East Glenbuck	110	1 16 1
J.B. Greenshields of Hall	108	1 15 5
Sir W. S. Anstruther of Spireslack	85	1 7 11
Thos. Anderson, Esq., of Waterhead	90	1 9 6
Peter Blackburn, Esq., of Newmains	61	1 0 0
John Maider, Esq., of Aitkencleugh	55	0 18 0
Wm. Aikman, Esq., of Holmhead	32	0 10 0

Note the “Swan” of Auldhouseburn. Would that be responsible for the wood (now not there) near the Reservoir getting the name “Swan Wood?”

The Thomas Anderson of Waterhead was an Advocate in Edinburgh, and it was from him the Parochial Board sought advice on legal problems,

Parochially Boards were composed of the Heritors, Kirk Session or Elders, and, in addition, a certain number of “Elected” members drawn from those addressed on “Means and Substance.” The election of these members took place in the Parish Schoolroom, and notices of the election were posted at the door of the Parish Church, Glenbuck Tollbar, Wellwood Tollbar, Thomas Johnstone’s, Glenbuck, Matthew Thomson’s, John Begg’s, and Robert Kay’s in Muirkirk village, and at the Iron Company’s Office, also notices in the “Ayr Observer” and “Ayr Advertiser.” The elected members were — Thomas Bryden, Hugh Smith, John McMin, and Robert Kay.

At the commencement of the Parochial Boards I noted that two meetings were postponed “on account of the thinness of the attendance,” But, nevertheless, I formed the opinion on perusing the books that the Board members carried out their duties with diligence and efficiency.

In these days applications for Public Assistance were termed “Petitions.” The following decisions, taken at random, may be of interest.

The Inspector of Poor was instructed to take an inventory of all the effects of the paupers upon the Poor’s Roll, and to get a book for the engrossment of said Inventories.

James Anderson and John Dalziel, Elders, were requested to dispose of the effects in one case, and to report to the Inspector the value of the effects in another, of deceased persons.

In 1847 the “Board proceeded to examine the list of arrears of assessments and were surprised to find arrears outstanding as far back as 1843, and it was agreed to recover all arrears as law directs.”

In 1847 the meeting refused a petition “seeing that he has employment at breaking stones at a wage of 3/- to 4/6 a week, together with an allowance of 1/6 per week from the Poor’s Fund.”

In 1851 “the Inspector brought before the meeting a case of a married couple, paupers, upon the parish of St. Cuthbert’s, Edinburgh. It appears from the statement that the man, once he was sent to this Parish, is improving in health, and the meeting therefore decline in the meantime returning them to St. Cuthbert’s, but direct the Inspector to send on an account of the money advanced for their support and demand immediate payment.” (Does this not reveal a very human touch? Muirkirk seems to have been a health resort at one time!).

In 1851 the Inspector laid before the meeting the Petition of John ———, which was read to the meeting. They are of the opinion that they cannot entertain the Petition seeing that a number of the statements therein contained are false, and at the same time the language used in the petition is highly improper, and such as the meeting will on no occasion countenance.”

In 1852 “The Inspector stated to the meeting that he had enquired into the case of Elizabeth —————. She stated that the person is still lodging with her, and from the information the Board has obtained their conduct is anything but becoming.”

The Board were very painstaking and took their job seriously, as the following may show. “Having compared the Cash Book with the Assessment Roll Book, and having compared the vouchers produced with the Cash Book, found them correct except at page 298 on the left-hand column on Debtor side of said Cash Book find an error of addition of 2d overcharged.”

## OTHER NOTES

In 1848 Muirkirk Iron Company appealed against their assessment on the grounds that during the year in question there were no profits and the establishment unproductive. They were prepared to show their books.

In 1849 Dr. Thomas Morrison, M.D., was appointed Medical Officer of the Parish at a salary of £26 a year.

In 1847 the Board opposed “an Act for Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths,” wherein it is proposed to be enacted that all registrations are to be paid out of the Poor’s Fund. The actual Act did not worry them, but the means by which the expenses were to be met, viz., the Poor’s Fund.

NOTE.—Compulsory registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths came into force eight years later in 1885.

It may be appropriate to note here a few statistics regarding Births, Marriages, and Deaths since 1855.

## BIRTHS

In 1855 there were 127. In 1875 (20 years later) the rate had risen to 184, and from then there was an increase till the peak was reached in 1879 with 267. This is the highest number of Births recorded in the Parish. In 1937 the rate fell to 66, and in 1940 the lowest number was recorded, viz., 60. Last year, 1941, there were 89. **Note.**—(In recent years many births have taken place outside the Parish in Maternity Homes, and these are not included in above figures. Births, like Marriages and Deaths, are recorded in the place where they occur, and not in the district of their normal residence or domicile).

## DEATHS

In 1855 there were 72. In 1859 (four years later) 44. In 1877 the rate had risen to 156, the highest on record. In 1934 the lowest death rate was recorded, viz., 29. In 1940 it was 46, and last year, 1941, the rate was 33.

## MARRIAGES

In 1885 there were 41. In 1896, 16, and in 1877 only 12—the lowest on record. By 1899 the rate had risen to 52—the highest on record. In 1936 and again in 1940, there were 44 (second highest). Last year, 1941 32 were recorded.

In connection with the population of the Parish this is the best obtained from the Census figures

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>No. Of Houses</i>	<i>Wind'd Rooms</i>
In 1891—	2782	2384	5165	996	2239
In 1901—	3111	2559	5670	1113	2614

Note—(The New Railway Huts seem to have been in existence in 1901 and account for an increase in population, especially the males).

In 1911	2682	2300	4982	1091	2524
In 1921	2486	2240	4726	—	—
In 1931	2304	2054	4358	—	—
In 1939	2203	2119	4322	—	—

Note .— (The number of houses and number of windowed rooms seems to have been discontinued after 1911. I understand there was a tax on windowed rooms in days gone by).

## MUIRKIRK OLD CHURCHYARD

The earliest stone bears a date 1629, but the Church yard must have been in use before that date. The Parish of Muirkirk was disjoined from Mauchline in 1621, and it may be reasonably assumed that Muirkirk, whilst not a separate Parish, was a Preaching Station with a Kirk and Kirkyard. It is reasonably estimated that there might be 6,400 persons buried in the Old Churchyard.

In 1894 the Sheriff-Substitute of Ayrshire found that the Burial Ground situated in the village of Muirkirk, adjacent to the Parish Church, “is dangerous to health, and offensive, and contrary to decency,” and it was recommended that Burials be discontinued in this Burial Ground.

This was agreed to with certain conditions, and also the following persons were permitted to be buried after 1894 (“who are all elderly persons”), viz.—John

Michael, Robert Riggans and Spouse, Thomas Gibson and Spouse], James Clark and Spouse, William Beck and Spouse, James Allison of Tardoes and Spouse, James McKersie, William Thomson, Charles Blyth, Marion McCaul, Miss Ellen Muir, Sarah Scott, Margaret Russell, Mrs Johnstone, Mrs William Gibson, Mrs Gilchrist, Hugh Begg, Alexander Dempster, John Taylor, James Weir, and Agnes Callan

The last burial in the Old Churchyard took place in 1922.

The New Cemetery was made in 1866 and extended in 1889 and again in 1900. First Cemetery cost £100 per imperial acre. Original Entrance Gate, £10 10/-.

### **FURTHER NOTES**

In 1842, First Cattle Show (Muirkirk's Farmers' Society).

In 1864, under the Nuisance Removal Act (Scotland) 1856, an Inspector of Nuisance was appointed at a salary of £5 a year.

In 1886, in above connection, the Committee agreed to inspect, personally, the Parish by house to house visitation.

In 1870, Kames Pit sunk. Lightshaw Pit same year.

In 1884, Muirkirk Curling Club celebrated its Centenary.

In 1885, Police Station (Main Street) completed.

In 1887, Miss Bruce commenced a School for Girls Only. School Hours and Fees same as other schools under the School Board (in Temperance Hall).

In 1894, Muirkirk Parochial Offices (new) opened by Mr J. G. A. Baird, M.P. Those present were supplied with cake and wine.

In 1885, a Dorkin Hen belonging to Fanny McFarlane laid an egg which weighed fully 3½ ounces.

### **MUIRKIRK WATER SUPPLY**

In 1887, Civil Engineer asked to report as to the suitable source from which to procure a Water Supply.

Tank or Reservoir must be 900 feet up above sea level.

Lade from the Garpel Water rejected on account of discoloration with peat to such an extent as to make it unsuitable for domestic use.

Ponesk, Dippal, Greenock Water—rejected as being too far away from village.

Auldhouseburn Accepted

Analysis of Auldhouseburn Water. — This water is clear and bright, and in a tube 10 inches in depth shows the same slight brownish tint as the Glasgow Water Supply. The analysis indicates that it is perfectly free from all impurities and of excellent quality for drinking and domestic purposes generally. It is rather hard for washing, but the hardness is reduced one-third by boiling. On the whole I consider it an excellent water for the supply of a town.

Note.—What about advocating for a pipe thro' the Whisky Knowe?

## THE BOND THAT IS MUIRKIRK!

In my research work my attention was directed to the annual Old Folk's Reunion which was held in the Ironworks Institute in the last year of the Second World War. I found that the address by that year's Chairman, Mr William Gold, was quite interesting and inspiring, and worthy of being reproduced in my notes. Mr Gold was a well-known and highly-respected inhabitant on the village, and was a member of the Gold family who resided at the back of my birth place — Albert Cottages. Willie, as he was more familiarly known, carved out a career for himself in the field of education, where he gained promotion to a headmastership. Here is how his reflections were reported—

Mr Gold, who gave an excellent account of himself in the Chair, said he regretted the absence of Mr Greenshields very much and hoped he would be restored to his usual health. It was quite a coincidence that he had been asked to deputise, for amongst his earliest recollections the old Free Church and Mr Greenshields stood out prominently. Mr Gold described his boyhood recollections of attendances at Church, the entry of the beadle and the Minister, experiences in the "cubbyhole" as assistant and then organ-blower-in-chief, and said these and many other things — his kindness, his consideration, and his unassuming knowledge were brought to mind when he thought of Mr Greenshields.

Mr Gold said he could go on speaking of his own recollections for a long time — of the ploys and plots dear to the heart of every boy — guddling in the burns, picnicking at the Cauld Watter Spoot, rambles to Cairntable and the Deil's Back Door, bird-nesting in the Wee Tree Wood, the Sma'burn Wood, the Blue To'er, and the Vault Wood, long summer days spent bathing in the Water Ayr and the Garpel—but why should he; these memories would be his hearers' just as much as his own — they were part of their common heritage, a heritage freely given to all who were born and bred in Muirkirk. There were many who liked to poke fun at our village, and some might remember a poem by the late Mr T. Floyd which appeared in the "Advertiser" thirty years ago (and which Mr Gold read to the audience) which had caused a great deal of controversy, but at the same time had proved that we, like all Scots, liked to make fun of ourselves.

Mr Gold said that when asked to preside he was puzzled what to say, but on the suggestion of his wife he had obtained copies of the "Advertiser" kept and bound by her grandfather (Mr Morton), and there was all the material he needed and a lot more. What a fund of information about Muirkirk was contained in the "Advertiser," and his own boyhood recollections of Mr Smith, the Printer, and the "Wee Paper" in his (Mr Gold's) capacity as a newspaper boy raised a hearty gust of laughter. Returning to his perusal of the paper — there were advertisements by Robert Jack, the Draper; Peter Fettes, gent's outfitter; Cook the grocer; (offering 3/- in the £1 dividend), and at least one firm that was still going strong—Hogg the Baker. The news items of forty years ago included the trial of Jew Bone, the Muirkirk Minstrels, the visits of Doctor Bodie, the discussions of the Lapraik Burns Club (with Charlie Bell well to the fore), the old dramas ("The Face at the Window," etc.), Bankhead Pit Disaster (the hero of which had passed away in the last year), Muirkirk beating Glenbuck in the final of the Ayrshire Cup (and the keen rivalry between the two villages): there it all was—pages and pages of grand entertainment. The wit and humour was first-class, too, and Mr Gold gave a few samples which had caught his sense of humour. There were, in these pages, said

the speaker, the Muirkirk of 50, 40, 30 years ago came to life, and he got an impression of a lively, boisterous, quarrelsome, but withal, a happy community. Even in print one could not escape the feeling that here were people that were real and vital.

And what of the present, asked Mr Gold. It was a common belief that we could never equal the past. They had better footballers, better quilters, better musicians, better singers, better preachers, aye, and better speakers in “the good old days,” but the argument could never be solved, and perhaps it was better so—we saw the past through a haze which blotted out, mercifully, the unpleasantness and the sorrow, but showed up in clear outline those treasured dreams of times long past which were our fondest memories.

Many things in our village had altered since they were young, many had altered even in his own memory—Bankhead had gone, the Sma’burn Wood, the Furnaces, the Cradle Brigs, the auld Waulkmill, etc., but all these changes were superficial — Muirkirk had not altered; the hills were the same — Cairntable, Wardlaw, Middlefield, the burns were still there, birds still nested in the trees, whaups still wheeped on the moors — and these were the real things which entwined themselves round our hearts and never let us go. All over the world, especially now, were scattered people from Muirkirk, but all of them were bound to their native village with chains, invisible, yet stronger than steel and more enduring than gold. After quoting several appropriate verses, Mr Gold resumed his seat amid applause.

## **BOWLING RECORD?**

Muirkirk bowlers will be interested to some information I have just uncovered. In 1937 the local bowlers sent out a 5-rink team to compete in the annual Glasgow-Ayrshire match which was being played at City greens. Muirkirk’s rinks all played well and returned an unusual final score of 142 shots each!

### 39 IN A ROW

In the “Glasgow Evening Times” the following night “The Skip” wrote:—  
When I set out to do a round of the greens at the Glasgow-Ayrshire match, I had in my pocket what I thought must almost be a record for the number of consecutive appearances in this game. Mr A. Dalrymple (Ayr Craigie), an S.B.A. Councillor, was making his thirtieth appearance when he played against Springburn the day previous, and he had skipped 28 times. At Willow Bank, however, I spoke to Mr J. Bell (Muirkirk), who commenced participation in the great game in 1892, but he has had one or two breaks. A little farther on, at Hyndland, Mr Hugh Bell (Muirkirk) was actively engaged skipping his rink. In conversation he told me that his first Glasgow-Ayrshire game was in 1897, and he had not missed a single game since. Making allowances for the Great War, this means Hugh has a record of 39 consecutive matches. I wonder if anyone can beat it.”

## THE AULD MEIKLE'S RAW

The Auld Meikle's Raw was situated in front of where now are the Council houses in Main Street — in those days between Victoria Buildings and the Clydesdale Bank. It comprised single and double storey properties, containing several business premises, and at one time was part of the hub of commercial Muirkirk. The following poem was written by Mr William Dornan, a Muirkirk man born and bred, who had emigrated to Canada to make a better life for himself and his family some time round about the 1926 miners' strike. Bill never forgot his roots, and indeed re-visited Muirkirk on several occasions, because like many before him, part of his heart was always in the village of his birth. Reading these lines will perhaps give the reader an incline in to what it was like living in Muirkirk in those now far-off days.

### THE AULD MEIKLE'S RAW

The days o' my boyhood I afttimes reca'—  
Thae long, happy days in the auld Meikle's Raw,  
As dear tae me still as they were tae me then,  
Though I am creepin' on noo tae the three score an' ten.

Its wee butts an' bens, aye sae tidy an' neat,  
Its wee bittie windows lookin' oot on the street,  
Its low slated roof an' weel whitened wa's,  
There was nae place on earth like the auld Meikle's Raw.

There's nae folk I kent that could ever compare  
Wi' the douce, honest folks that used tae bide there,  
In ilka wee hoose, I hae min' o' them a'  
Frae auld Johnny Colville tae big Jamie Shaw.

Auld Tammis Whyte, a tailor tae trade,  
At hame wi' a needle, a trowel, or a spade,  
He wad lay doon the needle an' dig for an' 'oor,  
For Tammis was prood o' his gairden o' flo'ers.

Auld Willie Dornan wi' his sharp-pointed beard,  
Gey licht o' the fit and gey smart at his trade;  
The 'Works Institute an' the hoose at Kameshill—  
The plasterin' there is proof o' his skill.

Jamie Gilchrist the slater was just a young man—  
His new mairret life had only began  
Wi' as fine a wee wife as ever ye saw—  
Was takin' up hoose in the auld Meikle's Raw.

Auld Mrs Gibney, God bless her kind heart  
That beat for a century e'er she did depart,  
An' mony a puir body that had nae hame ava'  
She sheltered at nicht in auld Meikle's Raw.

Mrs McConnell, wi' Jamie an' George,  
The laddies were puddlers an' worked in the Forge,  
An' whiles when we made muckle noise on the street  
She wad chap on the window—the boys were asleep.

Davie Greenwood, I min', was a big strappin' chiel,  
A demon was Davie at ridin' the wheel,  
An' doon on the track wad be pacin' them a'  
On a "Wellwood" he built in the auld Meikle's Raw.

Another auld worthy—the bauld Tammas Weir,  
Gey witty, they tell me, an' crammed fu' o' leer,  
But ye a' ken o' Tammas in a pawky Scots style,  
For auld Tammas Floyd has me skinned there a mile.

Dae ye mind o' Bill Lorimer—his wife was sae clean,  
Her hoose wad be shinin' jist like a new preen,  
Aye dreadin' that Bill wad dirty the floor  
She'd gi'e him his slippers outside o' the door.

An auld washer-wumman they ca'ed Jenny Train  
Was mair in the Raw than in her ain hame,  
An' could turn oot a washin' far whiter by far  
Than by the new-fangled things we plug in the wa'.

I've traversed the auld Raw frae gable tae gable,  
Describin' them a' as best I was able;  
I ken ye'll forgie me if I missed ane or twa—  
I was only a boy when I leaved in the Raw.

But the auld Meikle's Raw had been staunin' for years  
An' a guid bit the worse o' the wear an' tear,  
So they knocked it a' doon an' built it again,  
An' ye a' ken it noo by a grand royal name.



MAIN STREET — THE AULD MEIKLE'S RAW (ON THE RIGHT)

# The Muirkirk Advertiser

Circulated in Muirkirk, Glenbuck, Torhill, and Bankhead.

No. 1.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1907.

GRATIS.



BUSINESS IS NOW IN FULL SWING



AT

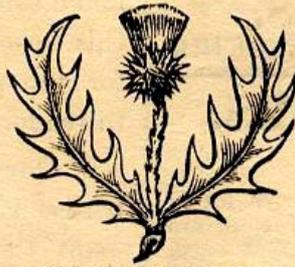
## ROBERT JACK'S NEW DRAPERY WAREHOUSE,

BLACKWOOD'S BUILDINGS.

EVERYTHING IS TIDY,

CLEAN,

AND UP-TO-DATE.



PRICES ARE THE KEENEST,

QUALITY THE BEST,

SERVICE PROMPT.

TOUCH ME WHO CAN.

Having had over 26 Years' Experience of the Drapery Trade in Muirkirk, I can with confidence solicit a continuance of public support, guaranteeing in every case the Best Value Procurable.

HATS and CAPS a Special Feature. LINOLEUM and FLOORCLOTH at Makers' Prices (all widths) FLANNELETTES—Famous for Quality.

HOSIERY (Gent's and Ladies')—Guaranteed Unshrinkable.

READY-MADE CLOTHING to Fit Big and Little.

HOUSEHOLD DRAPERY in all its Departments.

*INSPECTION FREELY INVITED.*



STEELE'S CORNER AND MAIN STREET

## A LOOK BACK IN TIME

Here is a list of Muirkirk folks, and where they were staying in 1925:—

<i>Christian Name</i>	<i>Surname</i>	<i>Address</i>
Adams	Andrew	43 New Terrace
Adamson	John	Main Street
Adamson	Nettie (Miss)	Wellwood Street
Aird	Miss	Smallburn
Aiston	T. A. (Mrs)	Main Street
Alston	John	Smithfield
Alston	William	Sornica
Anderson	George	Bridge Street
Anderson	Hugh	Nether Wellwood
Anderson	Matthew	Smallburn
Angus	William	Masonic Hall, Main Street
Armstrong	John	Irondale Cottage
Baird	Dugald, J.P.	Kameshill
Begg	Isa (Miss)	Bankend Cottage, Smallburn
Begg	Lena (Miss)	Ardbeg, Wellwood Street
Beil	Charles P.	Main Street
Beil	Hugh	Roslyn, Wellwood Street
Blackwood	Archibald	Fergus Place, Main Street
Blackwood	M.	Post Office
Blackwood	William	Wellwood Street
Boyes	Mrs	Hunter's Building, Main Street
Boyes	Thomas	Upper Wellwood
Broom	Thomas	8 Park Terrace
Brown	James	Main Street
Brown	John	Victoria Buildings, Main Street
Brown	William	Wellwood Street
Buchanan	R.	Jack's Buildings, Main Street
Buchanan	William	Upper Wellwood
Burns	James	Main Street
Caldow	William	Mossend, Main Street
Caldwell	James	Gleniffer, Wellwood Street
Caldwell	Thomas	Railway Buildings, Southside
Callan	John	Fairmount, Glasgow Road
Cameron	John, Dr.	Irondale House
Cannon	William	Garronhill
Clement	James	Naperston Cottage,
Craig	James	Netherwood
Cranston	John	Linkieburn
Crawford	Hugh	Greenockmains
Crosbie	Christopher	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
Dalrymple	John, (Constable)	Lilybank, Smallburn
Davidson	William	Heath Cottage, Garpel
Dempster	John W.	Kirkgreen
Dickson	Miss	Wellwood Street
Dunbar	John	Furnace Road
Dunbar	John	Central Bar
Falconer	Joseph	Bellevue, Glasgow Road
Fettes	Peter	Sauchie, Smallburn
Findlay	A. (Mrs)	Blackwood's Buildings
Fleming	Andrew	New Terrace
Floyd	Thomas	Woodside Cottage
Forbes	Sergeant	Constabulary Station
Forbes	David	Smallburn
Forbes	John (Mrs)	Wellwood Street
Foster	John	Kames Farm
Foster	William	Greenockmains Farm
Gardiner	Miss Ella	March House
Geedes	John A.	Main Street

**Muirkirk Folks (Continued)**

Gibson	Miss	Main Street
Gibson	Agnes	Furnace Road
Gibson	James	Railway Buildings, Soithside
Gibson	Robert	Gubson's Buildings
Gilchrist	Miss Isa	Smallburn
Gilchrist	James	Garronhill
Girdwood	James	19 Old Terrace
Goldie	George	Victoria Buildings, Main Street
Goldie	J.	Springhill Terrace
Grahan	Alex.	Wellwood Toll
Graham	Frank	Wellwood Toll
Graham	John	Wellwood Toll
Grant	Mrs	Smallburn
Guthrie	James	Glasgow Road
Hadden	William	Albert Cottages, Main Street
Halliday	William	Main Street
Harrison	George	Wellwood Street
Harvey	J.	Mid Wellwood
Hastings	Joseph	Railway Buildings, Southside
Hazle	Thomas	Jack's Buildings
Henderson	John, Rev.	The Manse
Henderson	Thomas	Cairnhill, Smallburn
Hendry	Dorothy	Knoweview, Main Street
Hibberd	George	Kirkgreen
Hill	James	Springhill Terrace
Hodge	James	Dundas Hall, Main Street
Hodge	James	Baird Institute, Main Street
Hogg	John (Baker)	Robertson Place, Main Street
Hogg	William	Glasgow Road
Holden	Joseph	Smallburn
Holden	Peter	Ashbank, Smallburn
Holden	Thomas	Ashbank, Smallburn
Hunter	John	Hillcrest
Hutchison	Miss Jenny	St. Brid'e, Wellwood Street
Hutchison	Dr. T. P.	Wellwood Street
Ingram	Adam	Glasgow Road
Irvine	Catherine Whyte	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
Irvine	John Whyte	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
Irvine	Mrs T.	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
Jack	Mrs William	Railway Buildings, DSmallburn
Johnstone	John	Furnace Road
Kennedy	John	Main Street
Kerr	J. P.	Holmhead
Kerr	Mrs Thomas	Fleming Cottage, Smallburn
Laidlaw	William	Railway Buildings, Southside
Law	James	Furnace Road
Lindsay	John	Midhouse Row
Lindsay	Miss Margaret	Furnace Road
Little	Alex.	Main Street
Lochrie	Mrs James	Lilydale Cottage, Smallburn
Loggie	Allan	Cairnview, Furnace Road
Loggie	James	Woodland, Wellwood streer
Lowe	Charles	Smallburn
Mackie	Peter	Jack's Buildings
Mackin	Joseph	Railway Buildings, Southside
Mansfield	Joseph	Morton Place, Furnace Road
McCall	James	Garronhill House
McCall	Mrs John	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
McCallum	Duncan	Linburn

**Muirkirk Folks (Continued)**

McCartney	James	Bridge Street
McClure	Mrs M.	Rosebank Cottage, Smallburn
McCulloch	Adam	Upper Wellwood
McCulloch	James	Haystackhill
McCulloch	Mrs J.	Haystackhill
McCulloch	John	Haystackhill
McCulloch	Tom	Haystackhill
McCulloch	Walter	Beaconhill Cottage, Wellwood
McDougall	Miss Bessie	Midhouse
McDougall	William	Morton Place, Furnace Road
McGillivray	William	Auldhouseburn Farm
McIntosh	William	Kames Row
McKechnie	James	Black Bottle Tavern, Kirkgreen
McKerrow	John	Burnfoot Farm
McLeod	John	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
McMichael	John	Burnbank Cottage, Burnside
McMillan	William	Main Street
Millar	William	Cairn House,
Mitchell	James	Springfield, Wellwood Street
Mitchell	William	Garden View
Moffat	John	Wellwood Street
Muir	George	Srableyards
Muir	William	Smallburn
Mullen	J.	Linkieburn
Murdoch	William	Townhead
Murphy	Thomas	Main Street
Murphy	William	Smallburn
Murray	D.	Rosebank, smallburn
Murray	W.	Railway Buildings, Southside
Nicol	James	Airdsmill Cottage
Nisbet	William	Glasgow Road
Park	Andrew	Crossflatt
Park	Mathew	Jubilee Row, Glenbuck
Pollock	Alex.	Main Street
Presston	John H.	Main Styreet
Pringle	Andrew	Irondale
Pringle	George	Furnace Road
Rae	Samuel	Helenslea
Ramage	James	Park Cottage, Glasgow Road
Rennie	David	Knowview, Main Street
Rennie	Robert	Eagle Tavern, Smallburn
Richmond	James G.	Wellwood Street
Robb	D. R.	Royal George
Robertson	James	Glasgow Road
Rodger	James	Holm Copptage, Smallburn
Ross	Andrew	Kirkgreen
Ross	Malcolm	Glasgow Road
Rowe	Thomas	Townhead Garage
Rowe	William	Burnbrae
Samson	David	Albert Place, Main Street
Samson	John	Hunter's Building, Main Street
Samson	Thomas	Main Street
Samson	William	Station Cottage, Southside
Scott	William	Dalfram
Selkirk	James	Main Street
Shanks	George	Main Street
Shields	Thomas	Railway Buildings, Southside
Smith	Miss A. L.	Bona Vista, Wellwood Street
Smith	Robert	Furnace Road

**Muirkirk Folks (Continued)**

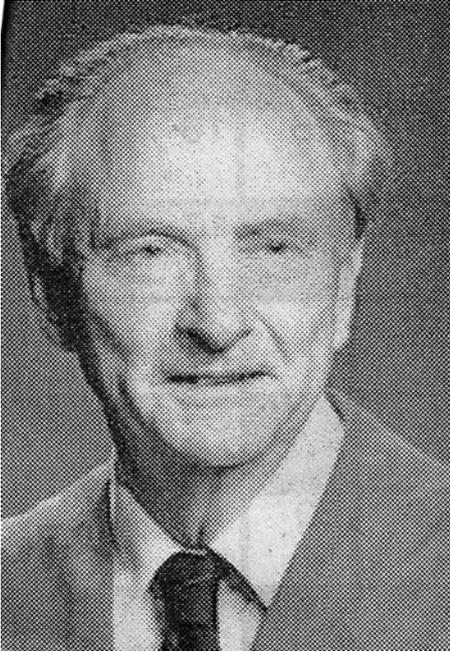
Smith	W. S.	Bona Vista, Wellwood Streer
Stacey	James	Railway Buildings
Steele	Mrs J.	Norwood, Wellwood Street
Steven	Robert	Glasgow Road
Stitt	David S. (J.P.)	Wellwood Street
Strathearn	Thomas	Smallburn
Sunderland	Miss Jean	Sauchrie, Smallburn
Symington	Robert	Rosebank, Smallburn
Taylor	David	6 Park Terrace
Taylor	George	Gibson's Buildings
Taylor	Robert	Cunningham House
Telfer	James	Wellwood Street
Telfer	William	Stableyards
Templeton	Alex. S.	Wellwood Street
Thomson	John	Blackside
Thomson	Joseph	Jack's Buildings
Turner	Robert	Smallburn
Vallance	John	Ivy Cottage, Smallburn
Wardrop	James	Catchieburn
Wardrop	William	Railway Buildings, Southside
Watson	Thomas	Burnside
Weir	Miss E. H.	Heathfield, Glasgow Road
Weir	James	The Old Hall, Glasgow Road
Weir	Walter	Rose Cottage, Glasgow Road
Wharrie	Thomas	Main Street
Williamson	Andrew	Under Whitehaugh
Willock	George	24 Midhouse Terrace
Wilson	Alex.	Victory Park Cottage
Wilson	David	Wanlass Place, Main Street
Wilson	T.	Railway Buildings, Smallburn
Wylie	John	Wellwood Street
Young	James	Smallburn
Young	John (J.P.)	Springhill
Young	Robert	Janetta, Main Street



GLASGOW ROAD, MUIRKIRK

## PROFESSOR TOM SYMINGTON

Tom Symington was just one of many Muirkirk sons that graduated to Professorship, and made a name for himself in the medical field of research. He excelled as a Pathologist and was a popular academic researcher and teacher. He was born at the top o' the town in 1915, and by his death in 30th April 2007, he had achieved great heights, and Muirkirk can be justly proud of his achievements. Here is one of the many tributes paid in the Obituary columns:—



Tom Symington was one of the giants of Morbid Anatomy in the twentieth century. He carried out ground-breaking research into the function of the adrenal gland that continues to affect the practice of medicine to this day.

In the 1950s and 1960s he developed new techniques of morphological and chemical studies of the adrenal cortex to provide an understanding of its complicated structure; he also explained the role of hormone production played by cells in different zones of the cortex. This research opened up an understanding of adrenal disease, and paved the way for a treatment.

A great leader and communicator, he headed a Department of Pathology at Glasgow Royal Infirmary that was renowned internationally as a centre of research excellence, and produced 11 future professors of pathology in the UK, Canada and the US.

Tom Symington was born the son of an Ayrshire miner in Muirkirk, Ayrshire. His father died in the influenza epidemic of 1918 and he was brought up by his Mum and Uncle Bob, who taught him the Olympian spirit of “strong in mind, spirit and body”.

Tom was a talented school footballer, and his headmaster told him he should not be going to university but pursuing a career in professional football.

He graduated from Glasgow University in 1936 with a degree in Biochemistry and in Medicine in 1941. Here he met Margaret, a fellow medical student and his future wife. After working for one year in General Practice, his training in science and an interest in tuberculosis led him into a career in pathology under Professor Blacklock at Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

It was here his interest in adrenal pathology started and he was awarded an M.D. with honours in 1951. He had been conscripted to the Army in 1947 and was in charge of a pathology department at the BM hospital in Kuala Lumpur during the communist uprising. His organisational skills allowed every soldier to be blood grouped and blood was supplied for the casualties of frequent ambushes.

He was appointed Professor of Pathology at Glasgow Royal Infirmary in 1954 and this allowed him to set up his adrenal research group with links across the world, and in 1961 an international conference on the adrenal cortex was held in Glasgow.

## JOHN McCARTNEY'S POEM

I am taking this opportunity of reproducing a poem written in America by a Muirkirk man, John McCartney, and sent to his brother here in Muirkirk. The poem was copied from an old manuscript by Thomas Taylor, and it would appear to have been written in the 1830's. The John McCartney referred to at one time lived in Wellwood Farm, and it was from an experience he had there that inspired James Hyslop, who was a shepherd at Wellwood, to write "The Covenanter's Dream."

Unfortunately the manuscript had seen better days and the translation into print may not be as written by the writer. I think it deserves a place in Muirkirk's history, if only for the fact of the names and places mentioned in a Muirkirk almost two centuries ago. Here it is—

Let's ken about my auld acquaintance  
 'Mang whom I've had a merry rant-ance  
 But chiefly let me ken this matter  
 Hoo's a' the folk on Greenock Water  
 An' hoo does Heaven its blessings share  
 Upon the bonny banks o' Ayr.  
 And wha is the Grand Maister noo  
 Amang my brethren o' the Blue.  
 Is auld acquaintance David Ross  
 Grown quate an' dooce, or is he cross?  
 Has he made a' the hammocks mellow  
 Athwart the lands around Carbellow?  
 Has Hughie Begg yet rowth o' fun  
 Wi his dug and double-barrell'd gun?  
 Hoo is James Blackwood, wife and weans—?  
 I hope he's busy wi' the pleans  
 Ask him if e'er o' me he speaks  
 To tell the story o' the brecks.  
 This story—it will mak' ye smile—  
 Was tell't us twa by Willie Lyle.  
 Ae nicht—when Jamie, Will an' me  
 Met in Hugh Beggs in famous glee.  
 I lauch't that nicht fu' weel I min'  
 I have not lauch't sae much sinsyne,  
 Tell me wi' Jamie Smith, how goes it—  
 Wi' rowth o' leather, awls and rosit  
 Or is that merry chiel frae Sorn  
 Still libbin at John Barleycorn?  
 An' tell me man, how does it wi'  
 Jock Begg, Adie and John McGhee?  
 Speak man, hoo's Adam Begg and Sarah  
 Dae they do weel, or not so verra?  
 John Kay, too, wi' his pawky tale  
 Wha said my post-boy was a snail  
 How's he, and is he dealin' still

## JOHN McCARTNEY'S POEM (cont.)

In whuskey, porter, beer, and gill?  
 Rab Mathison—what is he doin'  
 Dykin, delvin, ditchin, pleughin?  
 Or what, as ye maun also tell us,  
 Has he a lot o' sturdy fellows?  
 Or has a tribe o' the lassie sort  
 The fruit o' his and Nanny's sport.  
 Is Jamie Murdoch bidin' still  
 In his faither's hoose at the Waulkmill.  
 An' tell me wha's herding noo—be sure—  
 Dungavel heights and Ha's North Muir?  
 An' further ye maun let me ken  
 Hoo's a' the lads in Glenmuir glens?  
 An' tell me wha are shepherds a'  
 Tween Iseyardhill and Glenmuirshaw?  
 And wha the shepherd's plaid dae fill  
 Round Conor's Craigs and Conor's Hill (Deil's Back Door)  
 Cats-cleuch, Crows-cleuch, an' Winny Burn  
 Wha thereabouts noo taks the turn  
 Amang the ewes, to keep them staunch  
 Wha herds Penbreck an' Auchty-tench?  
 Will Jenny Barrie yet be able  
 To wauchle weekly owre Cairntable?  
 On Sabbyth's morn to hear the preachin'  
 A lesson to the careless teachin'?  
 Is Johnny Merrie daunerin' still  
 Among the flocks 'bout Staneyhill?  
 Rough-sykes and Bellstane Rig, an a'  
 The pleasant wilds about Wardlaw.  
 Oh! man! what pleasures wad I take  
 To hear the tunes o' Tam Lapraik (the Poet's son)  
 Does he, yet canny, lent the gear  
 That stray atween the Gray Mere.  
 Let's ken the loons wha play auld tricks  
 Mang moorfowl, hares and patericks  
 What feck o' mawkins mak' their den  
 'Tween Templandshaw an' Cameron's Stane  
 Does scarcely ane escape the mou's (mouths)  
 O' Charlie Howatson's souple grews (grehounds).  
 Does W. Rankin in Walltrees  
 Live well and happy at his ease?  
 An' farther laddie ye maun tell  
 If Garpel and James Gemmell's well?  
 Dear man, alas! it gi'es me pain  
 Tae think that Esq. Boswell's slain  
 An' sleeping now in silent earth

## JOHN McCARTNEY'S POEM (cont.)

As brave a man that e'er had birth  
 In our auld shire!—yet I've forgot  
 Wha at him aimed the deadly shot  
 I'd pinchedly pray "The Lord forbid it."  
 The Deil blaw south the loon that did it.  
 How's Esq. P.A.S. McKenzie  
 Is he south or north ken ye, how fens ye  
 I doubt affairs wi' him's but murk  
 When he thinks o' parting wi' Muirkirk.  
 Twad set me ill to wish him worse  
 That always wear a wappin purse  
 Baith lang and wide and for it linnin'  
 The yellow ore and silver shinning  
 Where ere he be the Lord be wi' him  
 May nae mishamper ever steer him  
 If yet he is not dead and gone.  
 Ye'll mind me to John Finlayson  
 Wha aye was fu' o' gleesome catches—  
 Bangin' them a' at plowing matches.  
 I heard and surely some one said it,  
 "The King of ploughs" 'twas he who made it.  
 Ane Davie Johnstone frae Affleck  
 Tells me she's like a goose's neck (the plough)  
 About the beam without a marrow  
 Akin to neither plough nor harrow  
 And though ye should an acre strew  
 Yard deep, in strae, or tripe or woo  
 In twa-three minutes after yokin  
 His naigs to Couterin and sokin  
 He'd turned a' owre, and yet nae chokin  
 Amazed I heard, says I, that's clever  
 Leapt up and cried, "Muirkirk for ever."  
 Till now, I maist forgot to speir  
 How is, and where is, noble Weir?  
 Can he yet caper, jump and yell  
 And vapour wi' the muckle mell?  
 Now laddie ye maun tell me wha  
 Is tenant noo in Katie's Ha?  
 Even this ye'll tell me noo in truth  
 Wha rakes the fire at Stockendrouth  
 An' a' the bodies steer and staunch  
 At an atween the Darnhunch  
 What echo hums wi' murnfu drone  
 About Cleuchhead an the Ha tone  
 An likewise tell wha hauds the pleugh  
 About Airdsgreen and Stannancleugh

## JOHN McCARTNEY'S POEM (cont.)

The braw braw lassies at Crossflatt  
 What kin' o' husbands did they get  
 Or hae they no for ought ye ken yet  
 Had nae connection wi' the men yet  
 Tell me man if the Haystackhill  
 Is blessed wi' a roof an' riggin still  
 Whase bairns yet innocently rowe  
 Amang the mud onto Peatstack Knowe?  
 Wha lifts the brass at Wellwood Towl?  
 Wha keeps the School at Winny-gowl?  
 An how's John Hair, I hear that Willie  
 Allow poor folk a drap ava  
 Fu cosie yet among your hills  
 Ye'll whiles hae bits o' dribblin' stills  
 Whence folk will get a dainty shair.  
 To soothe the pang o' joyless care  
 Let Scotia's bodies get their due  
 A cappie whiles a mountain's dew.  
 Now sir you see I fairly task ye  
 To answer a' that I have asked ye  
 An Muckle mair I had to spier  
 But can't for want o' room here  
 Thus far I've gane in doggrel rhyme  
 I'll farer gae some ither time.

J.McC.



ARCHIBALD FREEEBAIRN AND HIS HORSE "DOLLY."

It now seems very appropriate to reproduce the poem commemorating the fateful event at Airdsmoss in Covenanting times. It was written by James Hyslop, the poet mentioned in the previous article —

## **THE CAMERONIAN DREAM**

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In a dream of the night I was wafted away  
To the moorland of mist where the martyrs lay;  
Where Cameron's sword and his Bible are seen  
Engrav'd on the stone where the heather grows green.

'Twas a dream of those ages of darkness and blood,  
When the minister's home was the mountain and wood,  
When in Wellwood's dark moorlands the standard of Sion  
All bloody and torn 'mong the heather was lying.

It was morning, and summer's young sun, from the east;  
Lay in loving repose on the green mountain's breast;  
On Wardlaw and Cairntable the clear, shining dew  
Glisten'd sheen 'mong the heath bells and mountain flowers blue.

And far up in heaven in the white sunny cloud,  
The song of the lark was melodious and loud;  
And in Glenmuir's wild solitudes, lengthen'd and deep,  
Was the whistling of plovers and the bleating of sheep.

And Wellwood's sweet valley breath'd music and gladness,  
Its fresh meadow bloom hung in beauty and redness;  
Its daughters were happy to hail the returning,  
And drink the delights of green July's bright morning.

But, ah! there were hearts cherish'd far other feelings,  
Illum'd by the light of prophetic revealings,  
Who drank from the scenery of beauty but sorrow,  
For they knew that their blood would bedew it tomorrow.

'Twas the few faithful ones, who with Cameron were lying,  
Concealed 'mong the mist, where the heathfowl were crying;  
For the horsemen of Earlshall around them were hovering,  
And their bridle reins rung through the thin misty covering.

Tho' their faces grew pale, and their swords were unsheathe'd,  
Yet the vengeance that darken'd their brows was unbreath'd;  
With eyes rais'd to heaven in meek resignation,  
They sung their last song to the God of salvation.

The hills with the deep mournful music were ringing,  
 The curlew and plover in concert were singing;  
 But the melody died 'midst derision and laughter,  
 As the hosts of ungodly rush'd on to the slaughter.'

Though in mist, and in darkness, and fire they were shrouded,  
 Yet the souls of the righteous stood calm and unclouded;  
 Their dark eyes flash'd lightning, as, proud and unbending,  
 They stood like the rock which the thunder is rending.

The muskets were flashing, the blue swords were gleaming,  
 The helmets were cleft, and the red blood was streaming,  
 The heavens grew dark, and the thunder was rolling,  
 When, in Wellwood's dark moorland, the mighty were falling.

When the righteous had fallen, and the combat had ended,  
 A Chariot of fire through the dark clouds descended,  
 The drivers were angels on horses of whiteness,  
 And its burning wheels turn'd upon axles of brightness.

A seraph unfolded its doors bright and shining,  
 All dazzling like gold of the seventh refining;  
 And the souls that came forth out of great tribulation,  
 Have mounted the chariot and steeds of salvation.

On the arch of the rainbow the chariot is gliding;  
 Through the paths of the thunder the horsemen are riding,  
 Glide swiftly, bright spirits, the prize is before ye;  
 A crown never fading, a kingdom of glory!



CAMERON'S MONUMENT AT AIRD'S MOSS

## ALEC BROWN

The exploits and the history of the famous Glenbuck Cherrypickers has been well documented over the years, but readers of a sporting inclination should be interested in the following article I put together about one of their stalwarts, by the name of Alec Brown.



Alec Brown was a Glenbuck man and played for the famous junior combination, Glenbuck Cherrypickers. He entered senior football with Preston Northend before joining Tottenham Hotspur. He was capped for Scotland against England in 1902 and 1904.

Alec, along with Alec Tait, were the first players to go into senior football from the Cherries. They were both members of the Tottenham Hotspur team at a time when it was one of the leading clubs in the country. Brown and Tait were holders of English Cup Final medals, being in the Hotspur team which won the Cup in 1901. This was the first time for many years that the Cup was won by a South of England team. Tottenham beat Sheffield United in the semi-final by 4-0, and Southampton in the final by 1-0. All these goals were scored by Alec Brown. The Sheffield goalkeeper, Foukles - he was also England's keeper - was a giant of a man weighing nearly 18 stone. It is said that when Alec scored the first goal Foukles picked up the wily Spurs forward and swung him in the air. Later in the year the English Cup was brought to Glenbuck and exhibited in the shop window of Barr's Store. This was

the first time that the English Cup had been out of England, and was the original English Cup, made of gold, which was stolen in 1905 from a Birmingham shop window while in the temporary possession of Aston Villa. It was never recovered, and the present Cup is a replica in silver.

As already mentioned, Alec Brown was capped for Scotland twice. He was a member of the Scottish team on the famous occasion of the Ibrox Disaster in 1902. It is often said that Bobbie Templeton of Kilmarnock was the occasion of the disaster. He was executing one of his characteristic runs down the right wing and a portion of the crowd rose to their feet and swayed forward to keep him in view. Templeton, however, did not cross the ball but ran it into the centre and passed to Brown, who put it into the net. It was at that moment that the tragedy occurred. Part of the stand collapsed and many of the spectators were killed or injured. The match was at once abandoned and replayed at a later date for the benefit of the victims of the disaster.

Alec Brown was affectionately nicknamed, "Towey."

JAMES TAYLOR

## SOUTHSIDE ROWS, MUIRKIRK

It was a very sad time in the village when the Southside Rows were demolished, and although the inhabitants were re-housed in better and more modern accommodation, it must have been a feeling of mixed emotions leaving all their memories of happy days, and not so happy days, spent there right on the doorstep of all the popular places and picnic spots in the area. The following article I have reprinted will go a little farther back, and might stir up some memories in the process

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### 1913 Inspection Report

Muirkirk South is a considerable village on the south side of the River Ayr from Muirkirk proper. It is built in rows, having 237 dwellings, with a population of 1064, exclusive of officials' houses and of Linkieburn, most of which is tenanted by Spaniards, making it a little difficult to get exact figures. It belongs to Messrs. William Baird & Co., Ltd., and is tenanted chiefly by miners. In Linkieburn and Linkieburn Square there are a number of furnace workers, the Muirkirk furnaces being quite near.

#### Linkieburn, Right Side Up

The row nearest to the station is Linkieburn. On the right hand side up there are 14 houses, with only seven entrances. It is almost wholly inhabited by Spaniards, some of whom have rented two houses for the purpose, we presume, of accommodating lodgers.

**Size of house** — The size of the house is 14 feet by 12 feet, and the rent is 2s for the two houses. They are built of stone.

**Left side up** — There are six houses, of two apartments on the left hand side up.

**Rent** — The rent is 2s 1d for this double house.

**Accommodation** — There are two dry-closets, with doors, for both sides, but no coal-house and no washing-house. One Spaniard on left side had built a washing house for himself, so we were told, the use of which he allows some of the other tenants.

**Unpaved paths** — The paths are unpaved, but very clean. [63]

**Spaniard a good type** — The Spaniards here are of a good type, one house we were in being nice and clean.

**Water supply** — There is a good supply of water, a continual run going down the open syvor.

## Linkieburn Square.

**No. of houses Population** — There are 15 two apartment houses in Linkieburn Square. The kitchens measure 15 feet by 10½ feet, but the rooms are mere strips, 11 feet by 6 feet. There are in all 64 people here.

**Rent** — The rent is £4 4s per year.

**Accommodation, Closets, etc** — There are no washing-houses and only three coal-houses, but some of the tenants have built wooden ones for themselves. There is a dry-closet for every four tenants, with open ashpits. The closets were very clean.

**Unpaved paths** — The paths are unpaved, but very clean. There is a copious supply of water always running in the open syvor about 9 feet from the door.

**Water supply** — This water is led in pipes from the hills.

**Brick built** — This square is built of brick, and some of the houses are slightly damp.

**Midhouse Row. Population, etc. Rent** — There is a population of 90 in what is called Midhouse Row, inhabiting 25 two apartment houses. Some rent two of these two apartment houses, the rent of which is 3s 10d a week, and 2s for the ordinary house.

**Accommodation, Closets, etc** — There is a washing-house for every 5 tenants, a dry-closet for every 3 tenants, with coal-houses and covered ashpits. All these are under one roof, only 12 feet from the door, which is always undesirable.

**Unpaved paths, etc** — The paths are unpaved, but very clean; the kitchen floors of brick tile and the rooms of wood.

**Water supply** — Like the other rows there is plenty of water running, as well as for use.

## Railway Terrace, No. 1.

**Railway Terrace, No. 1** contains 26 two apartment houses built of brick, with a population of 101.

**Same as previous row** — It is the same as to size, rent, and accommodation as the Midhouse Row. In this Railway Terrace, No. 1, a good number of tenants have rented three apartments.

**Railway Terrace, No. 2** — Railway Terrace, No. 2, contains 27 two apartment, houses, with a population of 146

**Accommodation, Closets, etc** — These houses are built of stone, with the same washing-house, closet, coahouse, and ashpit accommodation as the two previous rows.

**Rent** — The rent is 1s 10d a week.

**Condition** — These houses are said to be a little damp.

**Unpaved** — The paths are unpaved, but clean. As in the other rows, there is plenty of water.

### **Kames Row, No. 3.**

**Kames Row, No. 3** — is built of brick, containing 27 houses, with a population of 123. The kitchen measures 14 feet by 12 feet, the room 12 feet by 10 feet. [64]

**Rent** — The rent is 2s a week.

**Accommodation, Closets, etc** — There is a washing-house for every eight tenants, and a closet for every four. There are coal-houses and covered ashpits.

**Paved** — This row is paved in front, which is a great help to the appearance and comfort of the houses.

**Water** — Plenty of water, as in the other rows.

### **Kames Row, No. 2.**

**Kames No. 2** is a replica of Kames No. 3. There are several tenants here who have taken three apartments. The population here is 291, inhabiting 56 dwellings, and the rent is 1s 11d a week.

### **Kames Row, No. 1.**

**Accommodation Unpaved** — Kames No.1 has 98 houses of two apartments, with a population of 249. It has the same accommodation in everything as the others, but is unpaved.

**Rent** — The rent is 1s 10d here.

**General Remarks** — At the lower end of these rows there is a settling pond which ought to be removed, as it gives off a very bad smell, especially in Summer. The flies at this lowest row are a perfect plague. Another thing which is to be deprecated is the washing-house, coal-house, closet, and ashpit all under one roof, and in many instances only 12 feet from front door.

**Water** — The water supply is excellent, the gravitation water being brought from Caintable. The water is plentiful and good.

**Inhabitants** — The inhabitants are a markedly good type. They take a great interest in their gardens, many of them having glass frames and some large glass houses. A great many of them have rented three and four apartments, which is proof that the people here are willing to pay for better accommodation.

**What is lacking** — The one thing lacking here is water-closets, if those were erected, and a bathroom added, we believe that the people would justify their erection by using them and appreciating them. On the whole this is a good type of village. Very little trouble and expense would make it a desirable place to live in.

## GLENBUCK SCHOOL

I am sure that there are those still here who would be interested in a little bit of history of the village of Glenbuck, and what better place to start than Glenbuck Public School, which in its heyday produced some talented scholars. The passing of the Education Act of 1872 brought into being the Parish School Board, upon whom devolved the duty of providing schools in every parish throughout the land.

The original school, of which no records remain, was carried on in a large "single end" in the now defunct School Row. While the present structure was in the course of erection, the school was held in the byre at West Glenbuck, but the cold weather of the 1875-76 winter made it impossible to carry on this temporary arrangement, and for several months no schooling was available in the village.

Glenbuck School opened on Monday, 13th March, 1876, when 106 children were admitted, and after a short address they were dismissed for a week "to allow the painters to varnish the desks, etc." The first — and sole — teacher was Mr W. S. Baikie, and his roll in the early days showed remarkable fluctuations. It is interesting to note that slumps in attendance coincided with visits by the School Board Treasurer each quarter for the purpose of collecting fees.

In 1877 the School Board Clerk had to advise the teacher "to be careful in firing the stove so as not to destroy it by overheating."

Next year the introduction of a new text book had an adverse effect upon the roll, as many parents could not afford to purchase it, and simply withdrew their children from the school.

As the roll mounted to over 140 pupils the staff was increased to two teachers, assisted by two monitors, aged 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> years.

Non-payment of fees called for periodic visits by the head-teacher to Cumnock J.P. Court, and on December 5, 1878, one of the villagers was fined five shillings or sentenced to five days in prison. There is a note recording that "he did not pay the fine, so was sent to prison."

Two years later, in 1880, the roll had risen to 180 pupils, and the following year tragedy came to the School when two boys were drowned in Glenbuck Loch while sliding on the ice.

Structural defects became obvious in 1881, when "snow that had blown in under the slates began to melt and came through the ceiling, causing some inconvenience." The School Board decided to enlarge the building, and work was begun in June, after the summer holidays had been re-arranged to suit the builders. By 1882 the attendance had soared to 220, and the staff now consisted of two teachers and three pupil teachers.

Next Year 1883, saw the closing of the Lady Pit and the School roll fell quickly to 140. The opening of a new pit in 1884 sent the figures up to 160 and in 1885 to 190 pupils, still under two teachers assisted by two pupil teachers.

On 5th January, 1886, as the result of the Board's decision to increase the staff, Mr John Rodger was appointed first assistant. Attendances now average over 200 under a headmaster, an assistant, and an infant mistress.

Mr Baikie resigned in October, 1888, and was succeeded by Mr Allen from Stewarton. After a fortnight's work in School, Mr Allen was removed home

critically ill, and he died in March, 1889. Mr Rodger was appointed as his successor on 11th March, 1889.

By now the roll was about 280, still under the tuition of three teachers and one pupil teacher. There was a serious epidemic of fever, and with a third of the children off school, the Board closed the premises for a period of three weeks.

18th November, 1892, was a momentous day for the little village when Glenbuck Water Scheme was opened. Unfortunately, during dry spells the villagers occasionally found that no water flowed through their new pumps. The inauguration of the service caused the School Board to grant a holiday for the great occasion.

In 1894 new dual desks were installed in school and some of these are today serving the grandchildren of those boys and girls who hanelled them that April morning, 52 years ago. The miners' strike of that year had severe educational repercussions, as many of the parents were unable to buy the necessary books for their children.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the roll mounted steadily to almost 300 pupils and, on the recommendation of H.M. Inspector, the building was divided by sliding partitions, in 1899, into five classrooms, and the staff increased to five teachers, one pupil teacher, and one monitor.

The long drawn-out strike of 1902 saw the families leave the district, but work on the new railway to Coalburn brought fresh families to the village. By 1905 the school staff was increased to six teachers with one first year pupil teacher.

The closing of the Galawhistle and Davie Pits started another exodus, the school roll dropping by over sixty pupils in six weeks and the staff was reduced to four teachers once more.

In September, 1910, the school was closed for the induction of Rev. John Henderson in the Parish Church at Muirkirk. During the period of the First World War the roll fell slowly but steadily.

In February, 1918, the school closed for a half-holiday to enable the pupils and staff to attend the funeral of Mr Howatson, chairman of the School Board. In October influenza was rife, and it was necessary to close the school for four weeks. The re-opening date was 11th November, but, when the news of the Armistice was known, a holiday was immediately declared.

The 1921 miners' strike had an adverse effect upon school attendances, and "no boots" and "no clothes" were everyday reasons for absence.

Flush lavatories were installed in October, 1921, and the following year the Galawhistle and Davie Pits, which had been re-opened during the war, once again came upon bad times. The 1926 miners' strike did not affect the children to the same degree as previous strikes, and arrangements for communal feeding were speedily and successfully put into operation.

Next year, 1927, saw the retiral of Mr John Rodger, Glenbuck's "Grand Old Man," after 38½ years of service as Headmaster of the village school. He was succeeded by Mr James D. Kirkwood, who was to hold the reins of office until his early and untimely death in February, 1943.

Decay was now evident in the local coalfield and many families left the area in 1929 to seek employment elsewhere.

The closing of Grasshill Pit in 1933 seemed the beginning of the end and more migration took place.

The population decline, proceeding at an accelerating pace since 1933, was partially arrested by the outbreak of war in 1939, when the school roll had fallen to 42 children. By February, 1943, the number of children on the roll had declined still further to 36 pupils.

To-day, the roll stands at 33, but it is interesting to note that this is "rock bottom," since the war children are beginning to make their appearance in school, and yearly admissions of 10 are replacing former yearly admissions of 5 or 6 pupils.

This brief history of the school for the past seventy years provides a mirror in which we may view the events of the village during the period.

To-day the villagers, learning of the plans by the experts, are uneasy as to the future, and the Glenbuck native may be pardoned for quoting the National Bard —

"An forward, tho' I canna' see, I guess an' fear."

(The above was written a few months before the closure of the school was announced, and the closing paragraphs should be read accordingly)



GLENBUCK PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1928

## MAIDENBANK MEMORIES

Back to Glenbuck again, and this time I will reprint the recollections of an old Glenbuck man in the person of Mr M. T. McWhirter revisiting the village after a lengthy absence. Mr McWhirter had been guest speaker previously at the Glenbuck Old Folk's Re-union. Here are his thoughts:—

On a visit to Glenbuck, the village of my birth and boyhood days, I wandered in solitude, recalling to mind scenes and incidents when men were men, and boys were boys, some fifty years ago.

One place in particular that I visited was the site of the old Maidenbank Pit, where I worked part of the years 1886-1887. As I wandered towards the hill-end my eyes followed the track of the hutch-road, the connecting link between Grasshill Pit and the Maidenbank Screen, where the coal was disloaded into wagons. I thought of the drivers and horses, whose duty it was to conduct the trains of tubs in foul and fair weather. The names of drivers that I remember were Archie Weir, James Paterson, and James Watson, and the horses were "Star" and "Donald." "Star" was of the Clydesdale breed, so domicile and obedient that a child could have led him, but "Donald" was a light-legged black horse that brooked liberties or interference. Yes, "Donald" was of a different caste, and everyone was familiar with his disposition. My journey to Maidenbank occupied about five minutes, and as I gazed at the shaft formation I noticed a few counter-sunk bolts that protruded from the engine seat. Like a butterfly gliding from flower to flower, incident upon incident of pit life fitted into realism.

I recalled the pitheadman, George Jack, giving me a rebuke for having overstocked the pithead fire. I was in the habit of proceeding to work a little earlier than required, and with waste, grease, and cannel coal kindled the fire during the winter mornings, so that the Muirkirk men conveyed to the colliery with the pug train would receive some degree of comfort.

A curious accident befell James Moran one morning. A wagon that was being lyed got out of control, and as it was passing James threw a pinch endways at the wheels, hoping it would with luck act as a sprag. The pinch rebounded from the fleeting wheels and struck him a severe blow on the arm and side, necessitating his removal to his home at Muirkirk.

Another incident happened one morning after the men had detrained, which caused some excitement amongst the pitmen. John L. Sullivan, an Irish-American, the champion boxer of the world, had been matched to fight Charlie Mitchell, the English champion, and for weeks before the fight partisans of the respective boxers extolled their reputed merits, so much so that on the morning of the day of the fight several blows were exchanged as a final argument to the pugilistic contest. The fight between Sullivan and Mitchell took place on an island off the coast of France, and ended in a draw.

Several workmen who were employed in and at the Colliery whose names I remember were John Logie, enginekeeper, and an old man named Skirving, who acted as crawpicker. "Cottie" McBride was pit-bottomer, and during the "cornering hour" we would foregather at the stable, where a disused trap-door that leaned against the wall side was laid on the pavement, and McBride initiated some of the younger element into the intricacies of step-dancing. The horse that hauled the tubs from the nine-foot seam to the pit-bottom was named "Bob," and had seen

service above the ground between the trams of John Blyth's fleshing van. John Taylor (now of Douglas) was the pony driver, and if one happened to be in the vicinity of the bottom when Johnny and "Bob" were approaching with a train of tubs all lights had to be extinguished before "Bob" would race his tubs into the pit-bottom. It was a peculiarity of Bob that he declined to move bottomwards if there were lights ahead, it being surmised that he had received some mishap with a lighted lamp previously.

I remember the names of some of the miners who worked at the Colliery. Finlay Reid (oversman), John Taylor, sen., James Short, "Tweed" Anderson, J. Greenwood, Provost Murdoch, Neddie Madden, John Marshall and his son, John McCall and his son, John Brown and his son, Kenny Reid, and the three brothers Moran — Willie, Mark, and Jamie. There were others, but I fail to recall them at the moment.

Piece-time usually occupied an hour, and sometimes longer if the discussion was keen. Many and varied were the topics that engaged the attention of this pit parliament, and it was at one of the piece-time meetings that one of the miners stated that if the people would return him as their representative in Parliament the first measure he would endeavour to place in the Statute Book would be that all coal miners receive a fortnight's wages every week.

Another matter of local interest engaged their consideration — an impending School Board or other election, the pros and cons of this weighty local affair being examined from all angles, and several of the miners gave expression to their opinion in no uncertain fashion. A young man named Richard McCann, a shop assistant, had in his vocation found a billet in Muirkirk. Dick was a bright young spark, and sufficiently go-ahead to allow himself to be nominated as a candidate. Muirkirk was in a ferment of excitement, and the pit-workers parliament examined the situation from different aspects. Several men supported McCann's nomination as a means of introducing, as it were, new blood into the public body, while others thought that it was an act of impertinence on the part of young Dick to attempt an entrance into a public body composed of gentlemen who had held important social positions in their midst. The arguments for and against waxed furious, and it would have been difficult to forecast the result had the election reached a finality.

On the eve of the poll someone had been busy, and it leaked out that Dick McCann, the idol of the younger generation, was a minor, and had falsified his age for nomination purposes. McCann hurriedly left Muirkirk, and the old members were returned and resumed their public duties. Several years ago I met an old gentleman named McCann, and during our conversation I was surprised to learn that my companion was Dick's eldest brother. It may interest Muirkirk people to know that Dick sailed for America immediately after the Muirkirk incident, and met his death by accident many years ago.

M. T. McW.

## THE GLENBUCK MURDER

Still in the village of Glenbuck, here is the story of perhaps the blackest day in its history. The information was culled from various local newspapers, and here is how the gruesome story unfurled:—

On Thursday afternoon, 2nd April, 1908, the inhabitants of the Parish of Muirkirk were horror-stricken when it transpired that a cold-blooded murder had taken place at Glenbuck. The saying that “ill news travels quickly” was amply proved in this instance, for it was known throughout Muirkirk almost as soon as in Glenbuck.

The victim was a young married woman, aged 29 years, and her husband, Thomas Bone, jr, locally known as “The Jew,” was taken into custody charged with the murder.

Both were natives of the village, the couple having been married about two years previously, but they had lived together for only a week or two. Since that time the deceased had been employed in domestic and farm service in different localities, while her husband had spent most of the time in prison for various offences, and had altogether an inglorious career. He was a miner, but was of indolent habits, and it would seem that he preferred to be in, rather than out of prison, for when he returned to Glenbuck a week or two previous after undergoing two months’ imprisonment for smashing his father-in-law’s window, a party remarked to him, “Ye’ve got back again, Tammie;” “och aye, I’ll no’ be lang tae I’m in again,” was the rejoinder.

On several occasions Bone had visited his wife in service and assaulted her, and for which he had as often been sent to prison, and, having stated that he would yet finish her, the deceased’s relations and many others in Glenbuck were in constant dread when he was not in jail.

Mrs Bone came from her situation at Raith Farm, Monkton, for the day by the afternoon train, to visit her parents in Glenbuck, and at about half-past twelve went to call at Bone’s aunt’s house. About half-past one, Bone and his wife left to have a walk together, crossing the burn, and going over the hill towards Glenbuck Station. When out they were heard to be quarrelling over something, and the first intimation that anything was wrong was when, about half-past three it was alleged Bone himself told several people in Glenbuck that he had killed his wife. Incredulous, a few men at once proceeded to the spot indicated, and, on top of the hill, within sight of Glenbuck and about 500 yards distant, they found the body of Mrs Bone lying across the path, with her head terribly battered in, and presenting a shocking spectacle. The condition of the head was such that several men who saw it fainted at the sight.

The Glenbuck Police Constable was absent from the village on other duties, so the Police at Muirkirk were telephoned for, and Sergeant Suttie being also on duty elsewhere, Constables Smith and Middleton at once set off on their cycles for the scene of the tragedy. Bone had made no effort to escape; indeed he seemed callous about the whole affair. On arriving at Glenbuck, the police were informed about Bone’s whereabouts, and they proceeded to his aunt’s house where he was arrested by the Constables named. After some little delay Bone was conveyed to

Muirkirk Prison under the charge of Constable Middleton. Meanwhile Constable Smith had Dr Carruthers telephoned for, while the Constable attended to the removal of the body of the victim to the house of her parents, and by the time this had been accomplished, about an hour after the tragedy had taken place, the doctor had arrived. The County authorities were also communicated with, and Superintended Cunningham immediately proceeded to Muirkirk and Glenbuck, and conducted enquiries which lasted all night.

A post-mortem examination was conducted the following day by Dr Carruthers, Muirkirk, and Dr McQueen, Cumnock, in presence of Mr McKenna, the Procurator Fiscal. Captain McHardy, the County Chief Constable, also visited the scene of the tragedy.

Bone was conveyed to Ayr on Friday morning in charge of Superintendent Cunningham and Constable Smith. He was brought before Hon. Sheriff-Substitute Lockhart during the day, and submitted a declaration.

The remains of the unfortunate woman were interred in Muirkirk cemetery on Saturday afternoon, a large course of mourners following to the grave.

As before mentioned, the head presented a shocking spectacle, the brains protruding, and such had been the force used by the murderer that the head was sunk in the ground. The weapon used was supposed to have been a large stone which was found lying beside the body, as the stone bore ample evidence, but it transpired later that a workman on the farm had seen Bone stamping with his feet and throwing something at this very spot, but owing to a declivity in the ground at the place, and the fact that he was some distance away, the workman did not perceive what the kicking or the stone was directed at.

Much satisfaction was expressed with the very efficient way Constables Smith and Middleton dealt with the case in the absence of the Sergeant, for although having to cycle four miles, going round by Glenbuck Station, over heavy roads, Bone was apprehended within half-an-hour after the body was discovered.

## **THE TRIAL OF BONE**

In the High Court of Justiciary, Glasgow, on 8th May, 1908, Thomas Bone, jun., miner, was tried on the charge of murdering his wife. The witnesses in the case numbered 27, of whom 20 were from Muirkirk Parish, but a considerable number of persons interested in the case also journeyed from Muirkirk and Glenbuck to Glasgow.

Before nine o'clock in the morning, although ten was the opening hour, a good many people had taken up their places in front of the Courthouse, and the crowd steadily gathered. About 9.30 a.m. a prison van, popularly known as "Black Maria," arrived with several prisoners, and as the conveyance passed inside the gate, those inside the van could be heard cheering, shouting, and creating a fearful din, in fact it reminded one of a cage full of wild beasts. Bone was second to emerge from the vehicle, stepping lightly to the ground, and the demeanour of the lot as they were let loose was more like that of picnickers than anything else.

Inside the Courthouse it was plainly visible that there was something special on. All the available sitting-room for the public was quickly filled, and officials and wiggled advocates were passing to and fro. Lord Ardwell presided. Mr William Thomson, advocate-depute, represented the Crown, while Mr Orr Deas, advocate, Edinburgh, defended the prisoner.

The charge was as follows:—"Thomas Bone, junior, prisoner in the Prison of Ayr, you are indicted at the instance of the Right Honourable Thomas Shaw, advocate, and the charge against you is that on 2nd April, 1908, on an old road or footpath leading from Glenbuck village to the Muirkirk and Lanark road, which road it strikes near to Glenbuck Railway Station, and at a part of said old road or footpath, about 500 yards in a southern direction from Glenbuck Village, all in the Parish of Muirkirk and County of Ayr, you did assault your wife, Agnes Campbell Bone, now deceased, did strike her with a blunt instrument, and did murder her."

Addressing Bone, Lord Ardwell said he would be aware of the charge; did he plead guilty or not guilty?

Bone — Guilty.

Lord Ardwell (in a tone of surprise) — Guilty!

This procedure seemed to take the authorities by surprise, and a consultation took place between the Judge, the Clerk, and the Prosecutor.

Lord Ardwell (addressing Bone) — "I think you had better be guided by your counsel and plead "Not Guilty."

Bone — "No; I have a higher Poo'er tae face nor you, an' for that reason I plead guilty."

After another consultation, Lord Ardwell said they would proceed with the case and take the evidence, and that the plea would not be recorded.



GLENBUCK VILLAGE SCENE

The first witness was Helen Bone, wife of Thomas Bone, Grasshill Row, and mother of deceased. She stated that her husband was a cousin of the prisoner. Prisoner and her daughter were married about two years ago. After the marriage they stayed together for about 8 days. After a little, the girl went to service. Several months after she returned to Bone and took up house for a few weeks. She was back three times. She finally went to service and at the time of her death was engaged at Raith Farm, near Ayr. Her whereabouts had to be kept secret. Her daughter came to Glenbuck on the day of the murder with the 10 a.m. train, and intended returning with the 6.40 train at night. About 12.30 a young girl came to witness's house and asked if she would let Aggie down to see the Jew. She did not let her go then. A little boy came immediately afterwards with the same request. Witness and her daughter had a consultation and finally her daughter said—"Mother, I'll go in case he comes near you." So Aggie went away between 12.30 and 12.45. She never saw her alive again. Cross-examined — She could not say how long they courted. She had never interfered with them in their married life. Her daughter came back to witness's house one night after the marriage but her father sent her back to Bone. The reason why she left Bone was that he kicked up rows. Witness had objected to the marriage because he had a very bad character. Deceased left the second time because he kicked up a disturbance, and would not work to keep her, and she could not put up with him. On one occasion Bone had threatened to take off her daughter's head. She could not say he was jealous. He was a good workman, but would not work. She did not think he could be regarded as silly.

James Short said prisoner was in her father's house on the day of the murder. Deceased passed the door on the way from the train. Bone said, "Hallo, here's the wife," and said he had been going away to see her at any rate. Witness said prisoner blamed deceased's mother for putting ill between them. Prisoner said he was to ask his wife back to live with him; he was to take the fair way first, and if she didn't it would be a pity of her. He threatened that he would kick the head off deceased, said he would kick her guts out. Cross-examined — Prisoner talked quite sensibly, but he never knew his own mind five minutes. She thought he was quite "wice." She thought the threats were meant to be repeated to his mother-in-law.

John Davidson, pit drawer, said that on the 2nd April he was standing near Mrs Milliken's shop. Prisoner came forward quite sober, and talked to him. Prisoner asked if witness had seen the wife here to-day. Witness said no. Prisoner then told him she was in Glenbuck, and if he got her he'd kick her b——y head off. Witness told prisoner he had better not interfere with her or it would be Ayr for him. Prisoner said he had a bad temper and that the rope was waiting for him at any rate. He said it quite seriously. Bone said the Constable was away that day. Bone was quite cool and calm, and had no trace of drink.

While this evidence was being given, Bone smiled repeatedly, and looked quite unconcerned. When witness was asked by the defending Counsel if prisoner was not regarded in Glenbuck as being rather silly, Bone looked upwards and could not repress a smile, but seemed highly amused. Indeed, when the question was repeated to the later witnesses, the smile and manner on the part of the prisoner were as certain to be repeated.

Mrs Milliken said that on 2nd April she was working at the back of her shop when her daughter came and told her that the Jew was in the shop. Witness went to the shop, and after some conversation with the prisoner, she told him not to molest his wife's people, but he replied that if he got the chance he would kick the b—y head off his wife. Witness had heard prisoner use threats against his wife on many occasions. Asked if she knew any reasons for the threats, witness said she believed he did not do very well with his wife. He did not work very much. She thought he was perfectly "wice." Cross-examined — She never knew him to be silly and had known him all her life. He had been called "The Jew" ever since he was a boy. He had not been looked upon as being of defective intelligence.

Mary Bone, who had a young baby in her arms, said she was an aunt of the prisoner, and he had been staying in her house. He had not been working for a few days prior to the tragedy. He had not been drinking. On 2nd April prisoner came into the house and said the wife had come. He sent a boy to tell his wife to come down and she came. When she came into the house prisoner said to his wife, "Hallo, how are you getting on?" After having a crack the two went out together about 1.30. They seemed quite good friends. Witness heard the rumour, and shortly afterwards prisoner came in and was crying; he was also excited and restless. Witness offered him food, but he couldn't take it. Her brother asked prisoner what was ado with him. Prisoner replied that he had killed his wife. On being asked why he had done so, prisoner said he had been bothered and tormented and killed her. Her brother told prisoner to go and give himself up; he never spoke, however, but went out. Cross-examined — the pair had been laughing and joking in her house for about an hour before they left. Prisoner had not been very well for a good while. He had complained of pains in his head.

Mrs Annie Murdoch said she was in last witness's house when prisoner and his wife made it up to go for a walk over the hill. Prisoner said in the house that he was going to Fife to work, and start a house again. She saw them going over the hill. Prisoner came back to her house about 3.15, crying, and saying he had killed his wife.

James Halliday, shepherd, said he was at Newmains Farm stading on 2nd April, and saw prisoner and his wife standing in an open shed. It was raining at the time. Witness spoke to prisoner, who was quite sober and sensible. Witness had occasion to go into the stable and, while there, heard accused speaking loudly, but did not know what he was saying. Witness spoke to the pair when they left, and saw them make over the hill for Glenbuck. Bone was a good workman when he liked. They seemed to be on friendly terms.

James Nelson, West Glenbuck, said he was working on the farm, and saw prisoner and his wife coming from Newmains between 2 and 3 o'clock. They passed within a few yards of him. Witness afterwards looked in the direction in which they had gone and saw prisoner stamping his feet. He was about 300 yards distant. Witness did not see the prisoner's wife, and could not see accused's feet owing to the rising ground. Witness didn't know what prisoner was doing, but thought he might be killing a rabbit or something. Shortly afterwards he saw some people collected at the spot where prisoner had been stamping.

Mrs Bain, wife of John Bain, Spireslack Row, said she was an aunt of accused, and could see the hill from her house. She was standing at the door of

her house on the day in question, and saw a man bending and rising several times. She saw the man coming along, and it was the prisoner. Prisoner came to her house, crying. (Witness at this stage completely broke down in the witness box, and cried bitterly, and prisoner tried to console witness by saying, loud enough to be heard all over the Court, "Cheer up, woman, an' speak oot". Prisoner asked for water and she brought it, and he washed his face and hands. Prisoner also took tea. Prisoner told her that it was an awful job he had brought himself to, for he liked his wife; it was a great pity, but there was nothing for it now but to look to another world.

Richard Bain, son of last witness, corroborated.

John Bain, Spireslack Row, said that prisoner gave as a reason for killing his wife that her mother said they were never to take up together again and that she was to go to service, that "never" was a long time, his temper got the better of him, and he struck her on the head with a stone. Prisoner sat and talked for about half-an-hour, and wishing the police would come with a machine as he was done up. Cross-examined — Prisoner was easily roused. He was shaking and sore put about after.

Alexander Hamilton, butcher, deponed to prisoner asking him to go and tell his (prisoner's) wife's mother, and that the body was lying over the hill. Witness sent a telephone message to the Police at Muirkirk. He went and saw the body, and described its condition. He saw a stone with blood and hair on it lying about four feet from the body. He saw the stone taken possession of by Constable Smith. The stone was produced in court and identified by witness. (The stone is of white sandstone, is **V** shaped, and about the size of the smoothing part of a large-sized flat-iron). A haircomb, string of beads, and teeth were also identified. Witness had known prisoner all his life, and had never any reason to suspect that he was otherwise than perfectly sane, but he was excitable, and had a bad temper.

Constable Matthew Smith deponed to getting the telephone message, going to Glenbuck, and apprehending the prisoner in the house of Mrs Bain. He was quite sober. A machine was procured, and Constable Middleton conveyed prisoner to Muirkirk Jail. Witness afterwards proceeded to the scene of the tragedy, and found the body covered in a blanket. The skull was badly bashed, the face cut and bruised. The head was in a round hole, and there was blood and brain matter lying about. A stone was found lying near the body, and this was also identified by the witness, as well as several other articles. He knew the prisoner, but had never known of any mental weakness about him. The prisoner was perfectly sober when arrested.

Constable Middleton spoke to there being blood-stains on prisoner's jacket and shirt, and corroborated Constable Smith.

Superintendent Cunningham spoke to taking possession of clothing, &c. Sergeant Suttie corroborated generally.

Constable McLean (to whom the prisoner smiled and “Winked his other eye” as if delighted, said that deceased told him that prisoner said he would take her life if she spoke to any young men. On 2nd January prisoner told witness that the next time he (witness) apprehended prisoner it would be for killing his wife. Witness had never any reason to think prisoner insane. Cross-examined — witness had been in Glenbuck for seven years. He could not say prisoner was jealous. The deceased was well-behaved and never gave any occasion for jealousy so far as ever he saw.

The Court then adjourned at 1.20 p.m. for luncheon, Lord Ardwell intimating that it would be resumed at 1.50.

It was two o'clock before resumption was made, the Lord-Advocate apologising for delay, and during the wait prisoner scanned the faces in the Courtroom, and smiled, nodded, and winked to many; indeed it seemed as if he imagined that a beanfeast was being held in his honour.

Dr Carruthers, Muirkirk, read a long report on the post-mortem examination of the body, which he conducted along with Dr McQueen, Cumnock. The report gave harrowing details of the injuries inflicted, and finished with the opinion that death was due to wounds caused by another, with a blunt instrument. The report was signed by both Doctors. Dr Carruthers also stated that the wounds might have been produced by a boot or a stone. He knew of no insanity about prisoner. Doctor McQueen, Cumnock, corroborated,

Doctor Macrae, Medical Superintendent of the Ayr District Asylum, said he had examined prisoner as to his sanity on 3rd April, 24th April, and that morning, and on each occasion failed to find any evidence of insanity.

Doctor Naismith, Medical Officer of Ayr Prison, said that in his opinion prisoner was a sane man.

Mr Orr Deas asked each of the Doctors to look at the prisoner, and then asked if in their opinion the face of the prisoner did not show defective intelligence, but each thought not. The while each Doctor was looking at prisoner, Bone faced them up, looking them straight in the eyes.

Asked if he was in Court when accused pled guilty, Dr Naismith replied in the affirmative. Asked if he did not consider the plea the act of an insane man, the Doctor said “No,” and that prisoner was generally insolent in his speech, so that he was not in the least surprised.

This closed the evidence, and the Advocate-Depute addressed the jury, stating that it was a painful duty on his part, and it was a painful duty on their part, but he asked for the full verdict against the prisoner. Never in all his experience had he known a case where it was so clear that the deed was done. The prisoner had been caught practically red-handed. They were dealing with a man who had made up his mind to do it — a man who did not act in an impulsive manner. He asked for a verdict of guilty as libelled.

For the defence, Mr Orr Deas said he thought that at the time the deed was done prisoner was not responsible for his actions, and that while he was guilty of

killing his wife he was not guilty of intending to murder her. Mr Orr Deas quoted from a previous case where a verdict of culpable homicide had been returned in a case of uncontrollable temper, and asked the jury to return a verdict of culpable homicide.

Lord Ardwell, in summing up the case for the jury, stated that people who had uncontrollable tempers had them because they never tried to curb them, and they had the law for the purpose of protecting people from those who had violent tempers. It was the fear of punishment that held them in check. An uncontrollable temper could not be held to excuse a man. In the case quoted by Mr Deas there had been no premeditation, but in this case prisoner had threatened to kick her guts out, and kick her b—y head off, and he had carried out his threat, but, instead of kicking off her head, he had knocked it in.

The jury retired at 3.18, and returned at 3.28. After they had got seated the Clerk of the Court asked what was their finding, to which the foreman replied that they had unanimously found the panel guilty as libelled. After a few minutes, during which the sentence was being written out Lord Ardwell assumed the black cap which had previously been lying at the side of his desk, and, addressing Bone, who stood up at the call of his name, said that he had been found guilty of the murder, and the sentence of the Court was that he would be taken from this place to the prison of Glasgow, and from there to the prison of Ayr, where, on the 29th May, between the hours of 8 and 10 in the morning, and within the walls of the prison, he would be hanged by the neck until he was dead.

Bone—"Thank you, my Lord," and, turning round quickly, he sprang lightly down the stair at his back.

Lord Ardwell then thanked the jury for their attendance and the close attention they had given to the case, and, in dismissing them, said that the verdict was one with which he entirely concurred.

Although there was another case to follow, the most of the people present left the Court.

## **BONE REPRIEVED**

Thomas Bone, miner, Glenbuck, aged 28 years, received a last minute respite from execution on 28th May, 1908. Provost Allan, Ayr, about six o'clock that evening received the following telegram from the Secretary of State for Scotland:—

"The case of Thomas Bone. Execution of the sentence of death is respited until further signification of His Majesty's pleasure. Please acknowledge receipt of this intimation by telegram.

"UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND"

The Provost acknowledged the telegram. The Governor of the Prison (Mr McGhee) received a similar communication from the Prison Commissioners in

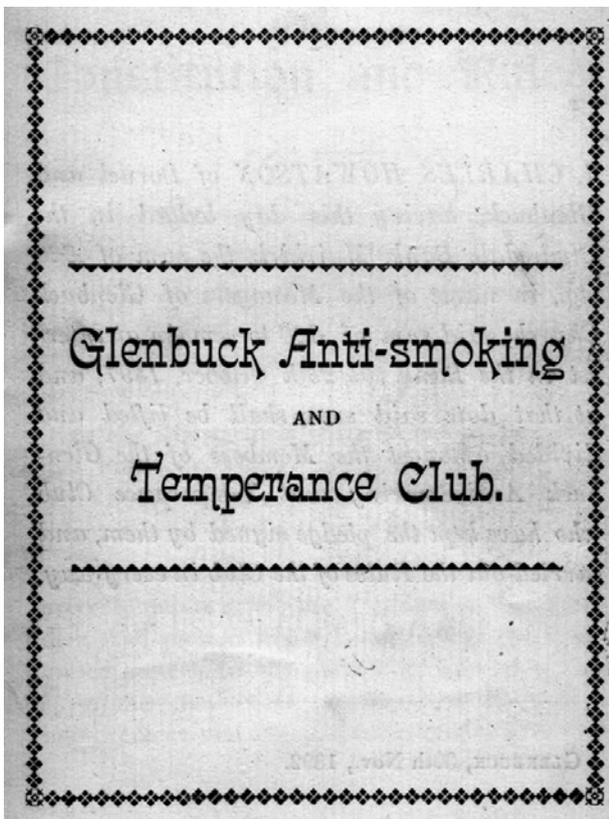
Edinburgh, and Mr A. A. Oswald of Auchencruive, Convener of the County, who had been interesting himself in securing a respite for Bone, also received a telegram from the Secretary of State for Scotland intimating that Bone's sentence had been commuted.

The Provost, accompanied by the Procurator-Fiscal and others, proceeded to the prison, and with the Governor of the prison, visited Bone in his cell.

On hearing the telegram, Bone, who was holding a small Testament in his hand, flung it on the table and exclaimed, "What is the meaning of that?" Provost Allan explained to him that it meant the execution was not to take place. Bone then went to a corner of his cell, and, holding down his head, burst out crying, and said he wanted to be with his wife.

The Rev. Mr Walker, the Prison Chaplain, said he ought to be thankful for the respite, but Bone, as he has done all along, showed that he was quite resigned to be hanged. An hour after, he was however, in a more composed frame of mind.

The tragedy did not finish here, and Thomas Bone was yet again to play the main part in the story which was to draw a line under the whole sordid affair. Bone, who had been seeing out his life sentence in Perth Prison committed suicide on 13th November, 1912. It appears he had been giving considerable trouble to the prison wardens for some time, latterly being regarded as a dangerous lunatic. Although closely watched, he took advantage of the fifteen minutes' absence of the warder, and committed suicide in his quarters by hanging himself with a bedsheet, which he tied tightly round his neck and attached to a peg in the wall. It is understood that the body was still warm when the warder returned, but life was extinct.



2

*I, CHARLES HOWATSON of Dornel and Glenbuck, having this day lodged in the Clydesdale Bank, Muirkirk, the sum of £20 stg., in name of the Managers of Glenbuck Church, said sum of £20 to remain at interest in the Bank till 26th October, 1897, and at that date said sum shall be lifted and divided amongst the Members of the Glenbuck Anti-Smoking and Temperance Club who have kept the pledge signed by them, and carried out the Rules of the Club in every way.*

GLENBUCK, 30th Nov., 1892.

## THE BANKHEAD PIT DISASTER

1898

I have managed to collate several items from the files of local newspapers, which in some way endeavours to put this tragic affair into prospectus, and in my opinion is a vivid insight to what life was like in a mining community such as Muirkirk. The thought of an accident in the local pits was always in the minds of the miners and their families in those days, perhaps because it happened so often. No doubt this was also the case at Bankhead Colliery, which had a small community of its own, with the workers being recruited from here and the near-by Garronhill. I found it a very touching story to write. What do you think?

The Bankhead Pit of Auldhouseburn Colliery, Muirkirk, which was flooded on Friday (11th March, 1898) morning by an inrush of water from the old workings, belongs to the Cairntable Gas Coal Company (Limited). It is situated on the south side of the Caledonian Railway Company's line from Lanark to Ayr, about half a mile to the east of Muirkirk Station, and has been worked for a period of about thirty years. The shaft, which is close to the side of the line, is 68 fathoms in depth, and the portion of the mine at present being worked lies to the east and south, the western section having been exhausted some time ago. From the bottom of the shaft the main road runs north-eastwards for a distance of about 130 fathoms. At that point it turns at an obtuse angle to the southward, the road being continued in that direction for about eighty fathoms. At the apex of the triangle thus formed, a heading had been driven towards the south for about 300 fathoms, with a rise of about 1 to 3. To the east of the rise are the disused workings of the Crossflat Mine, and it was from these workings that the inflow of water took place. The Auldhouseburn Colliery is not of great extent, only some 50 or 60 men being employed.

On Friday morning, between six and seven, the day shift went down to the number of 44, the majority being engaged in the rise workings. Work went on as usual until about a quarter to nine o'clock, when an alarm went through the mine that the water had burst in. The accident took place in the eastern end of the pit, at the working place of a man named John McMillan. According to his account, the water came at first in a stream about the diameter of a man's arm, then with a rush, which lifted him from his feet and flung him out onto the road level. Seizing the boy who was employed along with him, he rushed towards the pit bottom, which was distant about 300 yards, shouting as he went that the water had broken in. William Caldow, William Kilpatrick, James Lochrie, and John and James Dempster, who had been working at a lower level, knowing well what this meant, at once made for the pit bottom, several of their number running stripped to the waist as they had been working in the seam.

On the alarm being given, at the pit bottom, Robert Blyth, the fireman at the lower level, sped along the rise heading, shouting as he went to the busy miners to escape for their lives. Meanwhile, Robert Gibson, the bottomer, gave the signal to the pitheadman, and, with the utmost despatch, the miners, who by this time had begun to congregate at the bottom of the shaft, were brought to the surface. Those who were nearest the bottom outran the rapidly-increasing torrent, which was coming in heavy volume from the Crossflatt mine; but those who were at a greater distance found themselves in a stream which took some of them up to the knees, and others to the waist, while Gibson, the bottomer remained at his post until he

was immersed to the armpits. By this time he had succeeded in sending 23 of his men to the pithead; and, seizing a boy named John McGrowther, who had been carried off his feet, he rushed for a trap door which he succeeded in opening, and by an old road reached the shaft at a higher point, where he got into the cage. He was the last of the men who managed to escape from the flooded mine on Friday.

The manager of the Colliery, Mr John Shaw, who had been down in the pit early morning, was speedily apprised of the accident, and he at once took steps for the rescue of the men still below. From the character of the workings, confident hopes were then entertained that, without exception, they had all succeeded in reaching a place of safety. So far as was known, they were all employed in the rise workings, which are at an elevation considerably above the point where the water broke from Crossflatt mine into the main level, and it was considered by the manager and the more experienced workmen that when they found the main road flooded they would have been taken themselves to the higher levels. The only risk was that in the confusion following on the alarm they might have become bewildered, and rushed into the quickly gathering waters and perished. Indeed, a rumour was current in the course of the afternoon that cries had been heard by some of those who were last to make their escape, but it was impossible to verify the statement. The following is a list of the 19 men entombed for 12 hours:

James Hazle, married.  
 John Hazel, married.  
 F. Hibberd, and his sons,  
 Charles Hibberd and  
 James Hibberd.  
 James Lochhead, married.  
 John Marshall, married.  
 Hugh English, married.  
 John Kilpatrick, married.  
 Alexander Gilfillan, married

James Shaw, unmarried.  
 Robert Blyth, unmarried.  
 James Moran, married.  
 William Gemmell, married.  
 William Dempster, married.  
 Daniel Mathieson, married.  
 William Thomson, youth.  
 James Thomson, youth.  
 Alexander Vallance, unmarried.

The water rose rapidly in the mine shaft until it reached a total height of about 12 or 13 feet, and without delay operations were commenced with a view to clearing the mine. It is known in the district as a somewhat wet mine, and is provided with two powerful pumps, one of 14 and the other of 16 inches. These were at once set to work. In addition, two water chests which had been employed during a former period of flooding about six years ago, were happily at the mine. These were also rigged up and brought into use, bringing to the surface each about half a hogshead of water at each ascent. Between the pumps and the chests it was calculated that the water was being lowered at the rate of 300 or 400 gallons a minute.

The pathos of the scene at the pithead increased as night fell. When the news of the disaster first reached the village it was not thought that the matters were quite so serious, and during the afternoon the people who found their way to the pithead were comparatively few; but as the evening advanced and the gravity of affairs became known, the crowds who flocked to the scene greatly increased in numbers. When darkness came the village seemed veritably wrapped in melancholy. Muirkirk at ordinary times wears the characteristically dreary aspect of a mining village. The uneven village streets are unlighted, save, as by the weak

gleams shed by the flickering oil lamps in the houses. The brightest part of the village was when the lurid glare from the Eglinton Ironworks pierced the gloom. Along the uneven roads men and women wended their way to the pit. At midnight the scene in the neighbourhood of the pit was pathetically impressive.

Aulhouseburn Pit is difficult to approach. One was to wend one's way up a stiff incline, a rough road crossed by railway lines and strewn with lumber. This road was filled with a mining throng numbering between 200 and 300 people. The crowds made their way not without danger. The light which guided to the mine was somewhat dim. A wooden railing—broken in many places—was all there was to cling to on the way to the pithead. But the eager people stumbled on. The scene at the head of the shaft was grimly pathetic. A fire generously heaped with coal—coal that is so often bought at so dear a price—blazed at the pithead. Its glare shed a weird glow on the solemn-faced group who were gathered round. On one of the rude poles an oil lamp hung, its light dimmed by the great glow from the fire.

## **NARRATIVE BY ROBERT BLYTH**

Robert Blyth, the first of the men to get out of the pit, was escorted to his house, which is in the near vicinity. Here he was interviewed. He is a man of about 29 years of age and of modest demeanour. He was evidently shaken by his terrible experience, but though his voice trembled once or twice, he gave a very coherent account of the disaster. "As you may have heard," he began, "when the first word of the catastrophe spread through the pit, I ran to the rise workings to warn the men there at the time. I knew that the water would cut us off, but I wasn't going to be a coward. I have gone through some stirring experiences in this same pit, and have been in it all my days, and I hope it will never be said that Bob Blyth shirked his duty. I was near the bottom of the pit when the water rushed in, and after getting the men in the lower working to run for their lives, I made my way through the rushing torrent of water to the rise working, where I got the men there together. We found that air was being returned through the rise working, and there was absolutely no sign of damp or foul gasses. The atmosphere was quite fresh, and but for the privations, which a long stay in the pit would have meant, we would not have suffered from the atmosphere. The air was wonderfully fresh when they got the company of 16 gathered together. I took it upon my self, from my knowledge of the pit, to presume myself a sort of leader, although none of us thought anything of that kind at the time. We were all too glad to comfort one another. I knew it was folly to move from the place where we were, as any attempt to get through until the water had subsided would have been fatal. We collected all the coats and clothing we could get and huddled together for warmth, covered ourselves with blankets, and waited until the pumps, which we knew must be working, had finished. We were not badly off for light. Each of us had his oil lamp, and I got all the men to put out their lights, with the exception of two. When these were at their last flicker we lighted two more and so on, so that we did not suffer the inconvenience of darkness. There were two flasks of cold tea in the company. Some of the men wanted to drink the tea right off, but I induced them to hand over the tea cans into my custody. When I thought the strength of the men was giving way, about midnight, I fancy, I heated the tea with an oil can, and we each got a sip of the hot tea. When we saw that the water was going down I made two attempts to get near the pit bottom, but was unsuccessful. At the third attempt, however, I succeeded. I waded through the water, which was up to my neck. I could only keep my head above water with the greatest difficulty. It was a

bit of a struggle to get to the cage, as you may imagine. When I got to the pit bottom I saw that the water boxes were still at work, and, waiting until the "kist" had risen, I sprang forward and "belled the pit." That means I caught hold of the bell and rang to let the men above know that some one, at least, was safe. If it gave as much relief to those above as it gave me to ring that bell, it must have been very great. The men quickly came down and took me to the surface. There was a great amount of wreckage in the pit, and I saw the dead body of at least one pony. None of us saw anything of John Hazel, William Gemmell, and the boy James Shaw. What became of them I do not know."

## **RECOVERY OF THE BODIES**

Pumping was further continued to clear the workings and enable a search party to ascend and look for the three missing men, as to whose sad fate there now seemed no doubt. At eleven o'clock it was reported that the bodies of Gemmell, Hazel and Shaw had been found. The news, however, was premature, the actual discovery not taking place until after two o'clock. There were plenty of willing helpers to explore the workings. A party was selected to go down with Mr Andrew Pearson, Assistant Inspector of Mines for the West of Scotland. They were — Samuel Robb, William Kilpatrick, Robert Gibson, John McMillan, and Alex. Leggatt. The party had not been long down when Mr Pearson ascended and reported that the bodies of the three men had been found. The water boxes, which had been kept busily going for thirty hours bailing the shaft, were removed from the cages, which were prepared for the reception of the unfortunate men. A cart and stretchers were in waiting, and the bodies were placed in them, reverently covered, and removed to their homes in the village. The scene was very impressive. The bodies, followed by groups of mourners, were taken slowly down the long street, and deposited at the houses, which the men had left in the full flush of health the previous day.

## **DROWNED**

The following are the names of those drowned:—

William Gemmell, Garronhill; married, eight of a family.

John Hazel, married; two children.

James Shaw, single; resided with widowed mother.

While there is the deepest sympathy expressed for all the bereaved, the lot of Gemmell's widow is the hardest. There are eight of a family, and the eldest is a girl of 15 years of age. Shortly before four o'clock in the afternoon the bodies were taken to their respective homes. Surely, however, a better method might have been adopted for this sad duty. To city people at least it seemed harsh and irreverent to have the bodies carted and carried so publicly. One lay on an open cart covered only by a bed mat; the others were carried on stretchers.

No work was done in any of the collieries on Monday. Bankhead Pit was visited by a number of the partners of the Company, by H.M. Inspector of Mines, and by Mr Howatson of Glenbuck. Sir William Arroll, M.P., sent through Doctor Ritchie £25 to the bereaved families and £5 to be divided among the workers who rescued the men. Telegrams of sympathy were received from Messrs J. G. A. Baird,

M.P., C. Howatson of Glenbuck, John L. Hunter of Auldhouseburn (at present on the Continent), and James Johnstone of Alloway.

## INTERVIEWS

*John McMillan* said—I began work shortly before seven o'clock in the 3ft. seam. My place was about 100 feet from the face, and I saw nothing until the water burst through. It was totally unexpected. It came suddenly at first in a small stream, and then with a great rush. I was sitting on my bench, three or four feet up, and it lifted me and flung me on to the level road. The boy was standing on the level, and when he heard the rush he ran to the bottom. So heavy was the flood that I had some difficulty in getting to my feet, but having done so I shouted to the roadman and to the rest of the men that the water had burst in. The men working in this section ran to the pit bottom as quickly as possible, keeping ahead of the water. Several of them had nothing on but their trousers. As I have said, the burst was quite unexpected. I had been working in another place further along. It had become very wet, and the place in which I was working to-day was very different. The manager was down and said to me "This place seems as if it was to become dry altogether."

*Robert Gibson*, the bottomer said — I went on duty at six o'clock in the morning. About nine o'clock a man came rushing to me and said a burst had taken place in the working place of John McMillan. It was about the thickness of his arm at first, he said, but it come so strong that it flung him on the roadway. A number of men came running to the bottom, and I sent them up as quickly as possible. I did so for about ten or fifteen minutes. The water came very rapidly. I remained until it was up to my armpits. From the time it reached me until I left would not be more than four or five minutes. I went out through the trap-door, seizing as I ran a boy named McGladderie, who had been thrown off his feet in the torrent, and made my way by the rise road to the 45 fathom level in the shaft. All the others had been sent up. The boy was the last to reach the bottom. Unless the men got confused in the darkness, I think the rest of them must have escaped into the rise. I do not think they would have rushed into the water when they knew that they would be safe in the rise.

*William Caldow*—I was working directly below McMillan's place. I heard the burst and at once ran to the pit bottom. I warned, as I passed, William Kirkpatrick and his son, James Lochrie, Ned Brown, John and William Dempster, who were working in the lower level. I reached the pit bottom before the water, and went up in the first cage.

*Hugh Henderson*—I was in the rise working at the time of the accident. The roadsman, James Moran, came rushing along and cried that the water had broken in. I flung on my jacket, ran as quickly as possible, and by the time I reached the pit bottom the water was nearly up to my waist. I did not hear anyone coming behind me. I think those who were at a greater distance would go back to the rise heading.

## FUNERAL OF THE VICTIMS

At two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon an impressive ceremony took place in the Established Church, in which all the Ministers of Muirkirk took part. The Rev. R. Montgomery, E.C., presided, and was supported by Rev. J. Greenshields, F.C.; Rev. John Dundas, U.P; Rev. Mr Aitken, E.U.; Rev. A. M. Nelson, E.C.; and Rev. Colin McKenzie, E.C., Glenbuck. After the bells had finished their solemn tolling, Mr James G. Richmond, organist, played the Dead March in Saul, after which the proceedings were of a most impressive character. The Rev. Mr Montgomery announced a portion of the ciii. Psalm, after which the Rev. Mr Greenshields read Psalm xc., and the Rev. Mr McKenzie xv. Corinthians, while the Rev. J. Dundas offered up prayer. The last verse of the last paraphrase was then sung, and the service terminated. At the conclusion Mr Richmond played Benedictos by Webb. Thereafter the mourners marched to the houses of William Gemmell, and his body was removed from the house to the cemetery. This was afterwards repeated in the case of John Hazel and James Shaw. There were upwards of 800 mourners and as the huge mass passed by the way the sight was a most memorable one.

In fact, the funeral is stated to be the largest that has ever taken place in Muirkirk. The shopkeepers, to show all true respect to the deceased miners, closed their shops for about three hours. Amongst those present at the funeral, besides the Ministers, were Mr Charles Howatson, Glenbuck; Messrs Stewart, Angus and McCulloch of Messrs William Baird & Co.; Drs. Ritchie, Fulton and Carruthers; Mr Jackson, Clydesdale Bank; Mr Kitch, Cashier; and Mr Shaw, Manager, Cairntable Co.; Mr Leslie, Inspector of Poor; Father Puissant, R.C.; Mr Kerr, Chairman of the Parish Council; Councillor Crawford, Cumnock; &c. There was also a large representation of the merchants at the grave of William Gemmell. A funeral service was held, as he was one of the principal members of the Baptist denomination in Muirkirk. All the survivors of the disaster were in attendance, including Robert Blyth, the hero.



ROBERT BLYTH'S MEDAL



# Bankhead Pit, Auldhouseburn, 11th March 1898

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## THREE MEN DROWNED IN FLOODED PIT

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### Muirkirk Pit Flooded - Nineteen Men Entombed

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**Muirkirk, Friday night** — A serious mining disaster occurred this morning in Bankhead Pit of the Auldhouseburn Colliery, Muirkirk. While cross-cutting to extend the workings to the eastward, the men accidentally tapped an abandoned pit at Crossflat, and the water rushing in with great rapidity, those in the pit bottom escaped with the greatest difficulty, while the miners engaged in the upper workings had their escape cut off and at the time of writing were still entombed. Their fate is doubtful and while everything possible is being done to rescue them, and those engaged in the work cheer themselves by an optimistic view of the situation, there is only too much reason to fear that many, if not all of them, have perished. Though isolated from the vast coal and iron fields of the West of Scotland, Muirkirk has long been one of the most important seats of these industries. In fact, it was on the discovery of the smelting of iron ore more than a century ago that what was formerly a hillside clachan sprang up to be a busy manufacturing town, and though it has had fluctuations in its prosperity, it has been for the last sixty years, and especially since the formation of the railway connections, a thriving mining centre, and its population is now about 4000. It was one of the scenes of the many, enterprises of the Baird family, and the Eglinton Iron Company has several blast furnaces and rolling mills, which, along with the coal and ironstone mines that surround Muirkirk, give employment to the great majority of the inhabitants. Muirkirk, indeed, has no attraction other than its industrial surroundings, which nature has made bleak and desolate beyond almost any other district in Scotland, and which are rendered even more depressing by the smoking pitheads and flaring smelting furnaces which surround the town, and dot the valley of the River Ayr on its way westward. The Ayr runs through a valley which is well supplied with coal on both sides, and which can be easily worked, as it is found at no greater depth than six fathoms. There are six seams aggregating over thirty feet in thickness, and iron stone and other products add to the profitable character of the workings. Generally, the pits and ironstone mines in the district are worked on the most approved plan, and as both the Caledonian and Glasgow and South Western Railways have access to the town, a large export trade is done.

The scene of today's disaster is about half a mile to the south-east of Muirkirk, and separated from the town by the River Ayr and the valley through which it makes its way. The pit is the property of the Cairntable Coal Gas Company (Limited), of which Mr Thomas Barr, of Glasgow and Hartburn, is the managing director, and which has its offices at 75 Bothwell Street, Glasgow. Auldhouseburn pit, as it is termed, was originally the property of Mr Barr, who in 1871, formed the public company, which took its name from the neighbouring height of Cairntable. Since then the pit has been steadily worked, and, as its name

suggests, a large proportion of the produce went for the manufacture of gas. The pit is worked on the stoop-and-room principle, and is about 25 fathoms deep. There are two seams, one of cannel coal three feet thick, and the other of ordinary coal four feet thick, but, as the two layers are contiguous, the working is really a large seam seven feet thick. Having been so long open, great parts have become worked out, and of late the miners have been engaged cross-cutting towards Crossflat Colliery, the shaft of which is about a quarter of a mile to the east of Auldhouseburn. Crossflat was formerly worked by the Eglinton Iron Company, but about fifteen years ago the mine was abandoned. Since then it had lain idle, and, of course, had become filled with water. The Cairntable Company, however, in developing its enterprise had made its way eastwards as far as the Crossflat workings. Accordingly, four or five months ago a bore was run through from the one pit to the other, and the water drained into Auldhouseburn pit, and thence pumped out. The result was that it was believed the Crossflat working could be safely approached from Auldhouseburn. The work had been proceeding today, and about fifty men were employed. Of these a few were on the night shift.

Forty-five men proceeded down the shaft between six and seven this morning, due to return to the surface about 10.30. All went well until shortly after nine o'clock. At that time a man named M'Millan noticed water oozing out of the ground. He called the attention of his mate to the matter, but they thought little of it for a minute or two. The ooze became a bubbling flow, and quick as though it increased in volume until it was rushing with great force along the pit bottom. At first the rush was not alarmingly rapid, and several of the men made their way to the pit shaft dry shod, but every second the flood grew in volume and velocity, and ere the last of the miners were at the bottom of the shaft they were struggling through deep water. One boy, named M'Gladderie had a narrow escape, as he lost his footing, and had he not been promptly seized by his comrades, he would have drowned. The cage was at once set in motion and the men rapidly borne to the surface. As they waited their turn the excitement was great, although all show of it was concealed; and the horror of the situation was intensified when the cage became blocked for a time. That however, was soon remedied, and, with one exception, all the men in the main shaft were rescued. That exception was Robert Blyth, the fireman, who, when he had seen his comrades in a fair way towards safety, went off to alarm the workmen on the upper workings. He was not seen again. No fewer than eighteen men were employed there, and immediately the flood burst in it cut off their retreat. The workings of Auldhouseburn pit are exceedingly steep, varying in slope from one in three to one in six. The workings rise as high as 200 feet above the level of the main roadway, so that there is ample room for the safe refuge of the men. The authorities at the pit have no doubt as to their men being in these higher parts, as they were at work there, and could not possibly get down in time. The danger, however, is that some of them may have attempted to make their way through the water or have fallen into the flood. If they have escaped these mishaps, no doubt is entertained by the manager as to the men being rescued. He calculates that there is sufficient air to last at least 36 hours.

Returning to the men who escaped, it has to be stated that their first thought was the rescue of their comrades. Mr John Shaw, the manager, was summoned, and at once set the pumps in motion, and had water chests rigged up on the cage. As it so happens, Auldhouseburn pit is particularly well equipped.

Three or four years ago a huge dam was constructed to the south-west of the pit, and this resulted in draining off a great proportion of the water which used to find its way into the workings. In fact, the saving is estimated at from 300 to 400 gallons per minute. The result was that one pump, working about twelve hours a day, was sufficient to keep the pit dry, whereas two were formerly required. These, 16 inches and 13 inches respectively, were set to work on the water, which by this time was about 12 feet deep. On investigation it was found that the following were the missing men:—George Hibberd and his two sons, Charles and James Hibberd; Thomas and John Hazell, brothers, both married; John Kilpatrick, married; John Marshall, married; Alexander Gilfillan, married about three months ago; James Lochhead, married; Hugh English, married; a boy named Thomson; Robert Blythe, fireman, unmarried; James Moran, roadsman, married; William Thomson. Alexander Vallance. William Gemmell, married; William Dempster, married; Daniel Mathieson, married; James Shaw, drawer. It will be seen that the majority of the missing men are married, several of them with large families.

A man named John Macmillan, who was working at the exact point where the water broke into the pit, and who was the first to spread the alarm, gave one of our representatives an account of the accident. It is peculiar that Macmillan had only commenced work there that morning. A bore had been driven at the rise corner of the level, and he was preparing to get ready for a shot, when he noticed a trickle of water coming out of the face of the rock which had been perfectly dry a few minutes before. At first the oozing water did not strike him as peculiar, but a few minutes afterwards he determined to ask the opinions of his neighbour, who was familiar with that part of the workings. Macmillan sent his boy to the next man, who, on the spot, declared that the water's appearance was altogether new to him. Now somewhat alarmed, M'Millan sent for the fireman of his section, Easton, who, however, was at the men's bothy at the time, and as he did not come, M'Millan decided that he would not fire his shot until some of his superiors had seen the water. While he was sitting about three feet from the hole there was an ominous noise, and the water suddenly burst through, lifting him clear off his feet, and forcing him before it. His lamp was blown out, and he was left in perfect darkness to grope his way to the pit bottom. After the first sudden rush the water seemed to stop a little, and he had time to run and give the alarm to some men who were also working in that section. All the men made together for the pit bottom, and managed to get up without difficulty. The water was still behind them when they got to the pit bottom, but a few minutes later it seemed to spread through the pit with alarming rapidity. The later corners struggled through waist deep in water and a young lad named M'Gladderie was so exhausted when he was pulled out that it was some time before he recovered. M'Millan said the water came off the face, and he had the idea that the bore which others had been working at before he took it up that morning had holed into an old dook. It was holed through the centre of the level. The seam at that point is close upon seven feet, made up of the three feet and four feet seams, which are only separated by stone in which the bore was made.

A man named Robert Gibson made a heroic attempt to warn the men in the higher section. He made his way through the water in their direction, but the rush of water forced him back. The scene in the workings there was one of inextricable confusion. Hutches, wooden props, and other masses of material were swept along

in the flood as it came down the braes into the bottom levels, while one or two ponies vainly struggled for life.

News of the disaster as it rapidly circulated in the little community caused the greatest consternation, and soon many eager inquirers were trooping towards the scene. For the most part these were anxious female relatives, but when work ceased for the day hundreds of men, too, made their way to the pit. Offers of assistance were numerous, but these were unnecessary, as the men employed in the pit were enthusiastic in the work; but there was little to be done, except keep the machinery going full speed, and that of course was done.

Intimation having been sent to the head offices of the Company in Glasgow, Mr George Bait, son of the managing director; Mr David Inglis Urquhart, one of the directors of the Company; and Mr J. M. Ronaldson, H. M. Chief Inspector of Mines for the West of Scotland, proceeded to Muirkirk, which they reached about 6 o'clock. They found the work of pumping actively proceeding under the superintendence of Mr Shaw, the manager. Another interested visitor was Mr Robert Walker, manager of Kinneil Pit, Bo'ness, who was formerly manager at Auldhouseburn, hurried to the scene at once. Intimation was sent to him early in the day and he feared for the dam already mentioned, for the construction of which he was responsible. His fear proved unfounded, but Mr Walker, from his intimate knowledge of the workings, was able to make valuable suggestions.

Captain M'Hardy, Chief Constable of Ayrshire, was also present with several members of his force, but so far as keeping order was concerned there was no need for their services. The crowd round the pit was large, but was quiet and orderly to the point of stolidity. They stood round quietly and discussed the probabilities of their fellow workmen's fate. There was none of the hysterical excitement usually associated with such occasions in evidence. A stranger passing through the main street of the village saw little to indicate that the shadow of such a calamity was resting on the community, but in the homes of the entombed men the agony of suspense, alternating between hope and despair, was even more painful than the certainty of calamity. Hitherto Muirkirk and its locality, and Auldhouseburn Pit in particular, have been reasonably free from serious accident. The Cairntable Gas Coal Company owns pits also at Glenbuck, three miles to the east of Muirkirk, and there the output is considerably larger, especially as the cross-cutting operations have of late mainly occupied the attentions of the workmen. Mr John Shaw, who succeeded Mr Walker as manager about three years ago, was formerly at Ferniegair Colliery. He filled his difficult position today with the greatest ability, on the one hand superintending the rescue operations, and on the other furnishing information and endeavouring to reassure anxious. As night wore on and no information of the safety of the entombed men was forthcoming, the anxiety of the large crowd gathered at the pit head increased. The pumps were kept going steadily, and the only fear felt by officials was that rubbish might stick in the pumping apparatus and hamper their efforts.

## **The Ayrshire Mining Disaster**

Sixteen Men Rescued — Three Drowned — A Miner's Heroism

Muirkirk, Saturday Night — Though the worst fears regarding the disaster at Auldhouseburn Colliery have not been realised, the most sanguine hopes have been disappointed. Of the nineteen men who were imprisoned yesterday by the inundation from Crossflat workings, sixteen were today rescued safe and well, but three miners lost their lives by the catastrophe, being drowned, so far as can be conjectured, by the first terrible rush of the water.

But before the rescue restored happiness to the majority of the hones and confirmed the despair in a few of them, all Muirkirk spent a weary and anxious night. To judge by a walk along the public street, the absence of stir might have suggested that all was well in the little community, but the lighted windows at every house were eloquent testimony to the tension which prevailed. Along the quiet country road across the course of the Water of Ayr little groups of persons were encountered - women returning dejectedly after hours of weary vigil: others going back to the pit after a restless absence; while throughout the night hundreds awaited round the pit, and conscious of their impotence to hasten the rescue, stood quietly and even stolidly by discussing the probability of the prisoners' safety. They had at least the satisfaction that the pumping of the pit, thanks to the luckily disproportionate equipment of Bankhead pit, was being carried on with the utmost possible rapidity; but even that seemed slow to those who could do nothing but wait. In the early hours of the evening, when the reduction of the water was going on at the rate of several inches an hour, the prospect was bright, but the lively hopes of speedy rescue were damped in the early morning hours by the seeming falling off in the rapidity of getting out the water. As a matter of fact, of course, the volume of water lifted was never diminished, but when once the pumps had cleared the shaft, and the water level been reduced to the roof of the roadway, the larger area from which it was drawn made the measurement of advance seem slower. At midnight seven feet two inches was the depth, and it was confidently anticipated that by five o'clock a sufficient reduction would have been achieved to enable communication to be established with the entombed miners. But the seeming slow progress forced those in charge of the operations to allow the hour of rescue which they had in their minds to recede further and further into the morning. When five o'clock came there was still more than five feet of water, and the prospect of at least two hours work. Daybreak came after a beautifully clear, mild spring night and found many anxious watchers clustered round and among the grimy environs of the pithead. Huge braziers, in which large fires glowed, had each their ring of ruddy faces, many of them bearing pathetic evidence of the terrible suspense which they were suffering. Many an anxious wife and mother was in the throng, and one prominent figure, specially pathetic in the light of after events, was that of a Mrs Shaw, whose boy James, a drawer, was below. The lad was the main support of his widowed mother. She in her maternal solicitude was waiting with a large overcoat, and a flask of hot tea and other stimulants, which, as it proved, her boy was never to need.

At six o'clock even the most sanguine had serious doubts, for the fall of the water in the shaft seemed almost imperceptible, and Mr Shaw, the manager, who

had never for a moment quitted the post of duty, informed inquirers that at least two hours must elapse before even an attempt to enter the pit would be justified. His previous predictions, made with a quiet optimism which he had all along maintained, had proved to be founded on too high expectations, but no one could have more rejoiced than Mr Shaw himself when this one, too, was falsified in an opposite respect. As "the night is darkest just before the dawn," the prospect had seemed least hopeful on the immediate eve of its brightening. The workers at the pithead were looking anxiously forward to the moment when an entrance to the pit would be practicable, and to ascertain the probable time of that enterprise, two of the party, Hugh Murdoch and a miner named Graham, descended the shaft to measure the water. What was their surprise on reaching the bottom to hear a human voice, and see a head and shoulder above the water. They were those of Robert Blyth, the fireman, and practically the underground manager of the pit. Their first hearty greetings over, they had feelings of thankfulness and gratitude by the news that all the men who had been in the high workings were safe and well. It has been pointed out that this account of the discovery of Blyth is somewhat inconsistent, though not irreconcilable with that given by Blyth himself, and accordingly it may be convenient here to take up the narrative of the disaster as he explained it.

### **Robert Blyth is a Hero**

Few deeds of bravery have been performed more quietly and more coolly, or with a keener eye to their danger, than when Blyth, after having alarmed his comrades in the main roadway, and seen them in a fair way to safety, calmly shook his brother by the hand and said. "Good-bye, John. I'm off to the rise. I've got to do my duty." And he did it. Those above ground never doubted that he would, for he was a general favourite, and known as a shrewd and level-headed fellow, who could be depended upon in the time of danger. Indeed his presence below was the brightest gleam of hope which anxious watchers had before them. Blyth was known to have an intimate knowledge of every corner of the pit, as he had been employed in it since he was a boy, and the only fear was that he might have been overwhelmed in the first awful rush of water before he gained high ground. Fortunately that was a groundless fear as Blyth's own story shows. No sooner had he been brought to the surface and supplied with a little brandy, than he was hurried off to his home, which is within fifty yards of the pit mouth. Of course he was drenched to the skin from head to foot, having had to fight his way neck-high through water. Everything that love and thankfulness could suggest was done to counteract the effect of his trying experiences. But Blyth, physically as well as mentally, is made of hardy stuff, and in a very short time he was able to see a "Scotsman" reporter, to whom, in a few modest telling sentences, he quietly and unconcernedly narrated the events of the previous twenty-four hours. One could see, despite his unassuming demeanour that he had the proud consciousness of having done his duty, and with something of the feeling of the captain who refuses to leave his sinking vessel, he had remained at the post of danger. Blyth, who is about twenty-nine years of age, and is unmarried, soon made it all clear that three of his comrades in the pit were dead. "As you may have heard," he began. "when the first word of the break-in spread through the pit, I ran to the rise workings to warn the men there. At the time I knew that the water would cut us off, but I wasn't going to be a coward. I have gone through some stirring experiences in this same pit, and I've been in it

all my days, and I hope it will never be said that Rob Blyth shirked his duty. I was near the bottom of the pit when the water rushed in, and after getting the men in the lower workings to run for their lives, I made my way through the rushing torrent of water to the rise workings, where I got the men together. There were sixteen of us in all. We found that air was being returned through the waste workings, and there was absolutely no sign of damp or foul gases. The atmosphere was fresh, and, but for the privations which a long stay in the pit would have meant, we wouldn't have suffered from the air. From my knowledge of the pit, I took it upon myself to constitute myself a sort of leader, although, of course, none of us regarded the thing in that light at the time. We were all too glad to cheer up one another. I knew it was folly to move from the place where we were, as any attempt to get through until the water had subsided would have been fatal. We collected all the coats and clothing we could get, and, huddling together for warmth, covered ourselves as with blankets, and waited until the pumps, which we knew would be started at once, had taken effect. We were not badly off for light. Each of us had his oil lamp, and I got all the men to put out their lights with the exception of two. When these were at their last flicker we lighted two more, and so on, so that we did not suffer from darkness. There were two flasks of cold tea in the company. Some of the men wanted to drink the tea right off, but I induced them to hand over the tea cans to me. When I thought the strength of the men was giving way - about midnight, I fancy - I heated the tea with an oil lamp, and we each got a sip of hot tea. When we saw that the water was going down, I knew the pumps were working, and I made two attempts to get near the pit bottom, but was unsuccessful. Before this I had got wet at the very first, but all the other men had been as dry as if they were at home. At the third attempt I got through. I waded through the water, which before long was up to my neck. I could keep my head above the surface just by doing that" - and at this Blyth held back his head so as to elevate his chin and show that nothing but his face could have been above the water. "Had I held down my chin the water would have been into my mouth. It was a bit of a struggle to get to the shaft, as you can imagine, but at last I got there. At the pit bottom I saw that the water boxes were still at work. When they were down I couldn't get near the bell, but whenever the 'kists' went up I sprang forward and 'belled the pit.' That means I caught hold of the bell and rang to let those above know that some one at least was safe." "I suppose you would be glad when you got that length?" remarked the reporter. "Well," replied Blyth, "if more eloquent than words. When Blyth had left his comrades in the rise workings he had warned them on pain of their lives not to stir. He pointed out that whatever happened to him they could do nothing, and it would be lunacy on their part to attempt to leave a position which, for the time at least, was safe. He gave them what was doubtless the superfluous assurance that if he got out they would not be long prisoners, and said they would know if they heard him "bell the pit" that all was well. One can better imagine than describe how welcome to the prisoners was the unmelodious clang of the bell. Blyth added that on his way to the pit bottom he encountered a great amount of wreckage and saw the body of at least one pony. None of the entombed men saw anything of John Hazel, William Gemmell, and the boy James Shaw. What became of them Blyth did not know. He did not even know until he came to the surface that they were missing.

News of so glad a kind spread with almost incredible swiftness. It seemed literally to fly from door to door. Neighbour hurried to greet neighbour and relieve pent-up feelings by an interchange of congratulations and expressions of

thankfulness, and in one quiet thoroughfare occurred an incident which did one's heart good to witness. A little boy rushed along shouting at the top of his voice, "There's yin o' them oot." and, as if in a handclap every window seemed to go up and a head appeared there to make sure that the news was really true. The felicitations which passed on every side were all the more hearty that the first report was that all the men were saved. This rumour, which, unfortunately, was too good to be true, doubtless had its origin in Blyth's statement that all the men he had left were well, and in the consequent inference that he had left all the men. Within a few minutes the half-mile from the last of the town houses was studded with groups hurrying towards Auldhouseburn Pit. Many had maintained an unbroken vigil there throughout the night, and the good tidings seemed to infuse fresh vigour and animation among the weary and jaded watchers. Even the modification of the first rumour and the confirmation of the death of three men seemed to have comparatively little effect in damping the spirits, for while those who learned of the safety of dear ones did not forget to mingle with their own thankfulness heartfelt expressions of compassion, on those bereft, there was a delicious feeling of relief that the worst, at least, was known, and that the disaster had not been so terrible as some had dreaded.

But even amid the conflicting sensations which the news aroused, the pithead crowd, now several hundreds strong, maintained that quiet and almost stolid demeanour which had been its characteristic throughout. There was an entire absence of that painful and hysterical excitement which one associates with such scenes, or at any rate, if such feelings prevailed, they were totally suppressed. Those bereaved were surrounded by little groups of sympathisers, and took their way sadly homewards to give vent to their sorrow there. The spectators at the pit could watch pumping operations with easier hearts, while those engaged in the work carried it on as briskly as ever, with the knowledge that their labour had not been in vain, and that ere long its harvest would be reaped. Every point from which a view of the pit shaft could be obtained was crowded with onlookers, most of them themselves, miners in neighbouring pits, who never thought of returning to work while the slightest doubt remained as to the safety of those below. It was a quarter to eight o'clock when Blyth had been brought to the surface, and only half an hour elapsed when the welcome clang of the pit bell again told that someone was at the shaft bottom waiting to be raised. At once the cage was lowered, and a minute or two of an almost painful suspense ensued, as it went rapidly down, and, after a reassuring ring from below, was more cautiously raised to the surface. The first figures to be seen were these of the two rescuers, who, standing on the top of the cage, clung to the rope which elevated it. As they reached the level of the ground the cage was stopped for an instant while they jumped on to the platform. Another turn of the drum brought the cage to the top. The guard was thrown aside. There were anxious ejaculations of "take your time now," and "catch hold of him," as a man stepped on to the platform, but the precautions were scarcely necessary, for the miner, who was William Dempster, a tall, Herculean fellow, after swaying for an instant as he gained his footing, gratefully accepted a sip of brandy, and after hastily acknowledging the congratulations of the bystanders, strode firmly and rapidly through the waiting throng and hurried with all speed to his home. His companion in the cage was Hugh English. He, too, was supplied with stimulant, but before drinking it he waved the glass to those around him, and said, "Here's your good health. I hope we'll never have the like again" a toast which, despite the incongruous

circumstances in which it was pledged, found the heartiest response in the hearts of those who heard it. It seemed almost a touch of comedy to what was a curiously undramatic situation. Many had to think about other things than heroics. Scarcely had the dripping and grimy fellows moved away from the platform when the water "Kists" were again whirring up and down the shaft and gushing their contents into the adjoining lade, while the steam pumps maintained their monotonous clanking. Dempster and English, on their arrival assured those in charge that there was no likelihood of any of the comrades they had left following them immediately. The two men named, on learning of Blyth's success, had undertaken the hazardous journey next, because they were the tallest of the company. The others were likely to be more cautious. No sooner had the possibility of making the passage from the high workings to the shaft been demonstrated than there were many volunteers to proceed to the succour of those still imprisoned. The duty was entrusted to Hugh Murdoch, the blacksmith, and William Gibson, a sinker. The former had been prominent from the time of the disaster in seconding Mr Shaw, the manager in superintending the work. A brawny, broad-shouldered, and phlegmatic looking man, he went quietly about his work, as cool and collected as if he were plying his avocation under merely ordinary circumstances, and by the very calmness of his assurances he did more to soothe anxious minds than he could have done by a more noisy expression of his optimism. When the descent of the pit to measure the water, or to examine the pumps, fell to be made, he seemed to take the duty upon himself as a mere matter of course, and when the even more hazardous passage had to be effected he quietly donned his soaking overalls, adjusted his lamp into his huge sou-wester, and stepped into the cage. With them Murdoch and Gibson took a supply of stimulants, and they were then lowered. Their departure was not expected to hasten the rescue of the others, because it was known that the visitors, having experienced the difficulties, would urge their comrades to exercise patience a little longer rather than take unnecessary risk. Those above ground however, felt reassured, as doubtless also did those below, by the presence of these two fresh and experienced men. Pumping went steadily on, while those at the bank waited patiently, some clinging to the grimy pillars of the pithead erections, some ensconced on the railway wagons of the siding within a few yards of the shaft, and others standing on the sloping blaize mounds which surrounded the platform. Only the men absolutely necessary in emptying the kists remained on the staging, where also were Mr Ronaldson, the chief inspector of mines; Captain M'Hardy, Chief Constable of the county; and the mine officials. It seemed as though more rapid progress was being made in reducing the water, and this was doubtless true in fact, as a considerably smaller water area had now to be dealt with. But still at the bottom of the shaft there would be about four feet of a depth. At a quarter to ten the pit bell pounded, and the cage was let down. As it returned there were many peering eagerly downwards to catch a first glimpse of those who were coming. Murdoch and Gibson, the rescuers, having stepped onto the platform, the cage was opened, and out stepped Daniel Mathieson, William Thomson, and John Kilpatrick. These were comparatively young men, Thomson, indeed, being a mere boy, who smiled cheerily through the grime on his countenance as he regained the platform after nearly twenty-eight hours absence. Murdoch and Gibson confirmed the assurances that the others were well and ready to face the journey through the water. "There's not a frightened man among them," he remarked, "and they will all be out directly." Murdoch seemed to suffer not a whit from his trying work, but

Gibson, who was physically moulded on less robust lines, was quivering violently with cold and excitement. Still he was eager to return, assuring those who protested that it would be less trying than for anyone going down fresh, but he was restrained almost by main force and ordered home. His place was quickly filled, but Murdoch, having sipped a little brandy, took his place in the cage again, as if his return was a matter beyond even discussion. His declaration as to the speedy rescue of the men was soon fulfilled and within an hour the sixteen men had been restored to their friends. Drs. Carruthers and Ritchie, the former the pit surgeon, had been on the scene early after the disaster, and they waited on almost without a break lest their professional services should be required. As it proved, all that was necessary for them to do was to see that the men were taken speedily home, supplied with warm dry clothing, and sent to bed, where they soon recovered from the fatigue and excitement of the previous twenty-four hours. The men had little to add to Blyth's account of the time spent underground, but they were enthusiastic in their appreciation of their indebtedness to his knowledge and foresight.

When the first jubilations at the safety of the majority of the men were over the tragic result of the catastrophe to the remaining three impressed itself more vividly on the community. Long before all the men were out, hope as to endorsed the surmise that the three had met their death at the time of the inundation while making their way to the shaft. They had been at work near the main roadway, and unluckily, as it proved, had heard and had time to act upon the warning, but had been overwhelmed by the terrible rush of water. As soon as possible the bodies were brought to the surface and after they had been covered and placed on stretchers they were reverently borne home by their comrades.

The scene as witnessed from the rising ground at the east end of Muirkirk as the three little knots of men slowly made their way with their mournful burdens past the little hamlet at the pit mouth, down the incline from the pit to the water of Ayr, and then across the river and up to the town was exceedingly pathetic, and as the corteges separated to their respective destinations the townspeople quietly but not the less sincerely manifested their deep sympathy with the bereaved. Unfortunately these were numerous. Both Gemmell and Hazel were married, and are survived by widows and young families; while Shaw was the mainstay of a widowed mother. The names of the deceased were:-

John Hazel, about forty, Gibson Buildings; a wife and four children

William Gemmell, over forty, Garronhill; a wife and five children.

James Shaw (17), Victoria Buildings; unmarried.

The names of the sixteen men who had so trying an experience are:-

James Lohead, Hugh English, James Thomson, George Hibberd and his two sons Charles and James Hibberd, John Marshall, John Kilpatrick, Alexander Gilfillan, Thomas Hazel (a brother of one of the drowned men), Alexander Vallance, William Thomson, Daniel Mathieson, William Dempster, Robert Blyth, and James Moran.

It is worthy of mention, as showing that no stone was left unturned, that, in addition to keeping their pumping apparatus, which was abnormally great for the size of the pit, going at its full speed, the mine authorities made an effort to reach the entombed men by way of Crossflat working, but the water found there made progress impossible. Late last night, almost as an effort of despair, a staff of men were set to work at a point about seventeen fathoms from the shaft bottom to

attempt to penetrate from there to some old workings which at one time led to the high workings, but which had long been abandoned. Progress by that means was made, but it proved so slow that ultimately it was abandoned particularly in view of the good work being done by the pipes.

Mr George Barr, son of the managing director of the Cairntable Gas Coal Company (Limited), and Sir David Inglis Urquhart, Glasgow, one of the directors, as well as a number of the Company's officials from their Glenbuck property remained on the scene today as long as they could render the slightest service, and until definite information as to the extent of the catastrophe was obtained. Mr Shaw, as indicated in yesterday's narrative, was ceaseless in his efforts, and from the time that he was informed till the last of the bodies had been removed, and he was left almost alone at the now deserted pit, he was never off his feet. A "Scotsman" reporter, who met him at that time, found him weary and tired, but thankful that, sad as it was, the disaster had not been more calamitous. It seemed curious within half an hour of the removal of the bodies to find the pithead as quiet and deserted as if it were an ordinary Saturday afternoon, and the colliery had not so recently been the scene of one of the tragedies of modern industry.

There is little doubt that the cause of the accident was some miscalculation as to the learned of the abandoned Crossflat workings, due probably either to an error in the cross-cutting or to the presence of some unknown extension of the Crossflat mine. In any case an official inquiry will be held, and Mr Ronaldson, the inspector of mines, will investigate the circumstances.

Today telegrams were received from Mr J. G. A. Baird, M.P., on whose property the mine is situated, and also from the neighbouring proprietor, Mr Howatson of Glenbuck.

### **Muirkirk, Sunday.**

At already stated, the three bodies were discovered on Saturday afternoon, and were afterwards removed home. The search party under Mr Pearson, ran a good deal of risk, owing to the stormy weather. To-day the number of visitors to the scene of the catastrophe was not large. Intimations were given from all the churches in Muirkirk that the miners who had been drowned would be publicly buried on Tuesday - William Gemmell at 2.30, John Hazel at 3.15, and James Shaw at 4 o'clock.

[Scotsman 14 March 1898]

Yesterday Sheriff Orr Paterson and a jury held an inquiry in Ayr into the recent mining disaster at Muirkirk, when three lives were lost by drowning. After hearing the evidence, the jury, by direction of the Sheriff, found that the influx of water into the mine was due to a failure to observe Rule 13 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

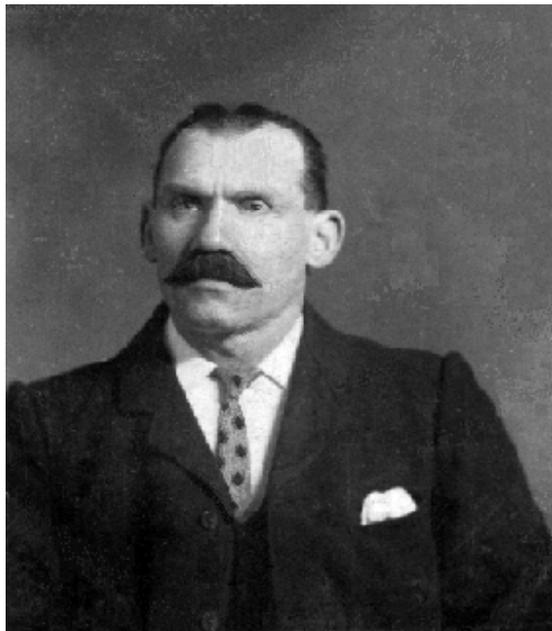
[Scotsman 31 March 1898]

## The Disaster At Muirkirk

### Rewards For Bravery

At a special meeting of the Royal Humane Society, held yesterday at the offices, Trafalgar Square, London - Colonel Horace Montagu presiding - the incidents in connection with the Muirkirk pit disaster on the 11th ult., were brought under notice as the result of evidence furnished to the Society by Sir W. Arrol, M.P. for South Ayrshire. The Society conferred its medals upon Robert Blyth (29), of Bankhead, and Robert Gibson, of Smallburn, who "most gallantly risked their lives in their exertions to save their fellow workmen," in the Auldhouseburn pit, Muirkirk, on the above date. The evidence showed that a sudden inrush of water from an old mine flooded the pit till the water rose four feet above the doorheads, and the pit bottom was full to the roof, some fifty feet back. Blyth, in his effort to escape, turned from the pit bottom and faced the rising water till he met with the other workmen whom he conducted to a higher heading, and by this means was mainly instrumental in saving sixteen miners, who had been imprisoned in a critical position for over twenty-four hours. At the earliest opportunity he again left the only place of refuge and braving the water reached the shaft and gave notice of the safety of his companions. Gibson stood bravely to his post to the last, signalling the men away in the cage until the water reached his neck, but just before leaving his attention was called to a lad of seventeen named John McGladrie, who in the darkness was just dimly perceived to be floating forward in straw and wreckage. He at once sprang forward, caught the lad, and swimming with him to a higher level by an under passage, which led to an opening into the shaft higher up, reached the surface with him in safety. The mine is 85 fathoms deep, and of the forty-five miners who were below at the time of the accident, three only were drowned.

[Scotsman 21 April 1898].



ROBERT BLYTH

## THE MUIRKIRK PIT DISASTER

**INQUIRY AT AYR**

Under the Fatal Accident Inquiry Act, an inquiry was held on Wednesday in the County Buildings, Ayr, into the deaths of William Gemmell, John Hazel, and James Shaw, who were drowned in Auldhouseburn Pit, Bankhead, Muirkirk, on the 11th March. It will be remembered that 19 men were entombed in the pit, all of whom, however, were rescued except the three named.

Sheriff-Substitute Orr Paterson presided, and Mr David Ferguson was procurator-fiscal. There was a small attendance of the public. Mr David Dougall, writer, appeared for Mr Shaw, the manager of the pit, and Mr T. J. Orr, writer, attended on behalf of the relatives.

John Clarkson, secretary to the Cairntable Gas Coal Company, was the first witness. His Company, in which there were four Directors, were, he said, the owners of the Auldhouseburn Pit. Crossflat Pit, of which the witness exhibited a tracing, adjoined Auldhouseburn Pit. Operations at Crossflat were abandoned about 12 years ago, and about two years ago the Company took a lease of the minerals. His directors knew that the operations in Auldhouseburn Pit were approaching the old Crossflat working. His Company got a plan of the workings from the engineer of the Crossflat workings. A plan was also sent to the Home Office. They did not consider it necessary to get any more. They did not take any means to find out whether there were more workings than was shown in the plan.

In reply to the Sheriff, Mr Ronaldson, Inspector of Mines, said that it was the object that all plans supplied to the Home Office should show the whole workings. Witness, continuing, said that Mr Tait's plan was sent direct to the office of the Company. He could not say whether the plan was seen by the directors. It was sent to Mr Shaw, the manager. There was a note on the plan given by Mr Tait that he would not guarantee the correctness of the plan at the time the mine was abandoned.

Mr Ronaldson, Inspector of Mines — When you noticed that Mr Tait would not guarantee the correctness of the plan, did you not think, seeing it was such a simple matter, of getting a copy of the plan which was sent to the Home Office.

Witness replied that they had written to the Home Office. He was not aware that the plan sent to the Home Office showed more than the other plan.

James Tait, surveyor, Wishaw, said he was asked by Mr Clarkson in June last year to give him a tracing of the Crossflat workings. He was a surveyor of the Crossflat workings at the time they were in use, about 18 years ago. When he put the note at the foot of the plan he meant to indicate that in the plan from which he copied there were parts done in pencil which he did not do, and which had been done after the date of his survey. He thought from the look of it that more coal had been taken out since he surveyed it.

Did you think your note sufficient warning?—It was all I could give them.

Witness put in pencil the same markings that were on the plan he copied from. He thought the plan in the Home Office would have been made out by him.

By Mr Ronaldson—20th August, 1882, was the date of the survey. He could not say how long the pit worked after the date of his survey. Assuming the plan

shown him by Mr Ronaldson was the same as the one sent to the Home Office, it showed more stooping at the extreme dip workings in Crossflat Pit.

How were you unable to give the owners the same information on the plan supplied to them? — The plan lodged with the Home Office is mine as a whole, but additional workings may have been added to it.

J. M. Ronaldson, Inspector of Mines for the West of Scotland, stated, in reply to the Procurator Fiscal, that he was at the Pit on the day of the accident, and a plan was made of the portion of the workings where the water broke in. Six bore holes were put there, because it was known to the miners and manager that they were in close proximity to the Crossflat old workings. It was known that the workings were full of water. Holes were driven in advance. That was done to enable them to tap the waste before actually working through upon it, and prevent the water from inundating. He considered that there ought to have been another flank bore hole in the rise between the east bore hole and the working face. It was according to rule to have at least one centre hole straight ahead, also for the purpose of precaution against water coming in suddenly. There was no centre bore hole in advance in this place at the time of the accident as required by Rule 13 of the Mines Regulation Act, 1887, which was to the effect that where a place was likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water there should be kept, at distance of not less than five yards in advance, at least one boring near the centre of the workings, and sufficient flank borings on each side.



BANKHEAD PIT

The part marked E in the plan was the place where John McMillan was working at the time of the accident, and where the water came through.

By the Sheriff — The centre bore was the most important from a commonsense point of view.

The hole that was made by the rush of water measured 8ft 7in. wide by 15in. high. That was the measurement after the water had been run off.

The Fiscal — What was the distance from where McMillan worked to the old Crossflat workings?

Three feet 9in. of coal. McMillan stated that he holed into a depth of 2ft 6in., leaving only a barrier of 1ft. 3in. at most to stand the pressure of the water.

Was that sufficient to withstand the pressure of the water?

The result has shown that it was not. Witness had been sent the plan which was deposited by the late owners of the Crossflat Colliery with the Home Office.

If the directors or managers had been in possession of that plan or guided by it, would they have been more careful?

I don't think they would have been. They knew that they were in close proximity to the old workings. The plan which they had, a footnote that its correctness was not guaranteed, and therefore in the circumstances they ought to have been more careful with the plan they had than if they had a copy of the plan which was given to the Home Office.

The Sheriff — Did the water break in at the point in the old workings shown on the plan or at a point not shown on the plan?

The water broke in at a junction of the old workings not shown. Had there been a borehole right in advance it would have gone right through into the waste working, and the accident would never have happened. The water would have been tapped to a certainty. Witness pointed to a place marked number 6 on the plan which ought to have been no more than 8 feet wide according to regulations, because it was approaching the waste workings, and which was no less than 18 feet wide, and there was not a single borehole in it.

The Sheriff — Of course that had nothing to do with the accident. The right into the workings is shown in the Home Office plan, but not shown in the owners' plan.

There is some mistake in the surveying; the plans are not exactly correct.

By Mr Orr — If the Company had consulted Mr Tait's plan they would have seen that they were in close proximity to the old workings.

The Sheriff — What sort of material was between the seams of coal where the water broke in?

— A sort of fireclay.

George Pearson, Assistant-Inspector of Mines, corroborated Mr Ronaldson's evidence.

Adam Easton, oncost man, said that his duty was to attend to the boring, and to tap the water.

Witness - in answer to the Sheriff, said that the last borehole was put in on the Monday before the accident happened.

By Mr Ronaldson — It is more difficult to bore straight ahead than to bore flank holes. He could not say if that was the reason why they were not bored. He made no borings except on the instructions of the manager, Mr Shaw.

Robert Easton, oncost man, corroborated.

William Kilpatrick, a miner, stated that for some days before the date of the accident he was working in a place where the accident took place. Boring was stopped on the Monday night. He told the manager on Monday that he thought that he was past where the water was. On the morning of the accident McMillan sent for him and when he went he saw water coming in. Witness advised him to send for the foreman, but before the latter arrived the burst had taken place.

By the Sheriff — He was not present when the water came through?

By Mr Dougall — When he told the manager that he had passed the water he believed that he was safely past. it. He had been a miner for about thirty-three years. He was aware that the manager was arranging to start from another heading, and that a start was to be made on the day following the accident.

John Kilpatrick collaborated. John McMillan, who was working at the place where the water came through, said that the manager remarked to him "that the place was very dry now." Witness saw no water. That was at seven o'clock in the morning. Between eight and nine o'clock he saw water coming in, and sent for William Kilpatrick, who advised him to get the fireman of the section. While waiting for the fireman, the hole burst and the inrush of water flung him out of the road. He made for the bottom of the pit, and got up the shaft.

By Mr Robertson — He had bored fully two feet before the water burst in the place where McMillan was working, according to the plan shown, runs

Robert Gibson, pit bottomer, said he was the last man to get up the shaft on the day of the accident. He heard his boy crying and went back to get him. The water came in a stream about seven feet broad—the whole width of the mine. The water rose to a height of five feet in as many minutes. There were 44 men in the pit. He heard the cries of men, but he had not the time to get a man out. He cried back to them, but, the water rising, he went to a higher level, and got the cage and went up.

John Shaw, the manager of Auldhouseburn Pit, was the next witness. The Sheriff warned him that he was not bound to answer any questions which might incriminate him.

Examined by Mr Robertson, witness stated that he was aware that he was approaching the old workings. The workings had not been surveyed for about three months prior to the accident. He had not received from the surveyors the workings up to that date. He had been making a survey of his own so as to get an approximate idea of the nearness to the Crossflat workings. He expected that they were within 40 yards of the old workings. The boreholes that were made in the place approaching the workings were put in according to his instructions, and the width of the place was also driven according to his instructions. There had been a borehole straight in advance of the place where the water came through up till

within a few days of the accident. There was no borehole straight in advance on the day of the accident.

Mr Ronaldson — Can you explain why there was no such borehole on that day?

His Lordship said that the witness need not answer that question.

Mr Dougall said that he understood that an agent for the Company was to have been present, with whom he would have consulted. He thought, however, that Mr Shaw might answer the question. Witness replied that from the measurements he had made, and from the appearance of the coal, he came to the conclusion that the old workings were behind them, and therefore he did not think it necessary to keep a borehole in advance any longer.

That being the case, can you explain the reason for putting in a flank borehole in the dip at the working place?

It was simply a precaution.

Yes, but you have just said that you thought that you were past the old workings, yet you put in a flank borehole in the dip. Why did you do that when you did not consider it necessary to put in a straight borehole?

Witness repeated that it was simply as a precaution; he could give no definite reason. He expected from the measurements he had taken that at most they should dip at 8ft. from the heading, so that he supposed that he was 20ft. past the Crossflat dook.

You also knew that the plan in your possession had a note upon it to the effect that it was not guaranteed, being surveyed up to the date of the abandonment of the Colliery. Ought that not to have put you on your guard?

The date of the plan was 20th September.

But are you not aware that the Colliery was working for a considerable time after that?

Witness replied that he had no personal knowledge of it.

It was simply to make room for the rubbish; that was the only reason.

Police-Sergeant James Thomson gave formal evidence as to the names of the deceased.

Sheriff Paterson, in addressing the jury, said it seemed to him that the accident resulted through failure to comply with Rule 13 of the Coal Mines Act, and particularly through failure to keep a borehole in the centre of the workings. Had there been such a bore, he thought the danger would, or at all events most probably would, have been averted.

The jury returned a verdict that the fatal influx of water was caused by the failure to comply with the requirements of General Rule 13 of the Coal Mines Regulations Act, 1887, and in particular to comply with the provision that where a place is likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water, there shall be constantly kept

at a sufficient distance, not less than five yards in advance, at least one boring near the centre of the working.

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## **THE MUIRKIRK DISASTER**

Ayrshire has, unfortunately within recent months, been the scene of several sad catastrophes. There were the Barassie railway collision, the Dreghorn Pit accident, and the Muirkirk mine disaster. We know what was the cause of the railway smash — deliberate ignoring, in fact, transgressing of rules. At Dreghorn the cause was clear enough, but the responsibility was not made so plain as in the other case, though there was the suggestion, at least, of carelessness. The public inquiry into the Muirkirk disaster during the week resulted in a verdict by the jury — guided by the Sheriff — which is exactly tantamount to attributing it to negligence. The verdict very specifically is that the influx of water and the flooding of the pit were caused by failure to comply with the requirements of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, and in particular by failure to comply with the provision that where a place is likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water there shall be constantly kept at a sufficient distance, at least one borehole near the centre of the workings. The evidence established the fact that adjoining the pit where men were working, it was well known that there was a large accumulation of water. In spite of this knowledge, no borehole was kept near the centre of the workings for some days. This was a daily transgression of the Mines Act, an exhibition of wilful fool-hardiness and a risking of life that seems almost incredible. It is a case in point where a blunder becomes greater than a crime.

No one connected with the Pit in question desired the destruction of property or loss of life, but they were jeopardising both in face of the regulations that all employed at the ill-fated pit must have been familiar with. Parliament in the past has spent much time in the consideration, discussing, and passing of Mines Acts, and the great masses whose business it is to work in the bowels of the earth have been enthusiastic in their support of these measures still show scant disregard of those in whose interests the Act are passed, being their wilful transgressors. And in whose interests the Acts were passed. There is no good in legislation if we trample its provisions under foot.

The attention paid now-a-days to the working of mines; the close inspection by Government representatives, and the restrictions of the law have done much to lower the casualty rate in mines, but we find that the Inspectors in their reports, remain incessant in attributing most of the accidents to neglect and carelessness. This distressing accident at Muirkirk, which issued in the death of three men, and, but for the courage and resource of one of the temporary entombed, would have been more disastrous, is another instance of gross carelessness. Surely here the tragic and costly lessons will exterminate carelessness, particularly where life is involved.

At the earliest opportunity he again left the only place of refuge, and, breasting the water, reached the shaft and gave notice of the safety of his companions. Gibson stood bravely to his post to the last, signalling the men away

in the cage until the water reached his neck, but just before leaving his attention was called to a lad of 17 named John McGladrie, who, in the darkness, was just dimly perceived to be floating forward in straw and wreckage. He at once sprung forward, caught the lad, and, swimming with him to a higher level by an under passage which led to an opening in a shaft higher up, reached the surface with him safely. The mine is 85 fathoms deep, and of the 45 miners who were below at the time of the accident, three only were drowned.

## **REWARD FOR BRAVERY**

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At a special meeting of the Royal Humane Society held on Wednesday at the offices, Trafalgar Square, Charing Cross, London — Colonel Horace Montagu presiding — the remarkable incidents in connection with the Muirkirk Pit Disaster on 11th ult., were brought under notice. As a result of the evidence furnished to the Society by Sir W. Arrol, M.P. for South Ayrshire, the Society conferred its medal upon Robert Blyth (29), of Bankhead, and Robert Gibson, of Smallburn, who "most gallantly risked their lives in their exertions to save their fellow workmen" in the Auldhouseburn Pit, Muirkirk, on the above date.

The evidence showed that a sudden inrush of water from an old mine flooded the pit till the water rose 4ft above the doorheads, and the pit bottom was full to the roof some 50ft back. Blyth, in his effort to escape, turned from the pit bottom and faced the rising water till he met with the other workmen, whom he conducted to a higher heading, and by this means was mainly instrumental in saving 16 miners who had been imprisoned in a critical position for over 24 hours.



BANKHEAD ROW

# The Muirkirk Disaster

11th March, 1898

Away on yon heath where our martyrs have bled,  
And moulded in dust lie the glorious dead,  
Where high, towering hills wear spring caps of snow,  
And gallant Muirkirk lies asleep far below.

There out of their homes at the cold break of day,  
To Bankhead the miners now start on their way.  
While out to the doorstep the fond mothers come,  
To whisper "Good morning, God send you safe home."

Ah! Deeply pathetic and hard is the life,  
Of the brave-hearted miner and his loving wife;  
When they part in the morning they never can tell,  
But they may have taken their short last farwell.

The sun now is risen and all is so still,  
Except the gay lark singing over the hill.  
And the gileless wee lambs that race o'er the heath,  
Unconscious of all the grim horror of death.

While hard at their labour with blow upon blow,  
Three hundred and ninety feet far below.  
The miners toil on without warning or fear,  
That a great flood of water is lurking so near.

When sudden and swift as the lightnings that fall,  
With a rent and a roadway goes the wall,  
And the great flood of water comes boiling and hissing,  
Oh, who will be saved and who will be missing?

They run for dear life, age, and swift they must run,  
For the water is coming on, ton upon ton.  
Run on you brave hearts no foothold now miss,  
Oh God, what a scene! What a moment is this!

Some reach the pit bottom. The bottomer's there.  
As brave as a lion to do or to dare,  
He stands at his post till the waters have passed,  
Up over his haunches and over his breast.

Then turns he to flee from his dangerous post,  
When lo, on the waters, about to be lost,  
A boy he spies fighting death and despair,  
And stretching his hand takes him into his care.

But who is the hero of this awful scene?  
Ah! That is Bobby Blyth, he is with the nineteen.  
He could have gone home but he choose to try  
To save his companions or nobly die.

To thee Robert Blyth, what words can I say,  
To show thee the depth of my feelings to-day?  
Thy dearest reward now awaits thee on high,  
From an Almighty power and an All-Seeing eye.!

My heart and my hand, here they fail to unite,  
My thoughts are too proud for me now to write,  
But the world now knows how he breasted the wave,  
And saved sixteen men from a watery grave.

And when the great flood the poor fellows entombed,  
And the wail went abroad that, alas! they were doomed,  
Our hero's great soul then arose to the call,  
While he led them to wait till the water would fall.

Weary they waited a night and a day,  
And slowly the water receded away,  
While with every heart-throb a deep, muttered prayer,  
Was whispered to God for his merciful care.

And God heard their prayers and deemed them good,  
He let willing workers reduce the great flood,  
And now from the jaws of grim death they have come,  
Bringing joy unbounded back into each home.

But, alas, there are those who shall never return,  
Their souls have departed across the dark bourne.  
Oh comfort the sorrowing, give them thy care,  
Soothe them in their dark hour of despair

From

## THE POEMS OF A POLICEMAN

By MATHEW ANDERSON

Waterside



### THE COUTBURN RAW

On the Sanquhar Moor, just past Springhill, on the path down to Tibbie's Brig can be found the ruins of a well-known Miners' row, namely The Coutburn Raw. It was situated just where the sheep pens are located, at the top of the golf course. History tells us that it was a very popular place in the 19th Century, having been built to house the miners who worked in Wellwood Pit amongst others, and for the various tradesmen who were employed in the Ironworks. We also have been told that it had quite a cosmopolitan atmosphere — several races being housed here, including, Irish, Italian, and Spaniards. Here is a poem, written by Hugh Park, whose father lived in the row.

### THE AULD COUTBURN RAW

Come listen noo people till my story I tell,  
It's on some auld hooses—it's lang since they fell—  
On the lands o' Kaimshill, on the road tae the Shaw,  
And the name they go under is the Auld Coutburn Raw.

Oh! the Auld Coutburn Raw was a he'rtsome auld place,  
And in the Auld Coutburn was mony a strange face;  
But noo, since they've left it, and a' gane awa',  
The grass growes green roun' the Auld Coutburn Raw.

Fu' blythesome they've sported their youthfu' young days,  
Fu' happy an' cheery about the glen braes;  
But, waes me, since then there's been mony a snaw,  
Has fa'en on the stanes o' the Auld Coutburn Raw.

The lav'rock may rise with its dewy wings,  
An' into the air he may merrily sing;  
And the rest o' the birds their sweet notes may blaw,  
But they'll ne'er bring back the pleasure o' the Auld Coutburn Raw.

Oft-times I ha'e wandered oot the auld Sanquhar Road  
An' viewed the auld Coutburn wi' its heavy load;  
Say oh! my dear friends, a tear it may draw,  
To look at the ruins o' the Auld Coutburn Raw.

Oft-times hae they wandered by yon waterside,  
Oft-times hae they wandered in moorlands sae wide,  
Oft-times have they wandered on the side o' Wardlaw,  
But their race has been run in the Auld Coutburn Raw.

For noo there's nae pleasure in it tae be seen,  
The road to the Coutburn is grown up quite green;  
But nature must be, it has ta'en them awa',  
Wha used tae reside in the Auld Coutburn Raw.

So now, my dear friends, tho' I've nae skill ava.  
It's true what I've said on the Auld Coutburn Raw,  
For I had an' auld faither o' sixty an' twa',  
Who was ane o' the tenants o' the Auld Coutburn Raw.

HUGH PARK

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Reproduced below are lists of dates relating to persons and places connected with the village of Muirkirk.

### OPENINGS

Kames Canteen .....	1957
British Legion Hall, Smallburn.....	1958
Library, Burns Avenue.....	1959
Smallburn Filling Station.....	1959
Viaduct Mine (Anderson).....	1959
Old Folk's Cabin, Smallburn.....	1959
Howford Bridge, Mauchline.....	1962
Glespin Miners' Club .....	1963
New Regal Cinema .....	1961
(Ten Commandments)	
Kames Pit Canteen .....	1941
Regal Opened .....	1938
(Rosalie)	
Regal Cinema Re-opened .....	1939
(Alexanders Rag Time Band)	
Bridge at Palmer's Crossing .....	1936
New Road and Wellwood Bridge .....	1931
McAdam's Stone Erected .....	1931
New Co-op. Premises at Glasgow Road...	1928
Auldhouseburn Reservoir .....	1928
Long Stone of Convention at Bankend:	
Erected.....	1686
Replaced.....	1929
First Talkies at Picture House.....	1936
(The Trial of Mary Dougan)	
Pavilion Re-opened .....	1939
New Houses in Main Street.....	1938
Buses Started to go Round Scheme .....	1960
Kames Baths Opened .....	1933
Extension to Kames Baths.....	1936
New Houses at Garronhill.....	1935
Red Raw built near Ironworks.....	1787
Council Houses at Wellwood Street.....	1930
Present Post Office Opened (T. Rorrison)	1931
Ironworks Erected .....	1787
Strathaven Road Built .....	1789
Temperance Hall.....	1884
New primary School.....	1971
Glenbuck School .....	1876
Railway station .....	1896
Cemetery at Glasgow Road .....	1889

### OPENINGS

St. Thomas Church .....	1906
Bowling Green Opened .....	1874
Temperance Hall .....	1884
New Primary School .....	1971
Glenbuck School .....	1876
Railway Station .....	1896
Cemetery at Glasgow Road .....	1889
Mason Hall.....	1907
St. Thomas Church .....	1906
New Printing Office at Furnace Rd.....	1971
Cairn Built on Cairntable .....	1920
Drill Hall .....	1913
Memorial Gates Unveiled.....	1922
Grouse Lounge .....	1973
Extension to Muirtex .....	1968

### CLOSURES

Mill Bridged Closed to Traffic.....	1959
Regal Cinema Closed.....	1960
(John Wayne in "Horse Soldier.")	
Douglas Water Thistle Finished .....	1962
Lanark Trains Stopped.....	1964
Last Street Water Pump removed.....	1962
(Torhill)	
Picture House Closed .....	1961
(Four Girls in Town)	
Wellwood School Closed .....	1942
Regal Cinema Burned Down.....	1939
Effie's Spoot Filled In.....	1932
Tibbie's Monument Erected .....	1932
Kirkgreen Co-operative.....	1970
Glenbuck Church.....	1954
Glenbuck Co-operative Society .....	1953
Kames Mission Church .....	1952
Bankhead Pit .....	1911
Muirkirk Parish Council.....	1919
Muirkirk School Board .....	1919
Ironworks Store.....	1946
Tom Brown, Barbour .....	1968

**DEMOLITIONS**

Kames Mission Church.....	1957
Station Waiting Rooms, North Side .....	1957
Regal Cinema (Dundas Hall) .....	1971
Manse Lane .....	1957
Victoria Buildings .....	1970
Masons Arms Hotel.....	1970
Baird Institute .....	1957
Irondale House .....	1960
Furnace Road School.....	1968
Railway Bridge at Furnace Road .....	1944
Kames Mission Church.....	1968
Airdsgreen Railway Bridge .....	1944
Bankhead Row .....	1939
Springhill Terrace .....	1965
Black Bottle Tavern .....	1860
Meikle's Row (Next to Bank).....	1936
Glenbuck House .....	1948
Baird Institute .....	1957
Irondale House .....	1960
Wellwood House .....	1929

**GENERAL INTEREST**

Councillor G. M. Bain Jailed.....	1958
Double Wedding at Parish Church: Ian Mitchell & Molly Bone John McMorran & Barbara Bone .....	1958
Double Wedding at St. Thomas Church: Martin Morran & Catherine Hunter Jim McCulloch & Mary McDade.....	1957
Boxing Display at Ladeside Park .....	1960
Glenbuck War memorial Transferred to Victory Park Gates .....	1961
94 Gas Street Lamps in Muirkirk.....	1935
Electricity Came to Muirkirk.....	1938
Ayr Rail Passenger Line Closed .....	1951
New Store Clock Installed .....	1950
Glenbuck House Built .....	1880
Bankhead Pit Disaster .....	1898
Wellwood Pit Sunk.....	1815
Tom Rorrison Retired from P.O. ....	1966
Lanark Trains Stopped .....	1964
Dr Weir succeeded Dr Duke.....	1961
First Train arrived in Muirkirk.....	1848
Kames Colliery Disaster .....	1957
Fire at Old Terrace.....	1955

**GENERAL INTEREST**

New St. Thomas School Opened .....	1973
Effie's Spot Re-opened .....	1973
Furnace Road Bridge Built .....	1789
Father Conway left St. Thomas.....	1962
Mr Vigors came to EU Church.....	1960
Parish Church Destroyed by Fire.....	1949
Andrew Loggie died in Road Accident .....	1961
James Grant, Stationmaster, left.....	1961
Doctor Ganvir came to Muirkirk.....	1972
First Edition of "Muirkirk Advertiser".....	1907
Last Edition of "Advertiser" .....	1974
Tom Drife, Banker, left Muirkirk.....	1961
Labour Exchange transferred from Main Street to Wellwood Street.....	1962
Mr Glashan, Headmaster, JS School .....	1961
(Replaced by Mr Crichton)	
Wm. McCubbin new Stationmaster .....	1962
Doctor Cameron left Muirkirk.....	1945
Last Cattle Show at Auldhouseburn .....	1906
Doctor Duke left Muirkirk .....	1961
Welltrees Disaster .....	1867
J. F. Gordon new Headmaster .....	1916
Gent's Lavatory Erected at Smallburn near Furnace Road.....	1960

**OBITUARIES**

TOM BONE, Quoiter, Glenbuck.....	1916
WILLIAM PEARSON, Draper .....	1916
JOHN S. WEIR, Shopkeeper .....	1917
J. G. A. BAIRD, founder Baird & Dal. ....	1917
Dr DAVID CARRUTHERS .....	1917
R. A. LESLIE, Registrar .....	1917
R. CUNNINGHAM, Schoolmaster .....	1917
CHARLES HOWATSON, Glenbuck.....	1918
JAMES TELFER, Blacksmith.....	1920
JOHN ANGUS, Pit Manager .....	1922
THOMAS FLOYD, local Poet.....	1933
JOHN HODGE, P.M.....	1937
JAS. G. RICHMOND, Head teacher.....	1939
FATHER JOYCE, St. Thomas Church .....	1938
HUGH BELL, Sportsman .....	1941
WILLIAM HUNTER, Kirkgreen.....	1941
GRANNY GIBNEY .....	1943
JOHN SHAW, Manager, Bankhead .....	1943

**OBITUARIES**

DAVID BECK, Angler ..... 1945  
 Rev. JOHN HENDERSON, Minister ..... 1946  
 R. (Dickie) WILSON, Newsagent ..... 1947  
 DUGALD BAIRD, Works Manager ..... 1947  
 LAMES DONAGHY, Shoemaker ..... 1947  
 DAVID CROSBIE, Grocer ..... 1948  
 REGGIE McATTEE, Muirkirk Juniors .... 1949  
 AGNES FETTES ..... 1949  
 R. K. WILSON, Works Foreman Joiner ... 1950  
 HARRY CALDWELL, Entertainer ..... 1950  
 JOHN DEVINE, Choir Master ..... 1951  
 JOHN JOHNSTONE, Musician ..... 1951  
 WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, Undertaker ..... 1951  
 JOHN H. PRESTON, Hairdresser ..... 1951  
 WILLIAM SHAW SMITH, Printer ..... 1952  
 JOE THOMSON, Memory Man ..... 1952  
 WILLIAM WALLACE, Bootmaker ..... 1952  
 WM. C. WEIR, Heid Inns ..... 1952  
 S. C. MATTHEWS, "Burro" Manager ..... 1953  
 ROBERT STEVEN, Mining Teacher .... 1953  
 DAVID HENDRY, Pipe Major ..... 1954  
 DUNCAN McCALLUM, Dairyman ..... 1954  
 JAMES McKERROW, Farmer ..... 1956  
 JOHN WYLIE, Butcher ..... 1957  
 PETER McLUSKIE, County Councillor ... 1957  
 THOMAS McCARTNEY, Gas manager .... 1958  
 DONALD McCALLUM, Linburn ..... 1958  
 W. H. MARTIN, Kames Church ..... 1958  
 MARION (Minnie) BROWN, Fruiterer ..... 1958  
 JAMES WALLACE, Violinist ..... 1958  
 JOPHN YOUNG, Ironworks Cashier ..... 1958  
 ROBERT. CUMMING, Ironworks Store ... 1959  
 ANTHONY DE SYKES, Lithuanian ..... 1960  
 ALEX. WOODBURN, Farmer ..... 1960  
 ROBERT YOUNG, Plumber ..... 1960  
 ELIZABETH McDOUGALL, Teacher ..... 1961  
 ALLAN LOGGIE, Postman ..... 1961  
 Rev. JAMES GREENSHIELDS ..... 1961  
 DAVID SHAW, Cobbler ..... 1962  
 DAVID RENNIE, Publican ..... 1962  
 DOMINICK GILLEN, Boer War Veteran .. 1963  
 MORAH LOVE, County Councillor ..... 1963  
 NORMAN McKENZIE, Co-op President ... 1963  
 JAMES CLEMENT, Contractor ..... 1963  
 JAMES MURDOCH, Janitor ..... 1963  
 JOHN COLTHART, Miners Agent ..... 1964  
 JOHN H. FOSTER, Kames Farm ..... 1964

**OBITUARIES**

WILLIAM McGILIVRAY, Farmer ..... 1964  
 WILLIAM ROWE, Bus Contractor ..... 1964  
 THOMAS R. HOGG, Baker ..... 1964  
 HUGH WILLIAMSON, Kames Church ..... 1964  
 HUGH LOVE, Co-op. President ..... 1964  
 Rev. DAVID CROSBIE ..... 1964  
 GEORGE BAIN, Fruiterer, Glenbuck ..... 1966  
 Dr T. C. FRAME ..... 1966  
 TOM BROWN, Footballer, Glenbuck ..... 1966  
 JAMES STRICKLAND, Pit Manager ..... 1966  
 ANDREW BROWN, Juniors' Linesman ... 1966  
 JAMES G. BERESFORD, Waterman ..... 1966  
 ELIAS BEGG, Pit Engineer ..... 1966  
 ANDREW MORELAND, Councillor ..... 1967  
 JAMES McCARTNEY, Janitor ..... 1967  
 JOHN TROTTER, Draper ..... 1968  
 G. M. BAIN, County Councillor ..... 1968  
 JAMES GIRDWOOD, Bantam Breeder .... 1968  
 ROBERT SMITH, Tailor ..... 1970  
 JANET JOHNSTONE, Grocer ..... 1971  
 ALLAN GEBBIE, Footballer ..... 1971  
 JAMES AULD, Chemist ..... 1971  
 JOHN SAMSON, Printer ..... 1973



REGAL CINEMA, MAIN STREET

## SOME MORE HISTORICAL NOTES

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Here are some interesting notes I came across, which those with an appetite for facts and figures of a local historical nature might be interested in:—

The River Ayr rises in the hills to the north of Glenbuck Loch, a picturesque sheet of water situated near Muirkirk. The loch was created in 1802 by James Finlay and Company to provide a reservoir for their Catrine mills, and another artificial reservoir, 21 acres in extent, was constructed a short distance downstream in 1808 to give more storage capacity.

(1) The second reservoir is now disused, but Glenbuck Loch still stores water for the Catrine generating system. The first works to use water power below the reservoirs was Muirkirk Ironworks, founded in 1787 by a group of Scottish wrought iron users.

(2) The site of the works was determined by the availability of a suitable fall of water, and the alternatives of an earth dam 150 yards wide and 30 feet high providing storage and a short lade to the wheel, and a long water cut on the south bank, were both considered.

(3) The latter course was adopted, and although a steam blowing-engine was erected, when a second furnace was contemplated in 1788, the building of a water-powered blowing-engine was again discussed.

(4) Eventually a water forge was built to process the crude wrought iron from the puddling furnaces.

(5) An earlier wheel, constructed to drain the coal near the furnace bank, was fed from the Garpel Water, a tributary of the Ayr.

(6) A third wheel to drain 'the first Air pit on Catchy Burn level' was authorised on 22 December 1789, and tenders sought. The pit was to be 25 fathoms deep, the 'working barrell' of the pump nine inches and the 'common pipes' ten inches in diameter.

(7) The long lade from Ashaw Burn to the furnace bank was wide enough and deep enough for it to be used as a canal connecting various ironstone and coal pits with the furnaces, and it continued to be used at least until the late nineteenth century. Though drained, its course and the basin at the furnace bank can still be traced.

Downstream from the ironworks, the first corn mill on the river was Aird's Mill, tenanted by William Aird in 1851. The site has now been cleared, though a small square shed may incorporate part of the mill buildings. Parts of the lade can still be seen. The mill was an L-shaped structure on the north bank of the river. Mr. James S. Wilson, writer of an unsigned series of articles on the corn mills of the River Ayr which appeared in the *Ayrshire Post* in 1944-5, confused Aird's Mill with a waulk mill which was powered by the Ashaw Burn, a tributary of the Ayr.

Two and a half miles to the west of Aird's Mill, near Nether Wellwood farm, stood Muirmill, on the north side of the river. The buildings here have disappeared, but a long lade can still be traced in places. The mill had one pair of stones driven by a breast paddle wheel. Before the collapse of the Ayr Bank, the mill and the farm of Dalfram were let by the Earl of Loudoun, to John Lapraik. Lapraik retained the mill after his financial crash until 1796. He was a friend of Robert Burns.

(8) On the south bank of the river, and a further one and a half miles downstream, a forge was built near Townhead of Greenock by Lord Cathcart about 1732. Although shown on Armstrong's map (1775), it was disused by the end of the eighteenth century. The lade system can still be distinguished: it branches into two, which would imply two wheels, the normal number in a forge, where one was required for the bellows and the other for operating a tilt' or helve hammer for forging. The statement that local ore was shipped to Bonawe for smelting may have been true after 1753, but before that time a bloomery, or primitive blast furnace, might have been used.

(9) This site, known as Terreoch, would repay careful excavation.



THE WAULKMILL, ASHIEBURN

## MUIRKIRK MINING ACCIDENTS

Below is reproduced a list of mining accidents in the Muirkirk District, which at the time were reported in the National Press in the period between 1835 and 1938

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### 17 December, 1835

**Severe Accident At Muirkirk** - On Thursday morning the 17th current, in one of the pits at the iron-works two colliers, James M'Farlane and James Gibson were killed by a fall of the roof-coal which they were in the act of taking down. When got by the other workmen in the pit all signs of life were extinct. From the quantity of coal that fell, their deaths must have been the work of an instant. [*Scotsman 26 December 1835*]

### May 31, 1855

**Muirkirk Fatal Accident** - Another of those alarming accidents which are so frequent in this district occurred on 31st ult. at No 12 Pit, Wellwoodmuir, by which a young man about 20 years of age, named Alexander Gibson, and his brother Thomas, a lad of 14, were deprived of life. It appears that they were engaged when what they term the head coal fell from the roof, by which they were fatally crushed — the weight being four to five tons. Their poor mother is now left to bewail the loss of four sons, who have all met with a similar fate. [*Ayr Advertiser quoted in Glasgow Herald June 11 1855*]

### 16 June, 1884

*Muirkirk - Fatal Accident* - Thomas Haugh, engineman, was killed on Sunday morning at Galawhistle Pit, Glenbuck, his head having been crushed by the connecting rod of the water engine wheels. He was engaged cleaning at the time. He was 20 years of age and unmarried. [*Scotsman 17 June 1884*]

### May 29, 1886

**Fatal Accident** - On Saturday, William Murdoch, coal miner, 34 years of age, was fatally injured while working in Lightshaw Pit, belonging to the Eglinton Iron Co. It appeared that he had prepared a shot and lighted the fuse and retired, but the shot not going off, he ventured back, and had just approached the spot when the charge exploded, injuring him so severely that he died in a very short time. [*Hamilton Advertiser June 5 1886*]

### August 12, 1886

**Serious Accident** - On Thursday forenoon, while working in Wellwood Pit, Hugh Campbell, aged about 36 years, was seriously hurt by a large stone falling from the roof upon him. Dr Stevenson was in immediate attendance and did all he could for the sufferer, who is at present in a precarious state. He has a wife and family depending on him. [*Hamilton Advertiser August 14 1886*]

## 17 June, 1887

**Muirkirk - One Man Killed and Three Injured** - On Friday, in one of the Cairntable Coal Company's pits at Glenbuck, named the Davy Pit, John Dunbar was killed by a fall from the roof, and other three were injured. The names of the injured are Alexander Dunbar and David Dunbar, sons of the deceased, and David Keith. Latest reports are that one of the Dunbars is very badly injured and fears are entertained for his recovery. [*Hamilton Advertiser June 25 1887*]

## 15 September, 1892

**Fatal Pit Accident** - Yesterday morning, Matthew Holden, aged 14, a pony driver in Kames Pit Muirkirk, was accidentally killed. Holden had left his own work to give the bottomers a hand, and by some means he was caught by the cage and taken up the shaft. While on its way up the shaft, the cage chain broke, and the cage fell back to the bottom, killing Holden in its fall. [*Scotsman 16 Sept. 1892*]

## 24 April, 1893

**Fatal Pit Accident At Muirkirk** - While the men were being taken up the shaft of the Davy Pit last night, Andrew Woods, twenty-two years of age, residing at Garronhill, fell from the cage; and was killed. [*Scotsman 25 April 1893*]

## 17 October, 1894

**Fatal Mining Accident** - Yesterday at Galawhistle Pit, Glenbuck, Muirkirk, a fatal accident happened to Thomas Davidson, miner, residing at Glenbuck. He was working at the face when a large fall of stone and coal from the roof fell and killed him instantaneously. [*Scotsman 18 Oct 1894*]

## 6 July, 1895

**Fatal Pit Accident** - On Saturday a miner named James Torbet was so severely crushed by a fall of coal at Kames Pit, Muirkirk, that he died soon afterwards. [*Scotsman 9 Jul 1895*]

## 15 April 1899

**Fatal Pit Accident** - On Saturday morning while William Reid was working at the face in Galawhistle Pit, Muirkirk, a large piece of coal came away and fell on him, killing him instantaneously. [*Scotsman 17 Apr 1899*]

## 9 January, 1901

**At Ponesk Pit, Muirkirk**, belonging to Messrs Wm Baird & Company, yesterday afternoon, a serious accident happened to George Samson, miner, Victoria Buildings, Muirkirk. While on his round as a pony driver, a fall of coal took place and caught him in passing, injuring him in a most serious manner about the face, body and legs. His condition is precarious. [*Scotsman 10 Jan 1901*]

[NB George Samson died on November 20, 1909, aged 28]

## 25 January 1901

**Fatal Mining Accident** - At Davy Pit, Glenbuck, Muirkirk, belonging to the Cairntable Coal Company, yesterday afternoon a fatal accident befell William Wilson, (21) miner, residing with his parents at Wanlass Place, Muirkirk. Wilson was drawing the road, when a large fall from the roof took place killing him instantly. The body was removed home. Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved family. [*Herald 26 January 1901*] Deceased's brother was killed in the mining accident some eighteen months ago. [*Scotsman 26 Jan 1901*]

N.B.— William's brother was Charles Wilson, 21, miner killed by a roof fall in Douglas, Lanarkshire on July 13 1899.

## 11 January, 1907

Yesterday afternoon at Bankhead pit belonging to Messrs Barr & Co, a fatal accident occurred by which Robert Hazel (17) Muirkirk and Robert Brown (16) drawer, Muirkirk, lost their lives while Thomas Watson, roadsman, was seriously injured. Hazel and Brown were on their way home after the completion of the days work, while Watson was just entering duty, being on the afternoon shift. They were caught by a runaway rake on the dook road, and owing to want of room they were unable to clear themselves. Hazel & Brown were killed while Watson received serious injuries, his arm being broken and one of his eyes almost knocked out. The bodies of the lads Hazel & Brown were conveyed home. [*Scotsman 12 Jan 1907*]

## February, 1907

**Compensation for the death of a husband** - Sheriff Shairp has issued an interlocutor in an action at Ayr Sheriff Court in which Mary Marshall or Rennie, widow of Thomas Rennie, miner, Garronhill, Muirkirk, sued William Baird & Co. coalmasters, Lugar Ironworks, for £256, 2s. as compensation for the death of her husband. It appeared from the proof that on 9th February last Thomas Rennie, while at his work in No, 2 Kames Pit, Muirkirk received a slight wound on the back of his left hand, which had subsequently led to blood-poisoning, pneumonia, and death. The Sheriff finds it proved that Rennie met his death from this injury while in the employment of the defenders, and awards £256, 2s., the amount claimed, one-third to the pursuer and two-thirds to her three pupil children; and finds her entitled to expenses. [*Scotsman 21 Nov 1907*]



WELLWOOD PIT

## 14 April, 1913

**Serious Mining Accident** - Yesterday afternoon at Kames Pit, Muirkirk, belonging to Messrs William Baird & Co Ltd, an accident which terminated fatally, befell David McSkimming (20) residing at Douglas Park, Muirkirk. McSkimming was at work at the pithead when he was caught and crushed between two wagons, receiving severe internal injuries. McSkimming was taken home in the ambulance van. He died in the evening from his injuries. [*Scotsman 15 Apr 1913*]

## 9 July, 1914

Yesterday afternoon, at Grasshill Pit, Glenbuck, belonging to Messrs William Baird & Co (Limited), a serious accident befell James Dempster, a miner, residing at Madeleine Place, Muirkirk. While at his work a large fall of coal took place. He was caught in the fall, and was seriously injured on the spine, as well as internal injuries. [*Scotsman 10 July 1914*]

## 5 November, 1915

**Fatal Accident at Muirkirk** - Yesterday afternoon at Carmcoup Colliery, belonging to Kennox Coal Co [NB In Douglas District], a fatal accident occurred to James Cringan, pithead boy, residing at Jack's Buildings, Muirkirk. While at his work, Cringan was accidentally caught in the machinery, and was badly mutilated, death being instantaneous. [*Scotsman 6 Nov 1915*]

**Fatal Accident in a Douglas colliery** - The death of a lad named James Roxburgh Dickson Cringan, employed, as a coal cleaner at Kennox colliery, Douglas, was reported to the Lanark police yesterday. The boy, who was working at the coal-cleaning tables, came in contact with a pinion wheel, with the result that he was dragged into the spokes. He was dead when taken out. [*Scotsman 9 Nov. 1915*]

## 26 March, 1919

Robert Parker, miner, residing at Kames Cottage, Muirkirk, was killed by a fall of coal in Kames Pit, belonging to Messrs Wm. Baird & Co. [*Scotsman 27 March 1919*]

## 12 August, 1920

At Muirkirk yesterday a fatal accident befell Thomas Thomson miner, residing at Glasgow Road, Muirkirk. While working in Kames Pit, belonging to Wm Baird & Co Ltd, Muirkirk, a fall of coal took place, severely crushing him about the body. Thomson succumbed to his injuries while being conveyed to Kilmarnock Infirmary. [*Scotsman 13 Aug 1920J*]

## 3 July, 1922

Muirkirk Fatal Mining Accident - On Monday morning at Kameshill Pit, Muirkirk, belonging to William Baird & Company Limited, a fatal accident befell David Loggie, miner, residing in Co-operative Buildings, Kirkgreen, Muirkirk. When at work, a heavy fall of coal took place and when he was extricated, life was found to be extinct. (*Hamilton Advertiser 8 July 1922*)

**20 July, 1922**

**Glenbuck - Fatal Accident** - At Grasshill Pit, Glenbuck, belonging to Messrs Wm Baird & Co Ltd, a fatal accident befell Archibald Allison, 18, residing with his parents at Grasshill Row, Glenbuck. While at work Allison was caught by a runaway hutch and severely injured. He was removed to Kilmarnock Infirmary where he succumbed. *[Hamilton Advertiser 22 July 1922]*

**21 May, 1923**

Mining Accident at Muirkirk - A mining accident occurred yesterday at Grasshill Pit, Glenbuck, belonging to William Baird & Co, (Limited), Muirkirk. Joseph Cameron, drawer, residing at Grasshill Row, Glenbuck, while at his work, was caught by a runaway hutch, causing severe injuries to his head over the right eye. Cameron was removed to Kilmarnock Infirmary. *[Scotsman 22 May 1923]*

**3 March, 1924**

**Roadsman Killed in Muirkirk Pit** - At Kames Colliery, Muirkirk, belonging to Wm Baird & Co Ltd, a fatal accident yesterday befell George Loggie, roadsman, residing at Garronhill, Muirkirk. Loggie was at his work when a fall took place. Death was almost instantaneous. Loggie leaves a widow and five of a family. *[Scotsman 4 March 1924]*

**12 January, 1925**

Muirkirk Miner Severely Injured - At Kames Pit Muirkirk, belonging to Wm Baird & Co Ltd, yesterday afternoon, a serious accident befell George Thomson, miner, residing at Garronhill, Muirkirk. While at work he was caught by an extensive fall from the roof, receiving severe injuries to the head and back, and his left leg is broken. Thomson was removed to Kilmarnock Infirmary. *[Scotsman]*.

**13 Jan, 1925**

**Muirkirk - Miner Fatally Injured** - At Kames Pit, Muirkirk, belonging to Wm. Baird and Co (Limited), on Monday afternoon, a serious accident befell George Thomson, miner, residing at Garronhill, Muirkirk. While at work he was caught by an extensive fall from the roof, receiving severe injuries to the head and back, and his left leg was broken. Thomson was removed to Kilmarnock Infirmary, where he died the same evening. He was 24 years of age and only recently married. *[Hamilton Advertiser 17 January 1925]*

**17 April, 1925**

**Muirkirk Mining Accident** - At Kames Pit, Muirkirk, belonging to Messrs Wm Baird & Co a serious accident yesterday befell Andrew Murdoch, roadsman, residing at Holmhead, Muirkirk. An extensive fall took place and Murdoch was caught by debris, sustaining a fracture of the leg and other severe injuries. He was removed to Kilmarnock Infirmary. Murdoch was the victim of a pit accident a few months ago. *[Scotsman 18 Apr 1925]*

**April, 1927**

**Ayrshire Pit Accident** - William Samson, residing at Midhouse Row, Muirkirk, while working at Kames Pit, Muirkirk, belonging to William Baird & Co, met with a serious accident. As the result of the explosion of a shot, he was very seriously injured about the face. After being attended to by the works doctor, he was removed to the Glasgow Eye Infirmary for further treatment. [*Scotsman 21 Apr 1927*]

**August, 1927**

**Muirkirk Miner injured** - Richard Bain, a miner, residing at Empire Buildings, Muirkirk, was severely crushed and bruised about the lower part of the body by a fall of coal, whilst he was working on Thursday at Grasshill Pit, Glenbuck, belonging to Wm Baird & Co Ltd. After medical attention Bain was removed by ambulance to the home of his mother, his wife and family being on holiday. [*Scotsman 6 Aug 1927*]

**25 April, 1928**

**Muirkirk Miners' Remarkable Escape** - Whilst at work yesterday in Kames Pit, belonging to Wm Baird & Co, Muirkirk, two men, Robert Bradford (38), married, residing at Donaldo Place, Muirkirk, and Patrick Mackin (16), residing at Kames Row, Muirkirk, were buried under a heavy fall of coal. The relief parties took two hours to dig them out, but after examination it was found that apart from severe bruises both men were in good shape.

**August, 1928**

**Muirkirk Pithead Accident** - Whilst at work at the erection of the new washing plant at Cronberry Moor Pit, belonging to William Baird & Co Ltd, James Ross, residing at Hunter's Buildings, Muirkirk, accidentally fell from a scaffold a distance of about 25 feet. He was unconscious when picked up and after medical attention was removed home in the ambulance wagon suffering from severe injuries about the lower part of the body. [*Scotsman 16 Aug 1928*]

**11 December, 1928**

**Muirkirk** - A serious accident occurred in Grasshill Pit on Tuesday forenoon, when Archibald M'Donald, Fergus Place, was crushed by a fall of coal. After being attended to by the local doctors he was conveyed to Glasgow Royal Infirmary, where he now lies in a critical condition. [*Hamilton Advertiser 15 Dec. 1928*]

**31 December, 1928**

**Fatal Result of Pithead Accident** - As a result of the accident on Saturday at the Kames Pithead, Muirkirk, belonging to Wm Baird & Co, Ltd, William Marshall, 15, who had his arm very severely crushed at the tables, has succumbed to his injuries in the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow. [*Scotsman 3 January 1929*]

**Muirkirk - Fatal Accident** - On Saturday afternoon last, Wm Marshall, 15, son of Mr Frank Marshall, residing at Bridge Street, was seriously injured about the arm, shoulder and head, through being caught in the machinery of the pithead plant at Kames Colliery, where he was employed. He was immediately conveyed to the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, where he died on Monday afternoon. [*Hamilton Advertiser 5 January 1929*]

## 4 June, 1929

*Muirkirk - Accident* - On Tuesday forenoon, John Davidson, residing at Iron Works Cottages, had his ankle crushed while following his employment in Kames Colliery. He was conveyed home in the ambulance wagon and attended to by Dr T P Hutchison. [*Hamilton Advertiser 8 June 1929*]

## 29 August, 1929

Two young miners were killed in Kames Colliery, Muirkirk, Ayrshire yesterday afternoon as the result of a heavy fall from a roof. Their names are Michael Parker, 45 Springhill Terrace, Muirkirk, and James Casagranda, Main Street, Muirkirk. It appears that the men were working together when a large mass descended upon them. Rescue parties worked strenuously, but owing to the heavy nature of the fall several hours elapsed before they could extricate the men, who were dead when brought to the surface. The colliery belongs to Messrs William Baird & Co [*Scotsman 30 Aug 1929*]

## 4 February, 1930

**Buried by a fall - Man Killed in Muirkirk Pit.** - While at work on Tuesday night in Kames Pit, Muirkirk belonging to Wm Baird & Co Ltd, two road repairers were buried in a heavy fall from the roof, and it took 3 hours before they were liberated. One of the men, John McCulloch (62) residing at 27 Kames Row, Muirkirk, was dead when extricated. The other man, William Kay Girvan (55), Garden View, Main St, Muirkirk, had a miraculous escape, but was very severely bruised about the head, body, legs and ankles. He was removed home in the works ambulance after medical attention. [*Scotsman 6 February 1930*].

## 22 March, 1930

**Muirkirk - Mining Accident** - On Saturday, Robert Turner, residing at Smallburn, and a young lad, J Kirkwood, residing at Kames Row, were caught by a fall from the roof in Kames Colliery. Kirkwood escaped with slight injuries; Turner sustained a serious fracture of the leg, and was immediately removed to Kilmarnock Infirmary. [*Hamilton Advertiser 29 March 1930*]

## August, 1930

While at work in Kames Pit No 2 belonging to William Baird & Co Ltd, Muirkirk, John Dodds (36), a miner, residing at Kames Row, Muirkirk, was caught by a fall and buried in the debris. When he was extricated some time later, life was found to be extinct. He leaves a widow and family of 6 young children. [*Scotsman 7 August 1930*]

## 2 February, 1931

While working on the back shift, a young man, Owen McGarry (20), residing with his parents at Main St Muirkirk, was fatally injured by a fall in Kames Pit, belonging to William Baird & Co Ltd, Muirkirk. [*Scotsman 4 February 1931*]

## 29 November, 1933

**Muirkirk Miner Killed** - James M'Call, a miner, aged 52, of Muirkirk, was killed in Kames Colliery, Muirkirk, as the result of a fall of coal. He was working at the face securing the coal, when a large piece came away, striking him on the head and killing him instantly. He leaves a widow and two daughters. [*Scotsman 1 December 1933*]

## 18 April, 1935

Kames Colliery Muirkirk was idle on Saturday as a mark of respect to Alexander Prentice, who was killed by a fall of stone in the Colliery two days previous, and whose funeral took place in Muirkirk Cemetery. There was a large concourse of mourners. [*Scotsman 22 Apr 1935*]

## 12 February 1936

John Logie, 31, a married man residing at Morton Place, Furnace Road, Muirkirk died as a result of an accident yesterday at Kames Colliery, owned by Bairds and Dalmellington Ltd. He was employed as a pit bottomer and was at work at the foot of the shaft when he fell into the cage seat, and sustained a fracture of the skull. Medical aid was procured but he died about half an hour afterwards. All the workers at the colliery stopped work after the accident. Logie leaves widow and three young children. [*Scotsman 13 Feb 1936*]

## 22 November, 1937

Alexander Summers (66), a miner, residing at Hedgegrove, Muirkirk, was crushed by a fall of stone from the roof in Kames Colliery, Muirkirk. He was conveyed to the pithead, and died about an hour later. [*Scotsman 24 Nov 1937*]

**Muirkirk - Mining Fatality** - On Monday night near the close of the afternoon shift, Alexander Summers (56 years of age) was buried by a fall from the roof in Kames Colliery. He was alive when extricated by his fellow workers, but only lived a short time after being brought to the pithead. Deceased was unmarried and had been in this district for 34 years. [Hamilton Advertiser 27 November 1937]

## 7 July, 1938

Kames Colliery Muirkirk was idle yesterday as a mark of respect for Benjamin Hendry, 37, Main St Muirkirk who was fatally injured on Thursday. Hendry, who was employed as a shot borer, was caught by a fall of coal from the roof, and died while being conveyed on a stretcher to the pit bottom. Hendry leaves a widow and a young family of three [*Scotsman 9 July, 1938*]



MUIRKIRK WORKING MEN'S CLUB

## MUIRKIRK REMINISCENCES

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A very informative article of local interest appeared in the "*Cumnock News*" (now extinct), in the year 1901, which I am delighted to reproduce here, as it is also of historical value:—

In the year 1809, the anniversary of the Battle of Corunna, when Sir John Moore beat the French in the Peninsular Campaign, and where he gallantly lost his life, the anniversary of the death of the great composer, Haydn, and the birth-year of yet another, Mendelssohn, Mr Hugh Anderson first saw the light of day on the 16th June of that memorable year, in the farmhouse of Greenockdyke, in which he still resides, and where for a long period of years he has successfully carried on business as a farmer. Mr Anderson, who has been confined to the house, is most hale and hearty, and he gives his recollections of the Parish in a clear, distinct, and succinct manner.

In the beginning of the last century the houses in Muirkirk were scattered here and there, in fact from Blackwood, the Wright's property, to the Black Bull, there were no buildings at all. Then there was the famous hostelry, "The Cross Keys," situated on the Glasgow Road, and in those early days there were hardly any houses in the Glasgow Road at all. The "Black Bottle" was situated on the opposite side of the Kirkgreen from where it is at present, and it was in this old Inn that Burns is said to have stayed when on his visit to Muirkirk to see his old friend, the bauld "Lapraik." The description shows that the houses were mostly scattered throughout the Parish — a great contrast to what we see now. In those early days tar kilns were successfully wrought a little above Springhill, and the mines then going were the "Big Pit," pits behind Midhouse Row, and the old Auldhouseburn workings — a striking contrast to the large number of pits now dotted throughout the neighbourhood. Mr Anderson can remember Mr McCall, who was a Postmaster in Muirkirk in these early days, who was grandfather of the late Miss McCall, who was Postmistress of Muirkirk for so many years, and at that time letters from Cumnock cost 7½d each.

There were no banks in the neighbourhood then, and people who had banking business to do mostly journeyed to Cumnock, which was then considered a most important centre.

The Parish Church was also built, and Mr Anderson has a perfectly clear remembrance of the then Minister, the Rev. Alex. Brown, who was ordained in 1814. Ironworks School and the Parochial School, as they were then termed, were also in a state of existence, but not nearly so elaborate as they are at present. All the business was done chiefly by carriers, there being no railways. Mr Robert Latta was carrier from Cumnock to Edinburgh, and Mr W. Ronald acted in the same capacity between Muirkirk and Glasgow.

Mr Anderson remembers the story told by his grandmother of her seeing the Highlanders, under Bonnie Prince Charles Edward, passing through Auchinleck on their retreat from England at the time of the '45 Jacobite rebellion, and many of the Highlanders were very lame. His grandmother died at the age 96. He also remembers having received the tidings of the Battle of Waterloo, in 1815, when he

was little over six years old, and the medium through which the information came was the "*Ayr Advertiser*" many days after the battle was fought. He still reads this periodical weekly.

Mr Anderson also remembers when the first railway train made its appearance in Muirkirk. There was a large turnout of spectators to witness the novel event, and most of the people looked on with something like dread and awe. The year 1827 saw a great failure in the farm crops, with the result that he had to pay for a load of meal, consisting of about twenty stones, the exorbitant price of £1 6s.

In his lifetime, Mr Anderson has seen many great snowstorms and floods. One of the worst floods was that which took place when a large waterspout broke on the Dipple, sweeping away all the hay, corn, and other crops in the meadows, so that afterwards the crops were quite useless. After the storm had spent itself, Mr Anderson went out and gathered 45 dozen trout lying in the meadows, and not one was picked up less than eight inches in length.

Mr Anderson also had the pleasure of meeting the famous Tibbie Pagan one day when he was at Springhill. Tibbie was coming from the Blue Tower, and Mr Pearson of Springhill, was going to have a joke out of her when she was passing, but he came off second best. Mr Anderson's description of Tibbie is very pointed. He says of her — "She was an old body, just had on her wearin' claes, and was not what one would call a braw woman. She drank a good deal, and was a bit lame, and it was a pity of anyone who came into her clutches, for she had an awful tongue."

In Mr Anderson's early days there were only the Douglas-to-Cumnock, the Glasgow, and the Sanquhar roads in existence. All the roads on the Greenock Water have been built in his time. In fact, the first stone dyke which is situated between Middlefield and Burnfoot, was built by him, and it is in splendid condition yet. The wire fences came out later, and Mr Anderson was the first to introduce them in this district.

In those days there were no custodians of the law. Mr Falconer, who resided at Kameshill House, and who was Manager of Messrs William Baird & Co., Ltd., was responsible for having bye-laws framed and had them published throughout the Parish. One of these curious bye-laws was that if any man be seen fighting at the "works side of the water" he would be instantly dismissed, but if he went to the "other side of the water" he could fight as much as he desired. Mr Anderson relates many interesting anecdotes relating to these laws.

Again, the parochial relief was then dispensed by the Minister and Elders of the established Church, so that must have been before the old Parochial Board system had been introduced, which is also now defunct, in the fact that our Parish Councils now look ably into these matters. There are at present only three farms in the Parish in which the families have remained tenants in Mr Anderson's time, viz.: Anderson (Greenockdyke); Gemmell (Garpel); and McKerrow (Spireslack). Mr Anderson has seen five sovereigns on the throne, viz.: George III., George IV., William IV., Queen Victoria, and King Edward VII. In appearance he is very venerable looking, with long flowing locks, giving him quite the appearance of a leader amongst breeders of the noted black-faced, a line of business he has been

long connected with, and his sterling judgment in it has been anxiously sought after by many of the younger generation.

Mr Anderson remembers the time when the country was greatly excited over the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and earlier, when the Radical riots took place, and when Hardy, of Strathaven, was hanged in Glasgow, and the Yeomen had to be called out. He remembers the great rejoicings that took place at the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837, and many notable events which are known as matters of history to the younger generation, and which show what rapid progress has been made during the reign of the Queen. He is one of a family of nine, three of whom lived to be over ninety, and all the rest are over eighty, except two. It need hardly be mentioned that Mr Hugh Anderson was the father of Mr James Anderson of Upper Wellwood.

## OLD COUTBURN RAW

I have mentioned previously about the old Coutburn Row, and here is some more interesting notes I have uncovered—

### **Coltburn Row (Also known as the Coutburn Row)**

Coltburn was a double row of houses on the road to Tibbie's Brig between Springhill and Cochrane Lodge. This row was built in 1791 by the ironmasters to house miners working in the Wellwood coal pits. They were built by Robert WILLOCKS at a cost of £ 12- 5s-0d (£ 12.25) each. The row was near the site of the tar works of Lord DUNDONALD, who had Cochrane Lodge built in 1788 for his brother Alexander COCHRANE whom he appointed as manager of the works. John Loudon McADAM of road building fame was also associated with the tar works, buying it from Lord Dundonald with a loan from the Wellwood Estate of Admiral McKenzie STEWART in 1790. McAdam's son, William, eventually closed the works in 1809 after the Navy stopped using tar for caulking. McAdam never used tar for his road making. He used a system of compacted graded stones. The tar works would be nothing but a memory in 1841. A postscript at the end of the census and written by J. D. THOMSON, the Superintendent Enumerator states:—

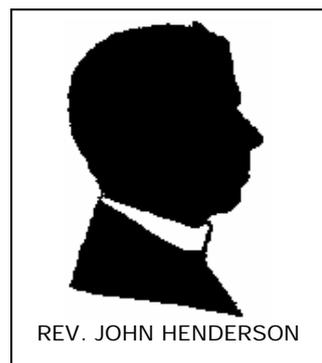
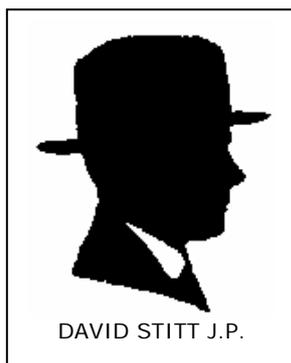
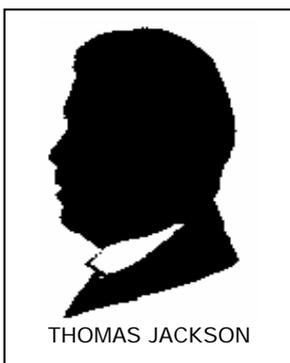
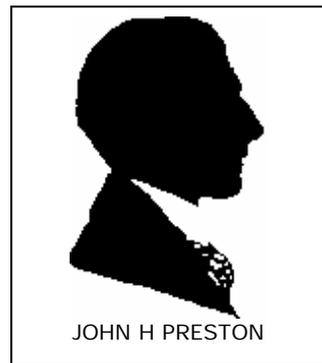
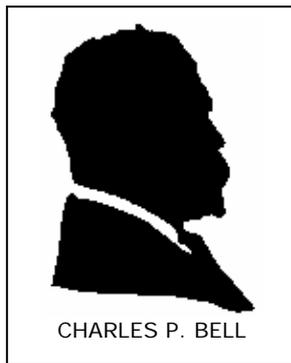
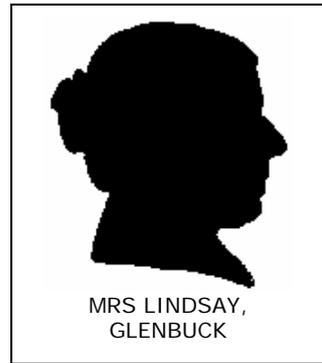
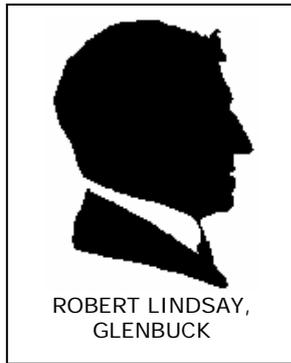
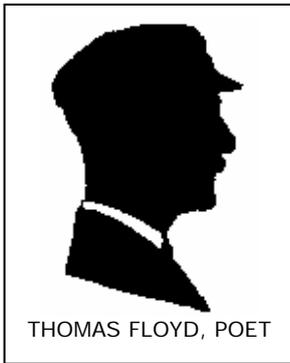
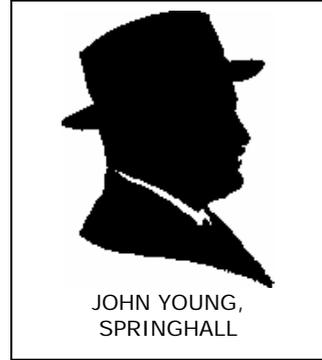
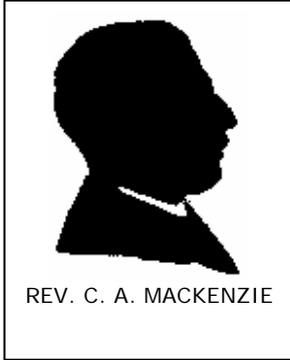
“The circumstances of the iron works having lately passed into the hands of a new Company has occasioned a considerable influx of workmen within the last few weeks”

At Coltburn on the 1841 Census night there were 13 dwellings, housing 62 people - 33 males and 29 females. They ranged in age from 9 months to 80 years. Most of them however, were aged between 20 and 50. Their places of origin were Ayrshire (30) other Scottish counties (10) Irish (21) English (1 - Richard Bone). Their occupations were Iron miners (3) Coal miners (3) Labourers (13 - 9 Irish, 1 English and 3 Scots) Iron Roller (1) Shepherd (1) Female servant (1) No employment (12 - male, 28 - female)

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

In my later years I have been collecting photographic images of Muirkirk, mostly of an earlier time. It would be impossible for me to reproduce the entire collection, but here is a small selection:—

### *Silhouette Salon*



## MUIRKIRK GOLF CLUB

In earlier days in Muirkirk most of the local organisations held an annual get together, and Muirkirk Golf Club was no exception. Older residents might be interested to see a list of the patrons who attended an "At Home" in 1911:—

Miss Mary Alston, Main Street  
 Miss Elsie Anderson, Glasgow  
 Miss Minnie Anderson, Main Street  
 Jessie and Madge Angus, Kaimshill  
 Mr Gavin Baird, Kateshall  
 Doctor Barbour, Irondale  
 Mr William Barclay, Furnace Road  
 Mr William Beattie, Glespin  
 Miss Blair, Milngavie  
 Father Bohan, St. Thomas'  
 Miss L. Bowie, Newmilns  
 Mr William Brown, Station Road  
 Mr Thomas Brown, Glasgow  
 Mr T. & Miss Buchanan, Upper Wellwood  
 Miss L. Campbell, Linkieburn House  
 Mr George Campbell, Langloanhead  
 Doctor Carruthers, Cairn House  
 Captain Clark, Crossflatt  
 Mr James Craig, Netherwood  
 Mary, Grace & Jeannie Craig, Netherwood  
 Mr J. Donaldson, New Cumnock  
 Miss Jeannie Dunn, Furnace Road  
 Miss M. R. Dorward, Hillside  
 Mr Alex. Easdale, Railway Buildings  
 Miss McEwan, Glasgow  
 Mr and Mrs John Gray, Railway Tavern  
 Mr Gray, Tabolton  
 Mr George Hay, Kirkburnhead  
 Mr and Miss Hall, New Cumnock  
 Mr John Hazel, Bridge Street  
 Miss Annie Hendry, Main Street  
 Miss Herbertson, New Cumnock  
 Mr William Hodge, Main Street  
 Miss Jenny Hogg, Glasgow Road  
 Agnes and Mary Hutchison, St. Bride's  
 Mr James Hutchison, Glasgow  
 Mr and Mrs Robert Jack, Elmdene  
 Mr Thomas Jackson, Jun., Bank House  
 Mr John Kennedy, sen., Main Street  
 Mr John Kennedy, jun., Main Street  
 Miss Kilpatrick, Lugar  
 Mr G. M. Lawson, Lightshaw

Mr and Mrs John McCulloch, Irondale  
 Mr William McGillivray, Auldhouseburn  
 Nellie & Jessie McGillivray,  
 Auldhouseburn  
 Miss McGrady, Cumnock  
 Mr and Mrs Hugh McLean, Main Street  
 Miss Jeannie Miller, Catcheyburn  
 Miss Jessie Miller, Catrine  
 Mr George Moffat, Kames  
 Mr James Muir, Station Road  
 Mr David Murdoch, Midhouse Terrace  
 Mr James Murdoch, Midhouse Terrace  
 Mr Robert Murdoch, Smallburn  
 Miss C. Murray, Crossflatt  
 Miss N. Neilson, Stirling  
 Mr R. Neilson, Ecclefechan  
 Mr William Nicol, Airdsmill  
 Mr William Oswald, Irondale  
 Mr W. S. Pirrie, Kennethmont  
 Mr and Miss Provan, Glespin  
 Mr David and Bessie Rennie, Smallburn  
 Thomas and Alex Semple, Tardoes  
 Mr Cornelius Seymour, Midhouse Terrace  
 Mr and Mrs W. Shaw Smith, Bona Vista  
 Mr John Smith, Masons Arms  
 Mr John Strathearn, Smallburn  
 Miss M. Strickland, Midhouse Terrace  
 Miss Sunderland, Wellwood Street  
 Mr Templeton, Dumfries  
 Mr J. S. Thomson, Cambuslang  
 Mr William Thomson, Glasgow Road  
 Miss Thomson, Douglas  
 Mr George Vallance, Smallburn  
 Mr Geo. Vallance, Smallburn  
 Mr William. Vallance, Station Road  
 Miss N. Vallance, Smallburn  
 Miss Lizzie Vallance, Auldgirth  
 William and Beatrice Weir, Edinburgh  
 Mr & Mrs James Winning, Midhouse Terr  
 Miss Wyllie, Kennethmont  
 Mr John Young, Springhill  
 Mr Robert Young, Parsonstown House.

## DEMISE OF GLENBUCK IRONWORKS

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I would like to give some information here on the village of Glenbuck, and in particular, the ironworks there, which was one of the earliest in Scotland. Much has been written over the years regarding Muirkirk Ironworks, of which most will be well aware of. However, not a lot was chronicled about Glenbuck Ironworks. I would like to reproduce some notes I put together some years ago, which will help to fill a void in the local history of the district:—

The value of legal records to the economical historian is now widely recognised. Rarely does a company or manufacturing enterprise survive long without leaving some trace in the courts. So far as the history of Glenbuck Ironworks is concerned, the permanence of legal records is especially fortunate, since the firm's business records have long gone, and the only evidence otherwise is purely physical—it was still possible to see the remains of the oldest surviving furnace in Ayrshire at least until the complete destruction of Glenbuck village by the opencast operations in the early 2000's.

Into the Parish of Muirkirk several new interests penetrated at the end of the 1780's. Foremost among these were the ironmasters who founded the Muirkirk Iron Company and the Earl of Dundonald, founder of the British Tar Company, whose first agent in Ayr was John Loudoun McAdam. Prospecting in the east of the parish at Glenbuck was well advanced in 1790, and an incoming landowner, Admiral Keith Stewart of Glasserton, brother of the Earl of Galloway, was active in taking leases and buying property. On the eve of the war with France, Stewart was thinking of forming a company with a capital of £10,000 (made up of twenty £500 shares) to make iron at Glenbuck. But this plan came to nothing because Stewart was recalled to active service and would not commit his capital in his absence. After Stewart's departure, John Rumney of Workington took up a mining concession on his lands in 1794. The following year, on June 6, 1795, James White of Newmains leased to him and his partners the lands and mineral rights of East Glenbuck, granting liberty to erect furnaces, forges, a smithy and all other buildings necessary to carry on the business of smelting pig-iron, making malleable iron, castings and other items. This tack was for 99 years from Whitsunday, 1796, at a fixed rent of £90, and £160 per annum for every blast furnace. With Stewart's death in 1795, Rumney and his friends were left with no serious opposition. One feature of the history of the Scottish iron industry, particularly illustrated this example, which had excited less interest than it ought, is the persistent interest of Englishmen from the North-west in Scottish ventures. The last half of the eighteenth century saw the rapid development of industries related to metal-workings in this part of England.

Particularly significant was the expansion of the Cumberland coalfield by local landowners such as the Lowthers, the Curvens and the Stenhouses. Technically, that coalfield was far more advanced than most, not merely in the use of metal tools but also in the application of rails for underground as well as surface haulage. In peak periods of demand the local furnaces were unable to supply all requirements; their level of output was relatively small and costs per unit simulated the building of larger furnaces such as Glenbuck.

Unfortunately, no exact date can be given for the foundation of Glenbuck Ironworks, but it seems most likely that furnace building began in the summer of 1796, when White's tack began to operate. This would explain why the Excise returns of 1796 did not include Glenbuck. Certainly, by 1799 it had more than a formal existence, for in that year the Glenbuck Iron Company was suing John Thomson, manager of its mines; this legal action was still in progress in 1805. The well known dangers of absentee owners relying upon managers usually provoked a crop of such cases. In 1895 Rumney seems to have lost control of the Company, although he was still in charge in March. His financial difficulties were apparently very serious; threatened with the sequestration of their assets, he and his partners gave way to a more substantial partnership, whose personnel were also mainly Cumbrians. Joseph Dixon was a merchant in Whitehaven; John Hodgson, a rope maker in Workington; Peter Hodgson, brother of John, solicitor and agent for the mining magnate, Sir James Lowther; Maitland Falcon, a retired banker; Joseph Christian, a linen draper in London but of a well-known Cumbrian family; Robert Falcon, a son of Maitland and an attorney in London. Mrs Nelly Ewart of Ulverston was also a partner, but of her nothing further is known. Of this partnership four individuals, Maitland Falcon, Joseph Dixon and the two Hodgsons were also partners in Bowes, Hodgson and Company, the Workington Bank founded by Richard Bowes of Lowca; for some years Maitland Falcon had been this bank's managing partner. Undoubtedly, Peter Hodgson had been moving the spirit in the formation of the new Glenbuck Company, and one suspects that he may well have been one of John Rumney's partners since in a letter to William Douglas, manager from 1805, he mentioned "that to come forward with the ready" and "astonished the natives." Thus, new partners and the accession of new funds saved the Glenbuck Iron Company and its single furnace from an early demise.

To mark the new era, a further lease was taken in 1895 from Archibald Douglas of Douglas Water of the land and mineral rights of Lightshaw for 16 years at £100 per annum. But despite the backing of the Workington Bank, the credit of the Glenbuck Iron Company was never very good with the already established Muirkirk Iron Company; the Muirkirk letterbox shows regular correspondence with William Douglas, asking for the prompt payment of relatively small sums. The two firms did, however, co-operate in labour relations, each agreeing not to employ the other's labour. The circulating capital so necessary to a firm in heavy goods production was provided increasingly by the Workington Bank. Thus, Glenbuck Iron Company became as strong or as weak as its partners who were associated with the bank. By 28th November, 1810, the book indebtedness of the Glenbuck Iron Company to the Workington Bank stood at £23,380 18s 6d; on that date was declared insolvent, and the balances due to it by the affected partners in Glenbuck were written off, as they settled their accounts with the bank. Nonetheless, Joseph Dixon, the Hodgsons and Maitland Falcon still had a deficiency of £4,871 10s, and this, in bills, due to Bowes, Hodgson and Company, was debited to Glenbuck Iron Company. In April, 1813 this paper debt had only slightly been reduced to £4,359 9s 7d.

For three years the Glenbuck furnace and casting house had been working on relatively large contracts for cast-iron goods. When Aiton visited Glenbuck in 1810, 70,000 cast-iron rails were being made for the Kilmarnock-Troon horse railway, an order worth about £20,000. In 1811 and 1812 cast-iron water pipes were being made for the Belfast and Dublin Water Committees. In fact, the Dublin contract was dishonoured by the customers in the depression of 1813. At the end

of 1812, the creditors of the Glenbuck Iron Company were already thinking of petitioning the Court of Session for an act of sequestration. Peter Hodgson was doing his best to prevent this from happening; by 5th April, 1813, however, he was running out of devices. Ultimately he had “no resource but the broken credit of the Glenbuck Company to apply to.” He tried to inspire local confidence as long as possible by moral-boosting letters to William Douglas in which he declared that creditors would be foolish if they pressed for sequestration; “They all knew that this (i.e. Glenbuck) is only a speculation of the partners, everyone of whom has other and more principal concerns of their own to attend to.” On 26th April, 1813, the assets of the Glenbuck Iron Company were finally sequestered, but then followed a period of confusion, since the officers of interim factor and trustee for the creditors were disputed at law.

Disgruntled creditors, prominent among whom was John Colville of Bardarroch, suspected that Glenbuck’s assets and credit were being used by the Hodgsons to salvage what they could from the wreck of the Workington Bank. Colville declared that they had used Glenbuck’s “funds and credit and made them subservient to their Workington concern.” To pay its debts they had drawn bills on the Glenbuck Iron Company; William Douglas had accepted these bills but did not put them through the Glenbuck Company’s books, because he did not judge them to be the proper bills of that company. At earlier meetings held in Ayr in December, 1812, John Hodgson and William Douglas produced a state of Account in which Glenbuck Iron Company was actually owed £8 11s 1d by the Workington Bank; on this occasion the creditors were told that when everything outstanding had been paid, there would be a balance of £2,998 15s 4d to share among the partners. For the moment, Hodgson and Douglas asked the creditors to appoint four commissioners to examine the books, and they agreed. Because of the fear that some creditors would be preferred before others, eventually the creditors proceeded with sequestration on the petition of Thomas White, vintner and innkeeper at Muirkirk, and William Douglas, the manager; the former was owed £200 and the latter £294. The fact that William Douglas was implicated in the attempt to secure the end of the Glenbuck Company must have provided a severe shock for Peter Hodgson; on 15th December, 1812, he had signed bills drawing on Glenbuck for £2,580 payable at four months at the Glasgow Ship Bank for John Key, another of the partners in the Workington Bank, but not a partner in Glenbuck. When these bills became due on 15th April, 1813, sequestration was imminent, but Hodgson was still writing to William Douglas in some ignorance of the mechanics of it: “I have received yours of 12th and I am glad to find that you had no hand in the nefarious and basically, inefficient and injurious plan of a sequestration. If it goes the creditors in Scotland will be fooled to all intents and purposes.” He went on to indicate that the Workington Bank’s trustee would put on a claim for the debt owed by Glenbuck Iron Company in 1810, i.e. for £23,380 18s 6d. Although this may well have been intended as a threat to restrain the Ayrshire creditors, it had little effect. Certainly, Hodgson was probably telling the truth when he said “The plan was as if the Glenbuck works were to be dismantled to let that be done when Bowers and Company’s affairs were settled.”

When the Court of Session granted the petition of Douglas and White for sequestration, Hodgson was still prepared to resort to any trick which his legal training found for him. Under protest from some creditors the interim trustee was

William Douglas, and he was given authority by the Court to take possession of the Company's effects, to keep the furnace in blast and to make deliveries of goods to customers on contract. When the creditors met again, Thomas White was elected trustee for them, but Hodgson and his partners successfully reversed this in Court by claiming that White was illiterate. Then, on the basis of the large debt owing to the Workington Bank, which far outweighed that of all the other creditors combined, his representative secured the election of Robert Goldie. His election was then reversed, as the result of an action brought by John Colville. Finally, on 15th July, 1813, John Sloan, an Ayr Merchant, became the creditors' trustee. One suspects that he little realised that his task would take until 1821 to complete, when the Court of Session discharged him. By 27th October, 1814, he had realised enough of the Glenbuck Iron Company's assets to pay a dividend of 2/6d in the £1, on a total allowed deficit of £7,986 10s 8½d owed in relatively small sums to local mineral owners, provision merchants, farmers, craftsmen, and workpeople. On 16th July, 1819, he paid a further 5/4d in the £1, a final dividend to 63 preferred creditors and about 120 unpreferred. Among them was Thomas Clyde, schoolmaster of Glenbuck, and John McFarlane who appeared for the school's governors. Work people were dispersed without receiving the full value of the tickets which they received in lieu of wages. The village store owned by John Callan, also suffered loss, as did the St. Andrew's Lodge which had been formed by the male inhabitants. Glenbuck Ironworks ceased to operate in 1813, after less than 20 years.

The village went into decline for a generation. Efforts in 1845 to revive the iron works failed. But in the 1840's and 1850's, first John Wilson of Dundyvan and then the Bairds of Gartsherrie came to Muirkirk Parish further to exploit the mineral resources. Glenbuck became a busy and — to followers of the Glenbuck Cherrypickers football team — a famous village before its eventual demise in the earlier twentieth century.



GRASSHILL ROW, GLENBUCK

## LIST OF CREDITORS OF THE GLENBUCK IRON COMPANY

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Coldstream & Company, Leith  
 John Ramsay, Ayr  
 I. & A. Monach, Glasgow  
 Robert Paterson, Glenbuck  
 Alex. Wright, Tolcross  
 W. Metcalfe, Stanhope  
 John Gilchrist, Glenbuck  
 James Stone, Glenbuck  
 Alex. Wright, Glenbuck  
 William Howatson, Muirkirk  
 Thomas Shearer, Coathouse  
 David Ralston, Tollcross  
 James Paterson, Carmichael  
 Dan MacDonald, Glenbuck  
 Wm. Draffen & Co, Glasgow  
 Thomas Whyte, Muirkirk  
 James Stark, Wishard  
 John Patrick, Cumnock  
 Thomas Haddow Glespin  
 John Torrance, Galston  
 James Johnstone, Affleck  
 David Bell, Hurlford  
 James Sinclair, Bankend  
 John Dick, Boghead  
 Henry Salkeld, Workingtom  
 Crane, Platt & Co., Liverpool  
 Grandy, Son & Wood, Bary  
 Thomas Thorburn, Dumfries  
 Crichton Purvis, Strathaven  
 Janet Wilson, Douglas  
 George Johnstone, Cumnock  
 David Turner, Ayr  
 George Wilson, Douglas  
 John Callan, Glenbuck  
 John Templeton, Blinburn  
 Thomas Clyde, Glenbuck  
 Andrew Colgan, Glenbuck  
 Glenbuck School  
 Glenbuck St. Andrew's Lodge  
 William Farquhar, Schaw  
 Alex. Murdoch, Ayr  
 Robert Strachan, Newton  
 Robert Wall Glasgow  
 W. McLean & Co., Paisley

Robert Paterson, Glasgow  
 William Jack, Douglas  
 Janet Hamilton, Glenbuck  
 James Stoddart, Douglas  
 Broome, Crosbie & Co, Sanquhar  
 Thomas Bison, Glenbuck  
 Dean Shackleton, Glenbuck  
 Alex. Connal, Cumnock  
 John Jamieson, Muirkirk  
 William Haddow, Douglas  
 James Meikle, Muirkirk  
 James, Lumsden, Glasgow  
 James Crosbie, Dubbs  
 James Cairns, Glasgow  
 Robert Balloch, Troon  
 James Shepherd, Paisley  
 John Watson & Son, Glasgow  
 James McKersie, Glenbuck  
 John Cannan, Glasgow  
 Andrew Blair, Galston  
 James Taylor, Cumnock  
 Alex. McNichol, Cumnock  
 Michael Linning, Edinburgh  
 Alex. Hammond, Whitehaven  
 Robert Dickson, Dumfries  
 Alex. Gibson, Stonbriggs  
 W. Muir, Muirkirk  
 W. Greenshields, Scrogton  
 W. Clark, Cumnock  
 John Dixon, London  
 Mathew Young, Brockloch  
 Andrew Pagan, Hallglenmuir  
 John Anderson, Lochside  
 James Cook, sen., Sorn  
 Robert McLachlin, Glenbuck  
 William Ronald, Muirkirk  
 John Lamb, Muirkirk  
 George Menzies, Muirkirk  
 H. Pearson, Cumnock  
 Tennant, Knox & Co., Glasgow  
 Sorley & McCallum, Glasgow  
 John McDougall, Glasgow  
 I. & I. Dawson, Glasgow  
 Aaron Newhart, Whitehaven

Key, Carr & Co., Harrington  
 John Colville, Bardarroch  
 Archibald Officer, Muirkirk  
 Wm. Muir, Brunton  
 A. & P. Hamilton, Glasgow  
 Maurice Carmichael, esq.  
 W. E. Lockhart, esq.  
 William Thomson, Birkley  
 John Bowman, Daldsting  
 James Muir, Muirkirk  
 Lord Douglas  
 James Hamilton, Douglas  
 F. Symington, Markshead  
 Henry Thomson, Whitehaven  
 James Cook, Monkasswood  
 William Rodger, Glasgow  
 James Dodgin, Sorn  
 John McKinlay & Co.  
 George Brown, Beathed  
 John Wilson, Muirkirk  
 James Brown, Glenbuck  
 Adam Waterson, Glenbuck  
 Johnh Mochie, Muirkirk  
 Thomas Callan, Muirkirk  
 John Howatt, Glenbuck  
 William Bryden, Glenbuck  
 Andrew McCrae, Glenbuck  
 William Sheddan, Glenbuck  
 James Weir, Glenbuck  
 William Gemmell, Glenbuck  
 Adam Blair, Glenbuck  
 Thomas Blair, Glenbuck  
 William Robertson, Glenbuck  
 D. & W. Anderson, Muirkirk  
 Robert Brown, Newmains  
 John Brown, Newmains  
 John Graham, Newmains  
 Robert Murray, Dumfries  
 William Ritchie, Newhall  
 D. & I. Ritchie, Glenbuck  
 Andrew Kay, Knockshiffnock  
 Gavin Dalziel, Glenbuck  
 John Mackie, Bonton  
 James McKenzie

William Clark, Cumnock  
 John Moor, Sanquhar  
 James Hay, Edinburgh  
 Henry Coswaite, Whitehaven  
 Dickson & Co., Edinburgh  
 James Denholm, esq.  
 James Ranking, Muirkirk  
 Adam McCaul, Muirkirk  
 Henry Lamb, Lanark  
 John Dick, Boghead  
 John Simpson, Cumnock  
 Robert Morton, Walton  
 Hugh Morton, Mauchline  
 James Currie, Douglas  
 James Cockburn, Douglas  
 P. & C. Wood, Leith  
 Charles Magee, Whitehaven  
 Robert Morton, Walton  
 James Wallace, Braehead  
 Forrester, Willis & Co., Glasgow  
 James Whiteford, Douglas  
 Peter Clemison, Driversholm  
 John Wilson, Ayr  
 John Gibb, Glenbuck  
 John Young, Glenbuck  
 John Dalziel, Glenbuck  
 John McMichael, Glenbuck  
 Robert Davidson, Glenbuck  
 Alex. McFarlane, Glenbuck  
 John Vass, Glenbuck  
 James Easton, jr., Glenbuck

Andrew King, Glenbuck  
 Charles Munro, Glenbuck  
 Richard Blair, Glenbuck  
 Anthony Thomson, Glenbuck  
 James Smith, Glenbuck  
 James Taylor, Muirkirk  
 John McFarlane, Newmains  
 John Currie, Newmains  
 Hugh Sloan  
 Thomas Russell, Hackshead  
 Thomas Ritchie, Newhall  
 James Taylor, Douglas  
 Matt. McFarlane, Glenbuck  
 Thomas Lindsay, Glenbuck  
 William Watson, Glenbuck  
 James Smith. Lees  
 James Lees, West Glenbuck  
 John Inglis, Holm  
 Charles Howatson, Cronberry  
 James Scott, Langholm  
 Wm. McMaster, Kilmarnock  
 George Sim, Glasgow  
 John Dewar, Glasgow  
 Hugh Halbert, Strathaven  
 W. Greenshields, Westerhouse  
 William Smellie, Hamilton,  
 Wm. Marshall, Avondale  
 George, Binnie, Glasgow  
 David Malcolm, Glenbuck  
 James Walker, Strathaven  
 John Paterson, Glenbuck

Jas. Rankine & Son, Carlisle  
 John Torrance, Cumnock  
 P. & I. Thomson, Glenbuck  
 Samuel Harper, Glenbuck  
 Alex. Muir, Glenbuck  
 J. Arbuckle & Co., Glasgow  
 William Thomson, Birkley  
 James Ewing, Glasgow  
 John Graham, Glenbuck  
 Andrew Duncan, Glasgow  
 David Gibson, Glenbuck  
 Thomas Wilkison, Glespin  
 John Crawford, Mauchline  
 A. Tomlinson, Douglas  
 John Calder, Kilbride  
 John Reid, New Cumnock  
 William Reid & Co., Glasgow  
 Mary Porter, Glasgow  
 Robert Kirkwood, Auchenbog  
 John Hodgson & Son, Keswick  
 D. Richardson, Tollcross  
 John Morrison, Berwick  
 R. Kennedy,  
 David Thomson, Glenbuck  
 James Donaldson, Edinburgh  
 Thomas Finlayson, Glenbuck  
 Andrew Russell, Glenbuck  
 Alex. Mitchell, Cumnock  
 William Jamieson, Kilbride  
 Wilson & Paul, Ayr



REMAINS OF GLENBUCK IRONWORKS (BEHIND ROSEBANK COTTAGE (JIM HYNDS' HOUSE))

## MORE ABOUT LAPRAIK

Further to my remarks on page 57, it seems that everywhere in my research work crops up the name of C. P. Bell. Charles P. Bell was a much revered schoolteacher who taught at the Donald School in Main Street. Originally from Ecclefechan, Charlie Bell, as he was more familiarly known became a highly-respected personality in our village, and indeed, his knowledge of things that happened in the past in Muirkirk made him a worthwhile local historian. He was a great Burns enthusiast, and was an energetic member of the local Muirkirk Lapraik Burns Club, and I thought it was appropriate to reprint this article from the "Advertiser" files of 1923:—

### LAPRAIK BURNS CLUB LECTURE

Mr Peter Mackie, president of the Club, occupied the Chair at a meeting in the Masonic Hall, and, in introducing the subject and Mr Bell at the same time, said the Lapraik Burns Club aimed at keeping the memory of Burns green, and to encourage the study of his works; and that he felt that Burns's poems were not appreciated to the extent they should be by the generations since Burns's time.

Mr Bell began his work by giving a history of the Lapraik Burns Club, stating that it was formed thirty years ago — in 1893 to be exact. The first office-bearers were:— President - Mr John McDonald; Vice-President - Mr Alex McDonald; Treasurer - Mr James Young; Secretary - Mr Andrew Pringle. There were eighteen others present at the formation of the Club. Of that company only Mr Pringle now remained in close connection with the Club, the others having gone the way of all flesh. A formal parade had taken place to Dalfram at that time. Twenty-one years of successful work followed, and the anniversary of Burns's birth was generally celebrated. Then came the war, and the grim struggle, when the minds of men were turned to preserve their very existence, and during this time the meetings were well held in obedience. An attempt was now being made to awaken the Club, and also to resuscitate the Literary Society, and it was hoped that this would be an accomplished fact by next winter. In 1914 the monument to Lapraik was erected at old Dalfram, and it was good to show that this effort had been appreciated. The monument had been erected chiefly through the energy and enterprise of Mr Arch. Fairbairn (gamekeeper at Wellwood Estate), who was President at that time. After Mr Fairbairn vacated the chair, it fell to the speaker to take it up.

During his own term of office the Club was not so successful as he could have wished, principally because the climax had arrived, and then the War came on. Mr Bell said he had written an account of the Lapraik family, and this had appeared in the "*Muirkirk Advertiser*" and also in the "*Burns Chronicle*," and it had been well read, as letters had been written to the Club from all over the world. The speaker had met a great grand-son of Lapraik's while on a visit to Muirkirk. This gentleman, whose name was also Lapraik, gave the use of a volume of John Lapraik's poems to the Club to take a copy of, and the speaker had done this — a most laborious task, but latterly Mr Lapraik presented the original book itself to the Club. This was indeed quite an asset, as these volumes are now very difficult to procure. The late Mr Howatson of Glenbuck had also presented to the Club a book which contained the Poet Lapraik's handwriting—"John Lapraik, Netherwood; his book, etc." Now the Club had been presented with several articles that belonged to Lapraik, from Miss McMinn, who is a direct descendant. Burns first heard of Lapraik at "a rockin'" at Mossgiel, a rockin' being a friendly visit in which neighbours met during the moonlight of winter or spring, and spent the evenings alternately in each other's houses. (The term is supposed to have had its name through women bringing their rocks or distaffs with them to work upon, to a certain extent like modern work parties.)

The distaff, again, was the stick which held the bunch of flax, tow, or wool in spinning). At this rockin' Lapraik's song, "*When I upon thy bosom lean,*" was sung:—

When I upon thy bosom lean,  
Enraptur'd I do call thee mine,  
I glory in these sacred toes,  
That made us ane wha ance were twain.

A mutual flame inspires us baith,  
The tender look, the melting kiss;  
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,  
Some sweet sensation new will arise.

Have I a wish, 'tis all for thee,  
I know thy wish is me to please;  
Our moments pass so smooth away  
That numbers on us look and gaze.

Well pleased to see our happy days,  
They bid us live and still love on;  
And if some cares should chance to rise,  
Thy bosom still shall be my home.

I'll lull me there and take my rest;  
And if that aught disturbs my fair,  
I'll bid her laugh her cares all out,  
And beg her not to drop a tear.

Have I a joy, 'tis all her own,  
Her Heart and mine are all the same;  
They're like the woodbine round the tree  
That's twined till death shall us disjoin.

The following verses appear in Burns First Epistle to Lapraik—

There was ae sang among the rest,  
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,  
That some kind husband had address  
To some sweet wife;  
It thrilled the heart-strings through the breast,  
A' tae the life.

I've scarce heard aught describe sae weel  
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel.  
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,  
or Beattie's wark?"  
They tauld me 'twas an odd, kind chiel  
About Muirkirk."

Burns thus addressed Lapraik in his third Epistle—

"But if the beast and branks be spare'd  
Till kye be gaun without the herd,  
An' a' the vittell in the yard  
An' theekit right.  
I mean your ingle-end to guard  
Ae winter nicht."

The Epistle was written in September, 1785, and, as good as his word, Burns visited Lapraik at Muirsmill, in December of the same year. On his visit he encouraged Lapraik to have his poems published by the same printer in Kilmarnock as had published Burns's, and this Lapraik did. John Lapraik was born in 1727, thus Burns was 32 years his junior. Lapraik was Laird of Upper and Lower Wellwoods, and tacksman of Muirsmill, which carried with it the privilege of threshing all corn in the district. In 1773, owing to the failure of the Ayr Bank, Lapraik lost all his money. He was confined at that time by his creditors, and to pass the time had taken to writing poetry. He never got clear financially as long as he lived, and was always

paying up the money. Mr Bell referred to the episodes in Lapraik's life in succession, stating that he was twice married, and had five children by his first wife, and ten by the second, and had evidently flourished in that way, at least. His second wife, was by name Janet Anderson, considerably younger than himself, and, although the speaker was not certain, he believed she was of the same tree as Mr James Anderson now of Lower Wellwood. In Lapraik's time Muirkirk was a comparatively poor place — only Garronhill, Kirkgreen, and perhaps a few other houses. In 1785 Lord Dundonald commenced Tar Works here, and Lapraik complimented him on his pluck and enterprise, as it would benefit the community, and also wrote and appreciative poem to Dundonald—

Ill Fortune, with redoubled blow,  
Had long laid AYR-SHIRE very low!  
Her Manufactures!, and her Trade,  
Seem'd ruin'd quite, without remead;  
One blink of hope did scarce remain,  
That e'er she flourish would again.  
That woeful Bank, that plague of plagues  
Had fairly kick'd her off her legs;  
It's baneful infl'ence did extend  
Through ev'ry comer of the land:  
Her sun, that shone erewhile so gay,  
Could scarce shoot forth one feeble ray!  
As Phoebus, with his glorious light,  
Dispels the gloomy shades of night,  
The world that late in darkness lay,  
Transported, hails the cheerful day;

So AYR-SHIRE lifts her drooping head,  
Erewhile in gloomy darkness laid,  
And casting round her wond'ring eyes,  
Beholds DUNDONALD great arise;  
And stretching forth his gen'rous hand,  
To save from death a ruin'd land!  
But chief MUIRKIRK, a poor, starved place,  
With hunger painted in it's face,  
With joy may bless the happy day,  
That e'er your LORDSHIP came this way.  
Her sons, before that you came here,  
Could scarce afford to drink small beer,  
And oft wree sain to hold with water,  
Make now the mutchkin stoup to clatter:  
They all before had scarce two groats,  
When now their pocket's lin'd with notes.

In the year 1786 Lapraik left Muirsmill, and went to Lower Wellwood, and from there he migrated to Muirkirk. His abode here was where the Roman Catholic School now stands (presently St. Thomas Hall). He had also a grocer's shop, and had the first Post Office in Muirkirk, followed in that way by the McCalls and then the Blackwood's. Lapraik died in 1807, and his monument is prominent in the Churchyard, while his widow died in 1826. James (a son) was farmer in Darnhunch, and Mary (a daughter) was married to Mr McMinn of Wellwood—great grandfather of the lady who presented the articles of furniture to the Lapraik Burns Club lately. Mr Bell next referred to the Buchanites and their wanderings, also their connection with Burns.



JAMES LAPRAIK (1836—1883)

Dealing with Tibbie Pagan, Mr Bell said she was born in 1741, and died in 1821. Very little was known of her, and that little was in a poem by herself

I was born near four miles from Nith-head,  
 Where fourteen years I got my bread;  
 My learning it can soon be told,  
 Ten weeks when I was seven years old.  
 With a good old religious wife,  
 Who liv'd a quiet and sober life;  
 Indeed she took of me more pains  
 Than some does now of forty bairns.  
 With my attention, and her skill,  
 I read the Bible no that ill;  
 And when I grew a wee thought mair,  
 I read when I had time to spare.  
 But a' the whole tract of my time,  
 I found myself inclin'd to rhyme;

When I see merry company,  
 I sing a song with mirth and glee,  
 And sometimes I the whisky pree,  
 But 'deed it's best to let it be.  
 A' my faults I will not tell,  
 I scarcely ken them a' mysel;  
 I've come through various scenes of life,  
 Yet never was a married wife.

That was all that was known except from tradition, but it was a fact that she resided for a time in a little cottage near Muirsmill till 1790, so that Tibbie was Lapraik's neighbour. Burns visited Lapraik in 1785, and, as Tibbie was not of a bashful nature, there was every likelihood that she would meet Burns. It was supposed that Burns dressed up Tibbie's "Ca' the Yowes tae the Knowes;" at least it was better than her other poems. At any rate, Tibbie claimed it, and Burns claimed it; probably Burns only improved it. Coming to what Tibbie did for a livelihood, Mr Bell said she knitted, and kept a public house. Then, as now, many people did not care about doing their drinking too openly, so they would make it convenient to call in on Tibbie and see the scenery at the same time, just as excursionists nowadays when having a sail go downstairs to see the engines. (A letter by Rabbie, now in the possession of Mrs Vallance, was passed round the audience at this stage). Tibbie died in 1821, at the age of 81, and was buried in the Parish Churchyard, the body being brought in a cart from her house on the side of Garpel Water. Mr Bell concluded his remarks by stating that he could have said much more on the subject, but that time was limited, and he might take up the subject again on a future occasion if such was desired (Applause).

The Chairman said the Burns Club were in possession of not only the book given by the late Mr Howatson, Lapraik's poems gifted by his great grandson, but also the pieces by Miss McMinn, comprising the Poet's family bible, his writing desk, arm and other chairs, parritch spurtle, etc. The bible was open to inspection on the spot by those

present, and anyone wishing to view the other articles could do so on application to Mr James Caldwell, they having been deposited in the Parish Council Office meantime. They had been removed from Fairlie by the Wellwood motor lorry, this through the kindness of Major Broun Lindsay. The Chairman then called on a vote of thanks to Mr Bell, and this was heartily given.

The Chairman also accorded a vote of thanks, on the call of Rev. James Greenshields, who complimented Mr Bell on his article on Lapraik, stating that the very fact of it appearing in the "Burns Chronicle," was a compliment in itself, and proved that it was a splendid article, while the Editor (Mr McNaughton) was perhaps the greatest living authority on Burns.

Quite a lot of the audience stayed behind and examined the Bible, etc.

## BILLIARDS

By the time I left school the game of billiards in Muirkirk was in decline, but at one time it was a very popular sport locally. To emphasise this, I take the opportunity to reprint the draw for a billiard competition in the Baird Institute in the early 1920's. The competition was one of 200 up (loser paying for the table). Here is the first-round draw with the handicaps:—

Wm. Samson, 65	v. M. Murray, 85	R. Ritchie, 90	v. W. Duke, 40
G. Abbott, 75	v. R. Kay, 75	D. Shaw, 95	v. W. Walker, 15
Bill Murray, 70	v. C. Gillespie, 90	J. Hamilton, 70	v. R. McKie, 50
John Symington, 15	v. W. Vallance, 65	P. Monaghan, 70,	v. Archie McDonald, 75
T. McCulloch, 80	v. W. Hamilton, jun., 75	H. McDonald, 95	v. W. Thomson, 95
W. Beck, 55	v. James Abbott, 75	James Barrie, 50	v. G. McMillan, 80
J. Clement, 20	v. J. Girdwood, 60	A. Thomson, 85	v. W. Dempster, 70
J. Wilson, 30	v. James Fleming, 20	Alex Dempster, 100	v. W. Hodge, Scr.
J. Park, 15	v. C. Sanderson, 80	Hugh Strathearn, 45	v. W. Taylor, 60
J. Mansfield, 85	v. James Samson, 30	James Murray, 45	v. A. Lowe, 45
George McCall, 70	v. William Cook, 90	B. McDade, 35	v. Jack Abbott, 75
G. Wallace, 95	v. James Weir, 70	D. Love, 40	v. D. Blyth, 70
J. Mansfield, sen, 45	v. A. Johnstone, 70	Campbell Taylor, 79	v. T. Sanderson, 55
T. Miller, 45	v. T. P. Hutchison, 35	James B. Ross, 60	v. T. Wilson, 100
D. Taylor, 75	v. R. Thomson, 30	D. Hamilton, 55	v. James Reid, Scr.
T. Anderson, 35	v. A. Smith, 65	Alex. McDonald, 45	v. James McIntyre, 75
F. Hastings, 55	v. W. Holden, 50	A. Mitchell, 45	v. Wm. Hamilton, 15
D. McSkimming, Scr.	v. W. R. Merry, 80	Jas. McCall, jr., 100	v. A. Fleming, 50R.
John Ross, 70	v. A. Beck, 35	Samson, 110	v. Dick Symington, 50
A. Little, 65	v. Wm. Wilson, sen., 85	A. Hodge, Scr.	v. James Masterton, 100
John Thomson, 95	v. James McKie, 65	George Thomson, 35	v. Charles Taylor, 60
Hugh Dempster, 65	v. Sam Gibney, 70	B. Da Prato, 85	v. R. R. Thomson, 55
D. Murray, 55	v. J. D. Brown, 85		

I well remember as a boy visiting the Baird Institute, but my recollections were that it was a very dark, dreary, and cold place. I can still see in my memory all the billiard cues hanging up in their cases on the side of the wall. Downstairs was where the carpet bowling tournaments were held, and in earlier days these were very popular. The caretaker then was Duncan McSkimming. Another venue for billiards was at the Ironworks Institute. This Institute is still standing, but is in private hands, while the Baird Institute is no longer there, it being demolished in 1957. It was situated next to the Victory Park gates.

## FOOTBALL HONOUR

Another interesting piece of information which came to light during my research work was that in 1923 a native of Muirkirk, who had been making a name for himself in the world of football, had the honour of captaining the Scotland team who faced the cream of England in Glasgow in that year. He was Willie Cringan, who played for Glasgow Celtic. Willie first saw the light of day in Muirkirk, although he was generally referred to as a Ponfeigh man.

## THE DOCTORS

That same year there appeared in the "*Muirkirk Advertiser*" the following report, which might be of interest to the present generation of readers:—

We are always pleased to have cuttings and notes from our readers, and one has favoured us with a copy of an inscription in the Churchyard at Auchinleck, which in these days when the question of remuneration of doctors bills largely in the public eye, is not uninteresting, as well as being from our own district:—

Here lies the dust of A. Baird Greig,  
 Wha was a skilly doctor;  
 His labour he did freely gie,  
 It wisna' gowd he wrought for.  
 A fee he seldom ever sought—  
 And ne'er frae a puir body,  
 Was weel content if he gat food,  
 And whiles a gless o' toddy;  
 As lang's he dwelt amang us here  
 Baith rich and puir did bless him,  
 And noo that he'd been ta'en awa',  
 A weel-a-wat we'll miss him.

Doctor Greig died 7th January, 1848. It has to be remembered that in these days the cost of living was very low, and luxuries few. Workers nowadays get more per day than they did per week at that time, and had the worthy doctor lived in the present age he would not have been so easily paid either, or he'd have had to do all his trudging on foot and look forward to the generosity of the Parish Council for outdoor relief at the end. All the same, it is a word picture of the "good" old days.

## SERIOUS FLOODING

I stumbled across a report in a file of the same year, the contents of which was often told by older people when I was a young boy. The paragraph was as follows: — "Serious Flooding — Sheep Lost — Last Saturday morning the River Ayr overflowed its banks to an extent probably unprecedented. 100 lambs belonging to Miss Turner, Kilchamaig, Whitehouse, Argyllshire, were being wintered at Mid Wellwood, and these were caught by the flood. In the early morning heroic efforts were made to save the flock, and in this Mr Harvey and many willing workers were only partly successful. Wading in the water up to the armpits, with ropes round the men's waists for safety, a number of the sheep were rescued, but several of them died later. Altogether 62 of the sheep were lost. The carcasses were skinned and hung up, and a county inspector visited the scene on Sunday, but decided that the meat was unfit for human food, and it was conveyed to Omos, Clelland, for preparation as manure on Monday."

## WAR MEMORIES

In the Second World War the villagers put on a brave face, determined to keep life as normal as possible, and the attendance at the Old Folks Re-Union in 1939 bore this out:—

### Main Street

Mr J. Brown  
Mr J. Goldie  
Mrs T. Morrison  
Mr H. Murray  
Mr and Mrs Kay Girvan  
Mrs William Ross  
Mr Andrew Rae  
Mr David Samson  
Mr J. McCall  
Mrs R. Samson  
Mr J. Thomson  
Mrs Devlin  
Mrs D. Hamilton  
Mrs Boyes  
Mrs J. Millar  
Mrs R. Ward  
Mr and Mrs J. Adamson  
Mrs Blyth  
Mr and Mrs Ferguson  
Mr Harry Caldwell  
Mr J. Mitchell  
Mr D. Murray  
Mr R. Blyth  
Mrs G. Wallace  
Mr and Mrs Wm. Caldwell  
Mr and Mrs T. Hogg  
Mr and Mrs P. McGarry  
Mr and Mrs G. Willock  
Mr J. Emslie  
Mrs A. McDonald

### Garronhill

Mr Vallance  
Mr A. Cannon  
Mr J. Higgins  
Mr Casagranda  
Mrs McKerrel  
Mr and Mrs Wm, Loggie  
Mr and Mrs D. McFegan  
Mr and Mrs D. McCrone  
Mr and Mrs Menzies

### Torhill

Mr and Mrs J. Stitt  
Mrs Garrity  
Mrs Pickering

### Bridge Street

Mrs J. Jack  
Mrs Anderson  
Mrs Agnes Anderson  
Mrs T. McDonald  
Mr and Mrs Gourlay  
Mrs and Mrs T. Moran  
Mr and Mrs J. McCall  
Mrs Gebbie  
Mr J. Cameron  
Mr and Mrs J. McCann

### Glasgow Road

Miss Park  
Mr and Mrs J. Ross  
Mr and Mrs Wm.  
Lindsay  
Mrs Malcolm Ross  
Mr George Bradford  
Mrs D. Gillen  
Mrs P. Cairney  
Mr J. Bell  
Mr and Mrs Masterton

### Smallburn

Mrs T. Wilson  
Mrs William Jack  
Mr Hamilton  
Mr G. Davidson  
Mr A. Pirie

### Furnace Road

Mrs Ferguson  
Mr and Mrs M. Anderson  
Mr J. Armstrong

### Middlefield Drive

Mr C. Lowe  
Mr J. Weir  
Mr Thomas Broom  
Mr R. Close  
Mr William McMillan  
Mrs J. Smith  
Mrs Jackson

### Wellwood Avenue

Mr J. Smith

### Wellwood Street

Mr and Mrs J. Guthrie  
Mr Constable  
Mr J. Brown  
Mrs Wood  
Mr Thomas Kean

### Kames Row

Mr B. Gibney  
Mr and Mrs P. Mackin  
Mr and Mrs J. Kelly  
Mr Connor  
Mr Montgomery  
Mr McDade

### Kirkgreen

Mrs J. Clark  
Mrs J. Stacey  
Mrs R. Park  
Mr and Mrs H. Campbell  
Mr D. Goodlett  
Mr M. Peacock  
Mr Mitchell  
Mr and Mrs D. Millar

### Park Terrace

Mrs Parker  
Mrs Greenwood  
Mrs Caldwell  
Mrs D. Woodburn  
Mrs William Bradford

### Springhill Terrace

Mrs Fulton  
Mrs Flanagan  
Mrs Samson  
Mrs Hill  
Mrs Rollett  
Mr R. McGladrie  
Mr A. Irvine  
Mrs C. Brown  
Mr and Mrs Greenhowe  
Mr and Mrs Wm. Loggie  
Mr and Mrs T. Mackin

### Old Terrace

Mr and Mrs T. Cowan  
Mr and Mrs A. Menzies  
Mr R. Lowe

Mr A. Kerr  
Mr Walker  
Mrs Park  
Mr and Mrs D. Slimmon  
Mr William Stoddart

### New Terrace

Mr and Mrs Johnstone  
Mrs McLatchie  
Mr O'Brien  
Mr and Mrs A, Loggie  
Mr and Mrs J. Fleming

### Midhouse Row

Mr and Mrs J. Murdoch  
Mr G. Williamson  
Mr H. Williamson  
Mr John Murdoch  
Mr and Mrs H. Samson

### Square, Stableyard, Linkieburn, Rail. Bldgs.

Mr and Mrs Peters  
Mrs Ferguson  
Mrs Robb  
Mr and Mrs Wm.  
Vallance  
Mrs Moffat  
Mr and Mrs A. Moreland  
Mr and Mrs Wm. Kirk

### Other Districts

Mr and Mrs Purdie,  
Bankhead  
Mr J. Carlow, The Isle  
Mrs Dempster, Burnside  
Mr & Mrs Bennie,  
Langloanhead

### Country Districts

Mr and Mrs Gardiner  
Mr R. Irvine  
Mr & Mrs J. Wilson,  
Lighshaw

## IN WINTER'S GRIP

Sitting at my computer to-day (28th December, 2009) in the middle of one of the severest winters for many a long day reminded me of probably the worst snowstorm ever to engulf Muirkirk which took place in January, 1940. It cannot be compared to the present one. Then the heavy snow was whipped up by gale-force winds, where in the current one the snow just fell without a puff of wind, lasting a period of over one week. Never in recent history had the village seen a storm so divesting as the one in 1940. The storm was followed by a severe frost, and combined, this isolated the village from the outside world. Road traffic was impossible, although the worst parts seemed to be just outside the Parish. Gangs of men were taken off the "burro" to shovel snow in an effort to clear the roads. Bus services were abandoned and some travellers found it difficult to get home. The railway system locally felt the full force of the storm, with huge snowdrifts, some 10 to 15 feet high blocking the cuttings approaching Muirkirk Station. Near Palmer's Crossing one engine got stuck and when another engine with a snowplough arrived it met the same fate. The stormy conditions caused a stoppage of work at Kames Colliery, and all outdoor labour suffered, while frozen and burst pipes were also common place, and caused considerable inconvenience to householders. The herds' dance had to be cancelled. The children were the only ones who seemed to get any enjoyment from the cold spell, for sledges were seen in abundance where there was an available slope, and even skaters were seen where any surface water had frozen over. As the big freeze continued, conditions became worse, and with provisions in the shops reaching a dangerously low level, men travelling on horseback (Andrew Ross, Co-operative van man, was one of the horsemen) had to bring in essentials, including ingredients to ensure a supply of fresh bread. Church services were abandoned, schools were closed, travellers were marooned for days on end — all this combined to make it the worst ever storm in Muirkirk's history. Another record broken by the storm was that the Muirkirk railway line was closed for eighteen days, unprecedented at that time in Scotland. I can remember it all clearly, and it took many weeks for the village to regain some sort of normality.

The following year, 1941, saw another blizzard hit the village, and although of a high severity, only lasted for a day or two. The snowfall was of a fine nature, but it being whipped up by strong winds, blizzard conditions were the result. The fine snow penetrated inside the roofs of the miners' rows at Southside, and as a result quite a few ceilings came down because of the weight. A small army of workers were employed clearing the snow from the lofts. Some houses had to be evacuated, and the tenants spent a couple of nights in the Reading Room of the Ironworks Institute. The miners were also idle for a couple of days, but a very quick thaw followed, and things were soon back to normal.

The next big storm I can remember more clearly was the one in 1947. The winter that year started just after Ne'erday and carried right through until almost the end of March. There was heavy snow and long spells of frost which brought a lot of inconvenience. 24 degrees of frost was recorded at Muirkirk on 3rd March that year. Then on 12th March, Muirkirk was hit by a severe blizzard, which completely isolated the village. For a time all roads were blocked and bus services were suspended and the railways were out of action for a time. The Parish Church Choir outing was stranded and had to spend the night at Kilmarnock. The wintry weather lasted almost into April. Several lambs were born in the district, and

somehow managed to survive the cold. As I have said, it was a long spell, but not as bad as the 1940 storm.

Muirkirk was never far from the headlines as far as the weather was concerned. This was certainly the case in August, 1966, when the “Big Storm,” as it came to be known, struck. After a day of continuous torrential rain, the likes of which had not been seen for some time, and Muirkirk bore the brunt. Cars were caught out all over the place. The main trouble spots were above Airdsgreen on the Douglas Road, in the dip beyond Wellwood Bridge near the Electricity Station, and at Greenockmains, where the water was four feet deep. On the second day of rain the River Ayr broke its banks and roads and fields were covered by a raging torrent, which was unprecedented. Some livestock were lost in the low-lying fields and the foundations of the New Bridge at Kames Colliery was swept away, making the bridge impassable. Several trees were washed down the river and one large one from Kameshill blocked the road at Kames Farm. Damage to Bridges in the Glespin area closed the Muirkirk-Douglas Road to traffic, and there was a shuttle service of buses on both sides, with passengers walking across the fields at the Janefield Bridge. The road was closed for some days, with a closed sign across the Main Street at Glasgow Road corner. Quite an experience!

Like most of the West of Scotland in 1968, Muirkirk did not escape the great storm which swept the country on that Sunday night (14th January). I remember it well, and it was really quite terrifying lying in bed listening to the gusts of wind which reached tornado proportions. But it was the devastation which met my eyes on waking up the next morning and seeing the damage that had been left behind. Where I lived at the top Wellwood Avenue, the top houses there bore the brunt of the storm. Across the road the chimney-head of the upstairs house (Elsie Murray’s) came crashing down through the roof, and through the living room ceiling — Elsie and her husband (Pim Park) had to be removed to safety, and rehoused elsewhere. All over the village was a state of utter destruction and carnage. Almost everything on the ground which had not been anchored down was blown away—huts, dustbins, fences, and greenhouses took to the air. Some cars were also shifted in the blast. Power was cut off in some areas, and at the “Advertiser” Office there was no electricity for three days. It was estimated that one in three houses had been damaged in the storm. One soon lost the count of damaged TV aerials, missing slates, etc. That was another night I will never forget.

On a whole, the winters in Muirkirk were becoming more placid, with very little snow and not a great deal of frost. There was a change in 1973 when in February blizzard conditions returned with a vengeance, and conditions were quite bad for about a week, and at one time the Cumnock Road was blocked at the Skew Bridge. At this time other neighbouring districts fared much worse.

Then came the one they called “The Great Storm,” which struck Muirkirk on 11th January, 1974. The wind reached hurricane force, and Muirkirk felt the full blast of it during the hours of Friday night and Saturday morning. The damage caused locally was tremendous, the entire village was affected. Garages were torn from their foundations, some being found some distance away. Huts and out-houses received the same treatment. Greenhouses were left in a shambles, and dozens of trees uprooted. Houses felt the full brunt of the storm and the damage was extensive with broken and removed slates and chimney cans and heads being dislodged. Part of the front roof of a prefab at Miller Road was ripped off. The occupants, Mr and Mrs James Purdie, were unhurt, and were later re-housed at

Middlefield Drive. The putting green attendant's kiosk at Victory Park was blown over. But it was at the top of the town that the worst damage was caused, it taking on the appearance of a disaster area. A chimney stack at the flatted houses at Wellwood Street came crashing down through the roof and through the ceiling of the top flat, occupied by Mr and Mrs John Dempster, causing extensive damage and caving in his floor and the ceiling of the flat below, occupied by Mr and Mrs Danny Sneddon, where the damage was only slight. Not far away at Carruthers Park another chimney stack gave way and crashed through the top flat of Mr and Mrs Alex Dempster, causing a lot of damage, with some minor damage to the flat below of Mr and Mrs Tommy Mackin. It was thought that the two stacks had come down about 7.15 in the morning, but it is a miracle that no one was hurt. One shudders to think what the consequences would have been had the stacks fell on the other side — where the bedrooms were situated, and where the occupants were sleeping. Early morning travellers on the Sorn Road found their way blocked by fallen trees, and they were forced to back track and by go the Cumnock Road. More fallen trees had blocked the Douglas Road on the other side of the Glenbuck dam, but these two roads were soon cleared. The devastation in the village and outlying districts had to be seen to be believed. This was probably the worst storm of its kind ever experienced in the village of Muirkirk.



1940



MUIRKIRK STATION, 1942

## COVENANTING FACTS UNCOVERED

Over the years much has been written about the Covenanters in Muirkirk, and I was very interested in a contribution which appeared in the "*Advertiser*," files, and I thought it might be appropriate to reproduce the article in full as it will add a little more to what we already know of the religious struggles of the Covenanters in our district:—

### SOME MORE LIGHT ON LOCAL COVENANTERS

During the recent perusal of an article on the Covenanters, several interesting and—to the writer—hitherto unknown facts concerning Muirkirk were disclosed, and, in the hope that others may also find these of interest, here they are.

It may seem as a surprise to many, in these days of colossal things, to learn that the number of Richard Cameron's followers at Ayrsmoss in 1680 amounted to forty foot and twenty horse. They faced a company of about a hundred foot and dragoons, under the command of Captain Bruce of Earlshall. Cameron's men were directed by Hackston, of Rathillet in Fife, and it is a coincidence that Bruce and Hackston must have known each other, being county gentlemen and magistrates in the courts at Coupar. Hackston fought bravely, but was wounded and captured, while most of the fighters on foot escaped over the moor. The two Camerons and seven of their men were left dead on the field, and four other prisoners were taken besides Thackston. One of these was Archibald Alison of Evandale (Strathaven), and his sword, which is in the possession of Miss Pearson of Crofthead, is a fine specimen of the time. Another interesting link with those times has come down to the same family from an ancestress, Elizabeth Allan, who lived in the early eighteenth century. Hackston, who was one of the assassins of Archbishop Sharp near St. Andrews. While hiding he was sheltered by Mr Allan of Elsrickle, near Biggar, and in return presented his host with his ring, saying,— "I am uncolys (exceedingly) obleeged to you." The ring consists of a handsome yellow topaz surrounded with two rows of smaller stones, this inner one of diamonds, and is in perfect condition.

During the hunt for fugitives in Ayrshire in 1684, the troopers captured on Wellwood two youths, John and William, sons of William Campbell of Over Wellwood. Two bibles found in their pockets were sufficient evidence to warrant arrest, and they were savagely ill-treated before they reached the Tolbooth in Edinburgh. It is good to know that these two were successful in escaping from their grim prison some weeks later, and that John became a captain of horse under King William in happier times.

At Greenockmains lived an aged man named Thomas Richart, whose son James was a fugitive, but the father had been induced to resume churchgoing by the indulged minister, Hew Campbell. Captain Peter Inglis, with some of his men, came in 1685 to the hospitable farm pretending to be Whigs, and induced the unsuspecting host to make incriminating admissions. He was taken to Cumnock and shot on the gallows at Barhill for sheltering "the honest party."

There were no fewer than three John Browns of Muirkirk who were martyrs in that epoch, but the most famous, and least offending, was he of Priesthill, or Priestsheil, as spelt then. There he lived with his second wife, their child, a son of his first marriage, and the herd laddie, John Brouning. Incidentally, it was Peden

who performed the marriage ceremony. It was a misty day in May, 1685, when Brown was surprised by Claverhouse while he was casting peats, and the identity of the traitor who led him over this moor has never been discovered. The brave conduct of the widow has often been told. Claverhouse interrogated the herd laddie, whose baptism is entered in Muirkirk Session Records on 26th July, 1668. On promise of pardon if he would give information of value, the lad told them much of local Covenanting, but, nevertheless, was taken to Mauchline and there hanged.

Probably one of the earliest unions was that which eventually became known as the United Societies, which were originally formed for the purpose of adopting certain precautions to preserve the Covenanters' freedom. It held general meetings, shire meetings, and fellowship meetings. One general meeting of great importance was held at Douglas Water on May 20, 1696.

Not all abuse was confined to the Dragoons, for there are records of abuse to which the hapless indulged clergy were subjected. The Society men did what they could to curb this as wanting in ecclesiastical dignity, preferring the method of peaceful ejection. In 1690 a book was published in London which gave a long list and complete history of the victimisations, but these were answered by Gilbert Rule in "A Second Vindication," in 1691. The Society men themselves took the precaution to publish a vindication disclaiming all knowledge and responsibility for these excesses at the Cross of Douglas on 4th January, 1689. But better times were to come soon. The new King, William, summoned a Convention for the following March, and henceforth the persecutions were at an end.

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OCTOBER 15, 1936.	PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.
<b>Public Notices.</b>	
<p><b>Dundas Hall, Muirkirk, for Only 3 More Nights.</b>          Tonight (Thursday), Friday, and Saturday, Oct. 15, 16, 17. Change of Program.</p>	
<p>BIG SUCCESS OF THE EVENING</p> <p><b>Follies Vaudeville Co.</b></p> <p>Over Two Hours Express Train of Talent. Vaudeville's Biggest and Best Show.</p>	
<p><b>THE GREAT HILLARDS,</b></p> <p>World-renowned Conjurers and Illusionists. Featuring the Sensation of the Century.          £500 Challenge Problem—The Unsolved Trunk Mystery. Also the Magical Brewers.          Come and have a drink</p>	
<p>The Famous <b>DECCA SISTERS,</b></p> <p>Singing and Dancing the Blues away.</p>	<p>Unique—Novel <b>DUVAL,</b></p> <p>The Yodeling Ventriloquist.</p>
<p><b>GEORGE WALTERS,</b></p> <p>The Renowned Scotch Comedian.</p>	
<p>Crazy Comics. <b>Billy Benson,</b></p> <p>Pianist and Piano-Accordion Expert.</p>	<p><b>BETTY DALLAS,</b></p> <p>The Popular Scotch Soprano.</p> <p><b>Kitty Ford,</b></p> <p>The Mystic Maid.</p>
<p>Weird and Wonderful— <b>MARTIN BREEDIS,</b></p> <p>The Wonder Man of the Age, performing Feats of Strength never attempted by any other Man.</p>	
<p><b>FREE GIFTS NIGHTLY—Come and Get a Present.</b></p>	
<p>Most Refined Show Touring. Nightly at 8 o'clock.</p>	
<p>PRICES—1/6 (Reserved), 1/-, 6d Children 6d and 3d.          Seats Booked at the Hall—No Extra Charge.</p>	
<p><b>ALL-FUN CHILDREN'S MATINEE on Saturday at 2.30. Children, 3d.</b></p>	

## **LINK WITH OLD MUIRKIRK**

It is amazing how information about the older Muirkirk can be found, quite by accident, while researching something entirely different. This was the case when I found this report from an 1923 file, and I quote:—

QUERY—Muirkirk is well connected. It has been proved that she has a link with Australia. New information is being sought concerning a Mr William Wilson, whose daughter was the wife of a former American Ambassador. Mr Wilson was born at Garronhill in 1793, and his mother's name was Janet Grant. In 1815 Mr Wilson worked with Macadam, the celebrated road engineer, on roads in England, and between that time and 1834 (when he left for America) he practised medicine in Dorchester, near Oxford. Any local genealogist any trace of him? What about the Church records? Fancy a Scot making even the English roads!

## **THE FIRE BRIGADE**

During the period of the Second World War I vividly remember seeing the local Fire Brigade demonstrating new equipment in the Main Street, which included a stirrup-pump! At that time the local Brigade were stationed next to the close in Victoria Buildings, where used to live the Mitchell Family (Bell Shankly). Previously they occupied a shop further up the Main Street, roughly across from the Crown Bar. The Station in Victoria Buildings was later to become the Doctors' Surgery.

## **GLENBUCK STREET NAMES**

At the same time I discovered that the correct name for the Monkey Row in Glenbuck was Auchinstilloch Cottages.

## **THE BIG FREEZE**

It would seem that I might have been a bit presumptuous with my comments on Page 191, as the wintry weather which started in Muirkirk on 18th December, is still with us to-day (6th January, 2010), and over the period more than 24 inches of snow has fallen, and the temperature has dropped to well below zero. The snow was followed by sub-zero temperatures, which lasted until 12th January, when there was a respite by way of a slow thaw. Although the main roads around Muirkirk were kept clear, the village itself was a very hazardous place to get around, and the Council workmen were conspicuous by their absence. Most of the pavements were non-negotiable. My own thoughts were that individual householders could have done more to help. In days gone by each tenant would have cleared the pavements in front of his own property — changed days, indeed. At time of writing (13th January, 2010) conditions in this respect are pretty grim. The following day a thaw set in although getting about the village was still a problem with the hard-packed ice underneath.



# MUIRKIRK

(From the Ordnance Gazetteer published at the beginning of the 20th Century)

MUIRKIRK, a town and a parish in the NE of Kyle district, Ayrshire. The town, lying near the right bank of the Ayr, 720 feet above sea level, has a station, with the junction of the Douglasdale branch of the Caledonian and South-Western Railway, 10¼ miles ENE of Auchinleck, 25¾ E by N of Ayr, 57¾ SSE of Glasgow (only 30 miles by road), and 49¾ SW of Edinburgh. With environs bleaker perhaps than those of any other town in Scotland, Leadhills and Wanlockhead alone excepted, it is the seat of an extensive iron manufacture, and was brought into existence through the discovery and smelting of iron ore (1787). A small predecessor or nucleus existed previously under the name of Garan; and the transmutation of this into Muirkirk is noticed as follows in the "Old Statistical Account"—The only village, or rather clachan, as they are commonly called, that deserves a name, lies at a small distance from the Church, by the side of the high road, on a rising ground called Garanhill, which therefore gives name to the range of houses that occupy it. They have increased greatly in number since the commencement of the works; and new houses and streets have risen around them. Many houses besides, some of them of a very neat structure, have been built at the works themselves; and others are daily appearing that will, in a short time, greatly exceed in number and elegance those of the old village, formerly, indeed, the only one that the parish could boast." The place has undergone great fluctuations of prosperity, but since about 1830, and especially since the formation of the railway, it has been very flourishing, in as much as to rank among the great seats of the iron manufacture in Scotland. The works of the Eglinton Iron Company have several blast furnaces and rolling mills; and several mining and lime-burning are extensively carried on. New works for collecting ammonia as a by-product at the furnaces were erected at a large outlay in 1883. In 1894 a drainage scheme, estimated to cost £1100, was begun. Muirkirk has a Post Office with money order, savings bank, and telegraph departments, a Branch of the Clydesdale Bank, two hotels, a gas company, and fares on the Tuesday after 18th February for hiring shepherds, and the Thursday nearest 21st December, when shepherds meet to restore sheep which have strayed from their owners. Baird's Institute, the gift of J. G. A. Baird, M.P., and erected in 1887, consists of reading room, recreation room, library, etc., and cost over £2000. The parish church, built in 1812, renovated in 1883 at a cost of £1700, and repaired in 1893, contains 800 sittings. Other places of worship are a Free Church built soon after the Disruption, a U.P. Church (1823), an E.U. Church, and St. Thomas' Roman Catholic Church (1856) enlarged and improved in 1882, when a presbytery was also built at the cost of the Marquis of Bute. Population — (1881) 3470, (1891) 3329.

The parish, containing also GLENBUCK village, formed part of the Mauchline Parish till 1631, and, then being constituted a separate parish, received, from the situation of its church, the name of Kirk of the Muir, Muirkirk, or Muirkirk of Kyle. It is bounded S. by Auchinleck, W. by Sorn, and on all other sides by Lanarkshire, viz., N. by Avondale, N.E. by Lesmahagow, and E. by Douglas. Its utmost length, from E. to W. is 10⅝ miles; its utmost breadth, from N. to S., is 8 miles; and its area is 37½ square miles, or 30,429-1/8 miles, of which

200½ are water. Two artificial reservoirs, together covering 121 acres, are noticed under Glenbuck. Issuing from the first of these, and traversing the second, the River Ayr winds 6¾ miles west-south-westward through the interior, then 2-3/8 miles west-north-westward along the southern boundary. Its principal affluents during this course are Garpel Water, running 4¼ miles north-westward, and Greenock Water, running 9-5/8 miles south-westward.

Along the Ayr, in the extreme W, the surface declines to 567 feet above the sea; and the chief elevations to the N. of the river are \*Burnt Hill (1199 feet), Meanlour Hill (1192), Black Hill (1169), \*Goodbush Hill (1556), and Priesthill Height (1615); to the S., Wood Hill (1234), \*Wardlaw Hill (1630), and The Steel (1356), and \*Cairntable (1944), where asterisks mark those summits that culminate on the confines of the parish. On all sides, then, except the W., or over a sweeping segment of 25 miles, its boundary is a water shedding line of heights. The interior is a rough and dreary expanse of moorish hills, tame in outline, and clad in dark purple heather, here rising in solitary heights, there forming ridges which run towards almost every point of the compass. Cairntable, on the boundary with Lanarkshire, near the S.E. extremity, is the highest ground, and commands, in a clear day, an extensive and varied prospect. At most one sixth of the entire area has ever been regularly or occasionally in tillage, and all the remainder, excepting about 250 acres of plantation, is disposed in sheep walks — some of them so excellent that Muirkirk black-faced sheep have carried off the first prize at several of the Highland Society's shows and at the Paris Exhibition of 1867. In the 12th century a natural forest extended over a large part, perhaps nearly the whole, of the parish; and have left dreary memorials both in such names as Netherwood and Harwood, now borne by utterly treeless farms, and in long trunks and branches deeply buried in the moss. The mountain-ash is almost the only tree that seems to grow spontaneously. It adorns the wildest scenes, and unexpectedly meets the eye by the side of a barren rock and requestered stream, seen seldom save by the birds of the air or the solitary shepherd and his flock.

Coal lies on both sides of the Ayr, at no greater depth than 60 fathoms, in seams aggregately 30½ feet thick, and severally 3½, 3, 7, 9, 2½, and 5½. It is mined, on the most approved plans and in very large quantities both for exportation for local consumption and manufacture. Ironstone occurs in the coal-field in five workable seams, so thick that three tons of stone are obtained under every square yard of surface. Limestone likewise is plentiful, and is worked with ironstone and coal. Lead and manganese have been found, but not in such quantity as to repay the cost of mining.

The parish is deeply and pathetically associated with Martyrs of the Covenant, A Martyrs' Monument was erected in the New Cemetery in 1887; and upon Priesthill Farm is one to the "Christian Carrier," John Brown, who, on 1st May, 1685, was shot by Claverhouse in presence of his wife and family. On the top of Cairntable there are two large cairns.

Among the principal proprietors are the Earl of Hume, John G. A. Baird, M.P., and Charles Howatson, Esq., of Glenbuck, who in 1893 added to his property the estate of Tardoes at the price of £11000. Giving off Glenbuck quoad sacra, Muirkirk is in the Presbytery of Ayr and the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr; the living is worth £190. Furnace Road, Glenbuck, Muirkirk, and Wellwood public schools and St. Thomas' Roman Catholic school, with respective accommodation for 479, 284, 276, 57, and 190 children, had (1892) an average attendance of 387,

238, 224, 10, and 56 , and grants of £338 12s 6d, £237 12s 6d, £234 17s 0d, and £44 11s 3d. Population (1871)—3966 were in Muirkirk ecclesiastical parish, and 11999 in Glenbuck quoad sacra parish.

(Ordnance Survey Sheets 23, 1864-65).

## TOP OF THE LEAGUE

Football enthusiasts of Junior Football in this district will be interested in this League Table from the early 1950's, and I don't think we will ever see Muirkirk Juniors in such an exalted position again!

WESTERN LEAGUE TABLE							
SOUTH SECTION							
(Up to and including 23rd August)							
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Muirkirk	7	7	0	0	18	7	14
Cumnock	7	5	1	1	24	8	11
Darvel	7	4	1	2	22	15	10
Hurlford U.	7	4	2	1	23	14	9
Lugar	7	4	2	1	18	11	9
Maybole	7	3	1	3	15	11	9
Annbank U.	7	4	3	0	22	16	8
Riccarton B.	7	3	2	2	17	13	8
Nithsdale W.	7	3	3	1	21	14	7
Craigmark B.	7	2	4	1	18	14	5
Kello Rovers	7	2	4	1	17	18	5
Kilmarnock J.	7	2	4	1	13	32	5
Auchinleck T.	7	1	4	2	12	21	4
Whitletts V.	7	2	5	0	12	28	4
Glenafton A.	7	0	5	2	15	26	2
Ayr Newton R.	7	1	6	0	14	32	2

## THE SANQUHAR ROAD

Mr Charles P. Bell, the well known Muirkirk historian, did much to chronicle events of other times in Muirkirk, and it was interesting to find that he had recorded some mileage points on the old Sanquhar Road. I have heard many an argument about "How far is this?" Mr Bell goes a long way to answer some of the questions. All the measurements are taken from the old Muirkirk Post Office, which was situated in what is at present the Bookmaker's Office next to Trotters building in the Main Street, and the final one goes to the Post Office in Sanquhar. Here they are—

SANQUHAR BRIDGE	2	KIRKCONNEL	11½
IRON GATE	4	GUFFOCK HILL	12
TUP'S PARK	5	TOWER BURN	13
PENBRECK	6½	CRAWICK FOOT	16
FRIARMINNON	8	SANQUHAR (Post Office)	17
FINGLAND	10		

OCTOBER 1, 1931. PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

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**Public Notices.**

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**Dundas Hall, Muirkirk, Friday & Saturday, Oct. 9 & 10.**  
 Seats Booked by the Misses Blackwood.

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ANNUAL VISIT OF

# THE WILSON COMPANY

of

## SCOTTISH PLAYERS,

When They will Present

TWO BRILLIANT NEW SCOTS COMEDIES—

**“The Lad o’ Pairts,”**  
 In One Act, by DAVID OLEGHORN THOMSON,

**“THE PROVOST’S CHAIN,”**  
 In Three Acts, by ANDREW P. WILSON.

An All-Laughter Entertainment of Outstanding Excellence.

---

DOORS OPEN 7.30 ; COMMENCE AT 8.

PRICES—RESERVED, 2/4 ; UNRESERVED, 1/2 and 6d.

# SCHOOL DUX AND SPORTS CHAMPIONS

## DUX

1930 Andrew Steele  
 1931  
 1932 Douglas Crosbie  
 1933 Elizabeth McIntosh  
 1934 Mary Boland  
 1935 Andrew Barrie  
 1936 Grace Bone  
 1939 Margaret Paterson  
 1938 Vera Monaghan  
 1939 Sheila F. Harris  
 1940 James R. Wilson  
 1941 Elizabeth Logie  
 1942 Agnes Kirkwood  
 1943 Hugh Samson  
 1944 Lillian C. Marshall  
 1945 Helen Henderson  
 1946 Elizabeth Rorrison  
 1947 Elizabeth Little (Equal)  
 Robert Keddie  
 1948 Ann Murray  
 1949 George Bradford  
 1950 Crosbie Matthews  
 1951 Agnes Little  
 1952 James Grant  
 1953 Janette Campbell  
 A. Blyth (Equal)  
 1954 Josephine C. Miller  
 1955 Roy Rutherford  
 1956 Robin Hamilton  
 1957 James P. Currie  
 1958 Mary B. McLaughlin  
 1959 John Wilson  
 1960 Margaret Marshall  
 1961 James O. Drife  
 1962 Elisabeth Savage  
 Brian Young (Equal)  
 1963 Hugh Samson  
 1964 Helen W. Aitken  
 1965 Donald Russell  
 1966 Margaret T. Archibald  
 1967 Andrew Mackin  
 1968 Nan Wilson  
 1969 Prize-Giving Ceased

## SPORTS CHAMPIONS

### Boys

Matthew Walker  
 Gilbert McKay  
 William Bell  
 William Bell  
 Donald Borthwick  
 John Gardiner  
 John Gardiner  
 Thomas Rae  
 George Park  
 David McLatchie  
 Adam Murdoch  
 James McLatchie  
 Hugh Walker  
 Jim McMorran  
 James Ramage  
 A. Morrison  
 William Strickland  
 William Archibald  
 B. Young  
 Ian Archibald  
 D. Rae  
 Hugh McL. Wyper  
 Brian Wilson  
 D. Masterton

### Girls

Mary Bradford  
 Mary Clark  
 Mary McGillivray  
 Jean Menzies  
 Margaret Simson  
 Janette Girdwood  
 Janette Girdwood  
 M. Saunderson  
 Anne Blyth  
 Helen Samson  
 Irene McCulloch  
 Irene McCulloch  
 Irene McCulloch  
 D. McLatchie  
 H. Hazle  
 Janet Walker  
 G. Renton  
 Janetta Samson  
 J. Park  
 Mary G. M. Smith  
 Ellen Anderson  
 J. Lowe



## **TRAGEDY RECALLED**

It is strange how the intimation of a death in the community can prompt memories of events long gone, and such was the case when the passing was announced of Mr William Hunter of Kirkgreen, who was a well-known and highly respected member of our village. The sad event recalled the local tragedy of 1867, when, as the result of the railway points being maliciously tampered with opposite Welltrees (near to T. French's Garage) on a dark stormy night, the engine left the rails and embedded itself in Welltrees Burn. Both enginemen Hunter and Blyth lost their lives, Blyth being drowned and Hunter (Willie's father) succumbing next day through being badly scalded with steam.

## **THE WAR EFFORT**

The work of local originations for the Second World War Effort has been well chronicled, especially that of our own Parish Church Woman's Guild. I can remember other contributions which were not as well reported. One was the Sphagnum Moss Gatherers. During the War there was a shortage of cotton wool for surgical dressings. A search for a substitute resulted in the re-discovery of sphagnum moss, used in the olden days for this purpose by the Scottish Highlanders. The shipping difficulties of World War II, and the demands on cotton for other purposes again turned attention to this valuable material. Sphagnum Moss forms the bulk of the peat mosses. It grows in close pale green cushions which are usually saturated with water. Gathering is a simple process as the moss is easily pulled up. Then as much water as possible must be squeezed out, and it is left to dry. The drying bleaches the plant somewhat, and also makes it rather friable. It should then be handled gently, as the less it is broken up the better. After drying, the sphagnum is picked clean of twigs, bits of heather, leaves of other plants, and the like. It is then ready for sending to a centre where the final process can be done. Local volunteers helped with the gathering of the moss, and I can remember some large harvests being lifted from the surrounding moors. The treated sphagnum moss was of course used all over the world, and it is good to think that the Muirkirk product would be used to help dress wounds and save lives in many of the battlefields.

Another aspect of Muirkirk's help in the War Effort was the saving and collection of waste paper. This took quite a bit of organising, and most of the work was done by volunteers. The central point for clearing the waste paper was in the old Band Hut in Meuse Lane (off The Stile to the rear of Main Street). I remember visiting this site on several occasions, and it was amazing to see the variety of waste paper collected. It was also surprising to learn how the waste was put to good use in producing articles to help the armed forces.

Also members of Muirkirk Co-op. could help the War effort financially by allocating some of their purchases to Joe Stalin's Number — 1050.

## **VILLAGE CHANGES**

It was while researching the files that I noticed the closing of two businesses in Muirkirk in 1942. That of William Alston & Sons (Blacksmiths), who had a Smiddy in Main Street at the rear of Mrs Alston's House; and also that of H. Keenan, Hairdresser, whose premises were in the present Bookie's Office in Main Street.

## SHOP AT THE CO-OP. IN WARTIME.

- Everything is in great demand, and our trouble is not in selling, but in procuring Supplies to meet everybody's requirements. Nevertheless, we have just ended another excellent Quarter, with Cash Sales amounting to £23,577. As a result we will be paying out the sum of £4,716 to our Members. Are YOU sharing in this reward for Co-operation?
- Trade in All our Departments is exceptionally good in the present circumstances, especially in our BREAD SHOP, where the Lord Woolton Loaf is taking on well, while for Smallbread the fact that we are unable to meet the demand is in itself proof of Top Quality at Keenest Prices.

**Quality makes the Co-op. the Best Place to spend  
your Cash and Coupons.**

- A REMINDER.—THE JOE STALIN NUMBER, 1050, is still open for Your Spare Cheque weekly. We want to make the present Quarter's Donation better than the last. You can help us to do it—put in your Cheque to No. 1050 and we will do the rest.

Place your Order for **MUSSELBURGH LEEKS for Transplanting,**  
3.6 per 100. Expect Delivery in Three Weeks.

**Muirkirk Co-operative Society, Ltd.**

### BILL SHANKLY

Much has been written over the years of the footballing exploits of the legendary Bill Shankly, who learned his footballing trade in the village of Glenbuck, before rising to greater heights as manager of Liverpool F.C. Bill Shankly was such a character that it came as no surprise to me to find a news paragraph in the "Advertiser" issue of 11th June, 1942, which I reproduce in full:—

"When on the subject of sport, it will be news to many to learn that Willie Shankly of Glenbuck is making a bit of a name for himself in another branch of sport besides football. Willie, who is serving in the R.A.F., has won three cups and three medals for boxing, and represents the R.A.F. in the inter-services contests. Thus it would seem that Glenbuck is still on the map, and knocking spots off the opposition."



## MORE ON THE WAR EFFORT

The more I research into the local war effort, the more memories of that time come flooding back. Hardly a week passed by without some local organisation or group of adults or children, laying on some form of entertainment to raise funds to help our fighting forces. I remember attending a “concert” in the empty smiddy behind Alston’s House in the main street. The entertainment was put together by the young ones from the top of the town, and the smiddy was packed to capacity. The star of the show was undoubtedly Graham McCrorie, who gave his usual spirited and inimitably impression of Carmen Miranda. It was not the first time we had witnessed his antics, and it wouldn’t be the last!

Regular “Carnival” days were held at the Bowling Green to raise funds, and these were always well attended; and there were the usual whist drives devoted for the same ends. All-in-all in was a great community effort.

A “Wings for Victory Week” in 1943 was a great success, and I remember clearly the huge 500-lb. bomb (un-primed, of course) which stood outside the Chemists shop in Main Street, and on which were stuck savings stamps for delivery to Germany!

A target of £10,000 was set, and on the first day (Saturday) the day’s takings totalled £8,000.

Amongst the activities arranged were a Public Meeting and Film Show; Parade of all the local Services, a Football Match (Home Guard v. Rest of Services); Concert by school children; Whist Drive and Dance; Model Aeroplane Competition; Poster and Slogans Competitions: and of course the W.V.S. Bomb.

The £10,000 was passed on Tuesday. £941 6s 6d invested on Monday raised the total to £9,110 and a further £1279 on Tuesday made it £10,389 1/- . With Wednesday’s contribution of £1873 3s 6d the total stood at £12,262 4s 6d. £1,144 4/- on Thursday and £2721 16s 6d on Friday brought this up to £16,128 5/- and the week was concluded in great style on Saturday with £5,176 14s 4d, making the record sum for this district:

**£21,304 19s 4d**

What a truly amazing total from the villagers of Muirkirk, and everyone seemed to be sticking out their chests that week.

## GARRONHILL OUTDOOR THEATRE

The old stage troopers motto—“The show must go on”— and there was a good example of this grand spirit one night at Garronhill Outdoor Theatre. While a youngster was doing her action song, a trio of dogs started an impromptu of their own exhibition. They fought and tore at each other all around the “stage,” and while the patrons in the orchestra stalls were inclined to scatter for safety’s sake, our little trooper stuck to her guns, or rather stool, and finished her piece. Of course the doggy “barrage” had it for a little, but our little artiste came up smiling, and did a repeat performance by special request, when the din of battle had cleared away.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, the Garronhill Outdoor Theatre is situated about the junction of Hedgegrove and Garronhill. The kerbs on either side of the roadway are the “stalls.” orchestral and otherwise, and the artistes are all home grown and budding. Make-up and dressing room is an

adjoining close. The youngsters get a kick out of these shows—so do the adult spectators—and the War Guilds get some useful help, too.

## **THE REAL VALUE OF WASTE PAPER**

Here is how the waste paper collection could be put to good use in the War Effort:

- One newspaper makes three 25 pounder shell caps.
- One popular magazine makes interior components of two mines.
- Six old books make one mortar shell carrier.
- One soap powder canister makes four aero engine caskets.
- Five medium-sized cartons make one shell fuse assembly.
- Sixty large cigarette cartons make one outer shell container.
- 20 breakfast cereal cartons make one case for two-pounder shells.
- Six old bills make one washer for a shell.
- Four assorted food cartons make one box for aero cannon shells.
- One old envelope makes one cartridge wad.
- 12 old letters make one box for rifle cartridges.

## **FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL**

In my younger days five-a-side football was a very popular sport, and regular tournaments were arranged, which were always well attended. In July, 1943, Southside Juvenile Football Club arranged such an event at Ladeside Park. Fifty players entered, and the teams were drawn from the hat. The teams were:—

- No. 1        S. Bradford, J. Strickland, J. Frew, Joe Montgomery, and J. Purdie
- No. 2        A. Irvine, Bert McDonald, J. Kean, Joe McKenzie, and Tom Smith
- No. 3        J. McGowan, R. Beck, J. Park (Bud), J. Park, and A. Boland
- No. 4        P. Fyfe, Tom Hill, L. McAleer, D. Park, and R. Wallace
- No. 5        J. Lang, C. Wyper, J. Morrison, C. McGowan, and W. Hill
- No. 6        W. Park, W. Johnstone, H. Lumsden, W. Kean, and A. Samson
- No. 7        G. Black, J. Lochrie, L. Barrie, W. Boland, and M. Thomas
- No. 8        Bert Hannah, A. Dickson, J. Ballantyne, J. Mitchell, and H. Hill
- No. 9        P. Wyper, R. Keddie, J. Lawson, W. McKenzie, and J. Park
- No. 10       J. Strickland, G. Logie, N. McKenzie, J. Brown, and J. McNally.

In the Final, Team No. 2 beat Team No. 4.

## **WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?**

An aftermath of the big blizzard of 1940 came in the month of June, when workmen who were shifting ashes in Muirkirk, discovered a patch of snow, three inches deep.

## NOW YOU KNOW

Have you ever wondered how the Greenock Water got its name? This used to baffle me too, until I found the answer in the “*Advertiser*” files. The writer states that it is a corruption of Green Oak. Interestingly it states that Aitkenclough was originally Oakencleugh. It’s strange how local inhabitants have changed the pronunciation of local place names. One which springs to mind is Auldhouseburn. I was brought up to call it “Alissburn!”

## DISASTERS REMEMBERED

Two deaths in the War years reminded us of sad incidents which took place many years before. First in 1943 was that of Mr Robert Blyth who played a prominent part in the Bankhead Pit disaster in March, 1898, when three men lost their lives as the result of an inrush of water. Bob was awarded the Carnegie Hero’s Silver Medal for his conduct in saving lives in this incident. The second occurred the following year with the death of Mr Robert Gibson, Jack’s Buildings, who was also one of the principal figures in this drama in days gone by.

## OLD SCOTS WORDS

I remember taking part in a competition for the best definition of old Scots words or sayings, which took place in the Higher Grade School at Furnace Road. I’m afraid I was not too clever with my attempts. If you would like a try, here are the 20 words:—

1—Brace	11—Shilpit
2—Humplock	12—Routh
3—To scowther	13—To hain
4—Scouth	14—Wersh
5—A bauchle	15—To hap
6—To threep	16—No troke
7—A swey	17—To Flype
8—To devall	18—To whummle
9—Sweert	19—Tocher
10—A cooter	20—To wale

The highest number of correct or practically correct answers was ten, followed by two nines. Over 100 competed. The winners were:—1st Lily Marshall, 2nd and 3rd (equal) Nancy Alston and Ada Love. The answers are given Page 208.

## WELCOME HOME FUND

This fund was raised by local residents to help those who had taken part in the War effort. The total number of recipients was 335, of whom 24 were dependents of fatal casualties. The total amount raised was £1,900, and each of the returning participants received £5, and the balance of £14 was given to the dependants of those who lost their lives in the War.

## THE HOMECOMING

Alex. Salmond might have had his “Home Coming to Scotland 2009, but in 1945-46, Muirkirk, like most other places in the country, welcomed home in fine style those brave lads and lassies who had served in the Forces during the Second World War. Hardly a week went by without our heroes being welcomed home in true traditional Scottish manner with parties and dances being arranged to mark the occasion. The women folk of the village can be justly proud of the organisation of these events, and in the austere conditions of that time, the spreads put out were out of this world. Never has Muirkirk been a happier place as during that time. The village, like most other places, had come through rough times, with many making the supreme sacrifice, and it seemed only right that those who returned unscathed should be honoured with the celebrations.

Here is a list of the Homecomers’ names as reported in the “*Muirkirk Advertiser*.”

ALEXANDER, W.	DE MASCIO, Bennie	KIRKWOOD, W.	RENTON, James
ANDERSON, William	DEMPSTER, Robert	LAWSON, John T.	RIDDICK, W.
ARCHIBALD, R.	DILLON, Hugh	LAWSON, John	ROBB, John
BANKS, John	DODDS, W.	LINDSAY, Alex.	ROBB, Robert
BECK, George	DUNLOP, Hugh	LOCHHEAD, Hugh	ROWE, George
BECK, James	FAIRNIE, Michael	MARSHALL, J.	RUSSELL, Adam
BELL, Hugh	FERGUSON, J.	MASTERTON, Robert	SAMSON, Agnes
BLAIN, George	FRANCE, John	MATHIESON, William	SAMSON, Isobel
BOLAND, Michael	GARDINER, J. M.	Mc DOUGALL, Wm.	SAMSON, R.
BONE, Jean	GARDINER, Miss E.	McCANN, J.	SAMSON, Robert
BONE, Richard	GAW, William	McCRORIE (Dvr)	SEYMOUR, J.
BONE, S.	GIBB, David	McCRORIE (Gnr)	SHAW, Elizabeth
BOWN, Alex	GIBB, Jean	McDONALD, James	SHIELDS, Hugh
BONE, John	GIBB, Thomas	McFEGAN, D/M	SHORT, Hugh
BRADFORD, George	GILLEN, Ann R.	McGARRY, James	SMITH, R. H.
BRADFORD, J.J.	GIRVAN, Allan	McGARVA, James	SMITH, William
BRADFORD, W.L.	GIRVAN, William	McKENZIE, G	SMITH, L/Bdr
BROWN, Charles	GRAY, Thomas	McLATCHIE, J	STEELE, James
BROWN, George	GREENWOOD, D. B.	McMILLAN, A	STITT, J.
CANNON, James	GREENWOOD, John	McNAIR, Alec	STITT, Miss J.
CASDAGRANDA, H.	HADDEN, Mrs G.	MITCHELL, A	STRATHEARN, J.
CASEY, John D.	HAUGH, Thomas	MITCHELL, Hodge	STRICKLAND, J.
CHAPMAN, John	HAMILTON, Robert	MITCHELL, R.	TAYLOR, A. W.
CLARK, Edward	HARRIGAN, Hugh	MONTGOMERY, John	THOMAS, M.
COWAN, D. C.	HARRISON, H.	MORAN, Mary C.	THOMSON, Robert
CRAWFORD, A.	HASTIE, W.	MURDOCH, J.	TORBET, William
CRAWFORD, Fred	HAUGH, W. A.	MURRAY, H.	WALKER, Hector
CRAWFORD, William	HAZLE, Robert	NELSON, Alex.	WALLACE, Thomas
CROSBIE, James	HAZLE, Tom (Sgt)	PALMER, T.	WARDROP, Alex.
CURRIE, D.	HILL, James	PARK, Mary	WARDROP, James
DA PRATO, Alfredo	HILL, Sgt	PARKER, John W.	WIGHT, W.
DA PRATO, Neil	HILL, William	PURDIE, David	WILSON, David
DA PRATO, Orlando	HOGG, Isobel	JOHNSTONE, S.	WILSON, James
DA PRATO, R.	JAMIESON, A.	RAE, Jack	WILSON, John P.
DAVIDSON, T.	JOHNSTONE, Helen	REID, Prv.	WILSON, Matthew

**ANSWERS TO SCOTS QUIZ**

(Page 206)

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1.—BRACE       | In an apartment — mantelpiece.  |
| 2.—HUMPLOCK    | A small mound.  |
| 3.—TO SCOWTHER | Scorch.   |
| 4.—SCOUTH      | Freedom, plenty of room.  |
| 5—A BAUCHLE    | An Old Shoe (Few of the contestants answered this correctly. Most thought it was a shapeless man or woman)                                    |
| 6.—TO THREEP   | To Insist.  |
| 7—A SWEY       | To swing pots on a fire.  |
| 8—TO DEVALL    | To Cease (Only two had this one correct. Perhaps the most difficult of the lot).  |
| 9.—SWEERT      | Reluctant.  |
| 10.—A COOTER   | A plough iron in the neck of a plough to cut the turf. Many gave the definition as a plough share (which is the sock for cutting the furrow}. |
| 11.—SHILPIT    | Thin and ill looking.   |
| 12.—ROUTH      | Plenty.   |
| 13.—TO HAIN    | To save, preserve.  |
| 14.—WERSH      | Insipid, tasteless.   |
| 15.—TO HAP     | Cover.  |
| 16.—NO TROKE   | No truck or dealings.   |
| 17.—TO FLYPE   | To turn outside in, as a stocking.  |
| 18.—TO WHUMMLE | Turn upside down.   |
| 19.—TOCHER     | Dowry.  |
| 20.—TO WALE    | To choose.<br>Many contestants mistook this for the word “wail”   |

**ANOTHER OLD LINK SEVERED**

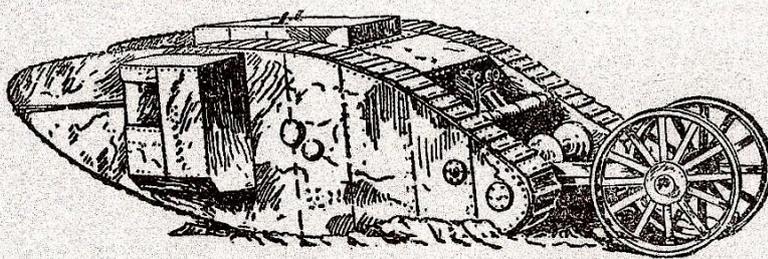
Another link, which had served Muirkirk for over 100 years, was severed during the Second World War. The “Auld Store” had been a familiar establishment in everyday life of generations of Muirkirk housewives. In the days of the blast furnaces and the forge and mill, especially, it would have been one of our busiest stores for the distribution of food, drink, and raiment for the workers and families who lived mainly at the Southside. In 1946 Muirkirk Ironworks Co-operative Society closed its doors for the last time. The decision to close down had been arrived at because of declining membership and business. Another change in the march of time, but no doubt the “Auld Store” would continue to hold a place in the memories of older Muirkirk folks. During my earlier years we were often told stories about this old store.

## PEACE RESTORED

Another reminder to us all that the War was gone was the demolition of the Air Raid Shelters at Carruthers Park, Victory Park and Linkieburn in 1946. Happily, the shelters were never used in Muirkirk. The local Councillors tried hard to get the shelters converted into public conveniences, but without success. And we were also reminded that we were not past the worst of our worries, when in July of that year bread rationing was introduced throughout Britain, and it was evident to all that it would take some considerable time before everything was back to normal—if, indeed, that was possible. An indication that we were “not out of the woods yet” was when Bananas made their first appearance in Muirkirk since the start of the War, and many of the youngsters in the village got their first taste of this fruit. In the same year the Victory celebrations took the form of various entertainments, including a successful Gala Day when Miss Nettie McCartney was crowned our Victory Queen at a ceremony in the Victory Park.

## COMMERCIAL CHANGES

That same year we had four changes in the business side of the village. Archie Mitchell announced his commencement in business as a Painter, Paperhanger, and Householder Decorator, and opened a shop at 10 Furnace Road. The well-known business of Licensed Grocer carried on by David Crosbie, was transferred to his sons, Walter and Douglas Crosbie, at 110 Main Street. Then George Brown and James Paterson started a new business at the Smithy, 51 Glasgow Road in Light Engineering, Welding, and General Smithy. Fourthly, a Motor Hiring Business was inaugurated by W. B. R. Girvan from his premises at 51 Main Street.



### THE CINEMA, MUIRKIRK.

MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY FIRST—

## THE ADVANCE OF THE TANKS

IN THE

### BATTLE OF THE ANCRE,

The Great War Film. Taken on the Spot, and No Faking.

FIVE REELS.

You see the Tanks from their first start to their triumphant return. You see their crews getting ready for the fray, you watch them creeping from their hiding places, you follow them till they cross the trenches and wander over “No Man’s Land,” you see them crushing down the German wire entanglements, and you welcome them back in triumph to the cheers of the soldiers who surround them.

This new film shows every phase of the Great Battle of the Ancre. It enables you to realise what our brave men are going through for our sakes, the terrific artillery duel, its close co-operation with the infantry, who are seen crossing “No Man’s Land,” behind the shelter of the “Barrage,” the work of the Red Cross, the sea of mud that covers everything, the ordinary life in the trenches, and the thrilling moment of attack.

TWO HOUSES EACH NIGHT—7 and 9. USUAL PRICES.

Book your Seats Now. No Extra Charge for Booking.

## **“The Weekly News” Top Ten Competition — Muirkirk’s 1949 Entry**



Sarah Hill, Nan Logie, Margaret Allen, Isobel Dempster, Nettie McCartney  
Helen Strickland, Joan Dempster, Greta Fleming, Margaret Haugh, Betty Paterson

### **SHOOTING CLUB**

I can just remember the rifle shooting club in Muirkirk, which met regularly in the Drill Hall. Did you know there was a full-size range in the Ponesk Glen, which prior to the start of World War II had not been used much. In 1946 the local Club decided to refit this range, and a hut was built. The rest of the work was carried out by German Prisoners-of-War under the Rifle Club supervision.

### **BUSINESS CHANGES**

The business scene always seemed to be changing, and this was the case in 1947. William McGillivray (Milk Supplier) transferred his business to H. Balfour, Holmhead. William Wilson, 87 Main Street, commenced business as a Chimney Sweep and Window Cleaner. With the death of Dickie Wilson, the Newsagents Business at 34 Main Street was taken over by his Aunt, Mrs Janet Murray. Later on in the year H. Balfour closed his Milk Business at Holmhead. J. S. Mansfield’s Boot Repairing business at 39 Main Street was taken over by Mr Thomas Stewart. James Gibson took over the Mason’s Arms Hotel at the top of the town.

## ROLL OF HONOUR

The two new plaques containing the names of those Muirkirk men and one woman who made the supreme sacrifice in World War II. (1939—1945), were unveiled at the Victory Park Memorial in 1947, viz.:—

Nurse Jessie Hunter  
 L/Sgt. Thomas Blane, Black Watch  
 Fus. George Chapman, R.S.F.  
 James Dodds, M.N.  
 Trooper John England, Rec. Reg.  
 L/Cpl. George Ferguson, R.E.  
 Pte. James Ferguson, Black Watch  
 Lt. David Forrester, Scot. Rifles  
 F/O William Girdwood, R.A.F.  
 L.A.C. William Hamilton, R.A.F.  
 John Hogg, M/M.  
 L/Cpl/ Robert Jack, P.C.  
 Cpl. James Loggie, Royal Scots

F/O Thomas McCall, R.A.F.  
 P/O James McCartney, R.A.F.  
 L/Cpl. John McCrorie, R.S.F.  
 Cpl. George McDade, R.S.F.  
 Pte. William McLay, Black Watch  
 Sgt. Andrew McSkimming, R.A.F.  
 L/Cpl. James Millar, Cam. High.  
 Sgt. Andrew Stephen, R.A.F.  
 Pte. William Templeton, R.A.O.C.  
 C.P./O. Henry Wardrop, R.N.  
 P/O William Wardrop, R.A.F.  
 L.A.C Fred Wilson, R.A.F.

### LADESIDE PARK

After much hard graft by volunteer workers, the new grand stand of Muirkirk Junior F.C. was opened in 1947, and was an added improvement to the facilities at Ladeside Park. There was of course, already a refreshment kiosk. Thus The Juniors could boast of a set-up that many other Clubs in the district, indeed, of Scotland, would dearly love to have. The bricks used for the stand came from Wellwood School.

### FEELING THE COLD

Another sort of a record was recorded at Muirkirk Higher Grade School that year, but one we really did not want. The thermometer at Furnace Road dropped to 32 Degrees of frost?

### RATIONING RELIEF

In 1948, the village, like every other place in the country was finding it difficult to deal with the rationing, but there was a welcome relief with the distribution to the miners of one box of army rations. Each worker was entitled to one box each, and this was greatly welcomed in the mining households.

### LET THERE BE MUSIC

At this time Muirkirk were well provided in the field of music. Following the war years when Samson's Band was the main provider of dance music, we now had The Modernaires, The Melody Quintette, and The Accordion Pirates (formerly George Steven's Band).

## **CHANGING SCENES**

A lot has changed in Muirkirk over the years, none more so than at Southside where the Railway station, signal box and railway sidings and turntable stood.

It might be of interest to learn that the present East Ayrshire Car Clubhouse is in fact the first railway station. Yes, there were two railway stations in Muirkirk. The wagons from Kames Pit had to pass over the G. & S.W. in front of the office here. With the removal of the platform at the Old Station another set of rails was laid down there so that the wagons could be brought to the Company's lye without interference from the G. & S.W. Company, and the offices were turned into a dwelling-house for another employee (this is now the Car Club clubhouse). The second station was built a little further eastwards. At one time there was a level-crossing taking the mineral train lines into the Ironworks. The first railway station was built in the years 1896-97.

### **'BUS STUCK**

I was quite amused to come upon a report of an unusual accident at the Southside. A "Central" bus driver forgot he was driving a double-deck bus and got stuck in the railway tunnel. There was little damage, and no one was injured. But quite an ingenious method was used to free the vehicle — they let the air out of the tyres!

### **TRADING NEWS**

In 1948 there were more changes in the commercial life of the village. James Paterson intimated that he was now in sole charge of the smithy business at 51 Glasgow Road (next to the old Wellwood Church), formerly Callan's. Mr William Ramage, Royal George Farm, announced the closing of his dairy business. A Painting and Decorating business was commenced by Michael Boland. A. Jeffrey opened a Fruit and Florists shop in Furnace Road. James Gibson opened his Ladies' Hairdressing business at 89 Main Street.

### **NEW BRIDGE**

After a long fight a footbridge was erected over the Main Ayr-Muirkirk railway line at Palmer's Crossing (near the top of Kames Row) in 1948. Local residents had complained that this was a dangerous crossing, and there had already been a fatality here.

### **LET THERE BE LIGHT!**

That same year Muirkirk was linked to the National Electricity Grid via Ayrshire Electricity Board. Previously the village had got its supply from Kames Colliery, and this served us well over the years, with very little interruption.

### **LOCAL LANDMARK**

It was sad to see that year the start of the demolition of one of our best-known land-marks — Glenbuck House. This striking edifice, which was built about 1880, had over the years, along with Glenbuck Dam, been a favourite beauty spot for locals and travellers alike. So it was good to welcome the appearance of a new building in Muirkirk, that of the E.U. Church's "Wee Hall," which was built at the corner of the Stile and Meuse Lane. It is no longer there, but in its day it housed many functions, and older readers will have happy memories of pleasant times spent there.

## MORE CHANGES

More changes took place in the shopping scene in Main Street in 1949. Mrs J. Murray disposed of her newspaper and confectionery business at 34 Main Street, to Messrs John Wylie & Son. Mr R. H. Brown intimated the opening of his new business, The Welcome Cafe, at 109 Main Street for the carrying out of Fish and Chips. The Restaurant for sitting accommodation would also be open on the same date. Also Mr A. Mitchell announced the opening of a Lending Library at his shop in Furnace Road. The following year Mr Harry Murray intimated that his Fish and Chip business at 104 Main Street would be transferred to Mr James Cannon. Michael Boland, Painter and Decorator, opened a shop at 94 Main Street. Later that year, Mr Cannon took over the Derby Cafe at Glasgow Road. James Paterson, Engineer, moved his business from Glasgow Road, to the Ironworks. The business previously run by W. B. R. Girvan at Main Street was taken over by Mr George Currie. The public house licence for premises at 6 Main Street was transferred to Mrs Catherine Rennie or Murray; and the Old Parish Church Manse was sold to Mr Robert Blackwood, Shankston, Cumnock, for £1,500. The new automatic telephone exchange came into operation the same year, when all local numbers had the figure 2 prefixed. And in June that year, the firm of C. & J. Rowe opened their new ice-cream factory at Townhead.

## LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATES

In 1950, the N.C.B. presented 20 long-service certificates to 20 employees from Kames Colliery, which came to over 1000 years. The recipients were as follows:—

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Service</i>
BARRIE, Thomas	Kirkgreen	57 years
BRADFORD, Robert	5 Wellwood Avenue	58 years
BRADFORD, William	15 Wellwood Avenue	55 years
CLARK, Andrew	17 Wellwood Avenue	56 years
CLARK, John	93 Main Street	50 years
COOK, Duncan	Wellwood Toll (retired)	53 years
DAVIDSON, Thomas	Vass's Buildings, Glenbuck	52 years
GOLDIE, George	86 Main Street (retired)	57 years
FLEMING, John	11 Wellwood Avenue	61 years
HASTIE, William	Glenbuck (retired)	56 years
HAUGH, Thomas	14 Middlefield Dr. (retired)	52 years
MILLIKEN, John	Smallburn	52 years
MURDOCH, Ronald	Glenbuck (retired)	54 years
PARK, Matthew	Glenbuck	57 years
ROSS, John	7 Wellwood Avenue	50 years
ROSS, Thomas	Kirkgreen	59 years
STEELE, Gavin	1 Wellwood Avenue	56 years
STITT, William	Torhill	60 years
STRATHEARN, Thomas	Main Street	54 years
WILSON, James	6 Garronhill	55 years

## THE CHERRY-PICKERS

In 1949 "The Cherrypickers" booklet was printed at the "Advertiser" Office, and I was privileged to be part of the production team that produced this history and informative record of the footballers of Glenbuck.

## OPENCAST COAL MINING

This method of coal extraction in our district at present is now taken as the "done thing," and yet I can remember in the early 1950's when the drilling rigs were a common sight in and on the outskirts of the village. As a young lad playing golf at Auldhouseburn course it was interesting watching them drilling for coal at the foot of Cairntable, and their bores were laid out in wooden boxes, ready for transportation for further analysis, and it was easy to see the various soils and rocks that the drill had gone through. It was common talk at that time that opencast workings would stretch from Crossflatt along the lower reaches of Cairntable to the Skew Brig area. Drilling also took place on the Burnfoot Moor, the Wee Tree Wood, and around Tordoes Farm.

In 1950 much disappointment was expressed at the closing of the Skew Bridge opencast Site allegedly because of the poor quality of coal. Yet look at what is going on to-day at the Powharnal site, a stone's throw from the Skew Bridge. So has the clock turned the full cycle?

However, just as operations were being concluded at the Skew Bridge another opencast coal operation was being begun at Bankend. The site of this mine used to be covered by "Murchie's Wood," which had disappeared over a considerable period of time and presented a rather bleak landscape. It was expected that when the coal-getting operations ceased this area would be turned into a 20 acre arable piece of land. Of course, we had heard promises like these before.

## ANGLING

While never on a par with Glenbuck, Muirkirk did however produce some remarkable sportsmen in various sports. One of our more successful organisations over the years was Muirkirk Angling Association, who always seemed to survive through the bad as well as the good years. There were always tales being told of some remarkable incidents in the field of angling, and it must be said that it seemed that the angler with the longest arms always seemed to catch the biggest trout! Other records were broken that cannot be disputed, and this one I came across in a June file of 1950. In the second scratch competition of the season a total catch of 68 lbs 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>oz was weighed in. The Club President, Mr R. J. Bradford, on complementing the competitors, remarked that he couldn't remember a bigger catch during his life time.

The result was as follows:—

1st	THOMAS BECK (J.)	12 lbs 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> oz
2nd	THOMAS BECK (D.)	9 lbs 12oz
3rd	JOHN DE SYKES	9 lbs 9oz
4th	HUGH HILL	6 lbs 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> oz
5th	DAVID BECK (D.)	6 lbs 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> oz

## **TIME MARCHES ON**

How many people remember the “Old Toon Store Clock?” This familiar three sided time piece, which was attached to the wall above the Co-operative Central Grocery shop in Main Street, had served us well, but after over fifty years it lost its “tick.” It was erected (second-hand) in Queen Victoria’s Jubilee year, and in 1950 it was decided to replace it with a posh luminated electric clock. This one never really received the same affection as the one it replaced, which was reverently known as the “Toon Store Clock.” And this one, too, has seen its time run out, and the present time-piece (erected last year, 2009) is of course, of the third generation — will it last another 50 years?

## **LICENSING HOURS**

In 1951 at a meeting of Ayr & District Licensing Court an appeal by 17 Licence-holders for the 9 o’clock closing time to be extended to 9.30 p.m. in winter and 10 p.m. in summer was opposed by Licence-holders in Muirkirk, Joppa, Ochiltree, Cumnock, and New Cumnock, for whom an agent stated that there was no demand for later closing, as the hard-working people of South Ayrshire had to get up early in the morning, and did not require any extension of hours. The usual hours were decided upon. The only change in this district was the granting of the licence for the Royal Arms in Glenbuck to Mr A. V. Hazle, 8 Council Houses, Glenbuck.

## **OPEN-CAST COAL MINING**

In June of that year, production ceased at the opencast coal site at Bankend, the scheme having lasted a little longer than the nine months originally anticipated. The workers at the screening plant at Wellwood Disposal Centre were all paid off.

## **MORE CHANGES**

1951 was a bad year for changes so far as the district was concerned. In August Glenbuck School was closed, and the pupils were transferred to Muirkirk Secondary School. Then in the following month the passenger train service from Ayr and Muirkirk Branch was withdrawn. The later decision was not unexpected as the passengers using these services had dwindled to only a handful. Thomas M. J. Stewart relinquished his Shoe Shop at 39 Main Street. Robert McFarlane, Radio Engineer, opened a shop at the top of the Masons’ Arms Hotel Steps, where he undertook radio repairs. Changes also took place in the Licensed Trade in Muirkirk. The Licence for the Black Bull Hotel was transferred from Mr Grigor Smith to Mr John Rodger, West Linton; and the one for the Crown Bar to Mr Daniel B. Malcolm, Kilmarnock. Mr James Pringle opened a Gent’s Hairdressing business in the premises previously occupied by Mr John H. Preston at 80 Main Street. The following year (1952) saw quite a stir in the commercial life of the village. After many years Miss Mary Wallace gave up her Millinery shop at 68 Main Street (Victoria Buildings), and Miss Helen Coull took over this establishment. It was announced that N. Da Prato had resumed control of the Derby Cafe and Fish Restaurant in Glasgow Road. And there was another change in a long-established business in Muirkirk with the announcement of the retiral of Mr

and Mrs Tom Hogg from their bakery shop at Main Street. This popular couple had served Muirkirk well over the years and their quality of produce was known far and wide. It certainly stirred some pleasant memories, especially of their “sugared” morning rolls, which were a real treat. However, there was no change in the name of the firm, because the new owner was Mr and Mrs Tom Hogg from Glasgow (no connection to the Muirkirk Hoggs). Mrs Sarah McAttee opened a millinery shop at 94 Main Street, while Mr Thomas Floyd, Jr., Wee Torhill, took over Mr James McGarva’s franchise. Because of government legislation it was announced that Mr John Thomson, Dairyman, would in future be receiving his milk, etc., from Stevenson’s Dairy Farms, Cumnock. It was also announced that during his National Service period, James Pringle’s hairdressing business at 80 Main Street, would be carried on by Mrs R. Russell. But a change with more significance as to the future of our village was the announcement that Glenbuck Railway Station had to close. This was of course due to the fall in passengers using the service.

## **A NIGHT FOR SPORTSMEN**

In the early 1950’s I was lucky enough to be present at a special sports show held in the Regal Cinema when there was a full house. The event was presented by the Glasgow “Evening News” and the large audience composed mostly of football fans in particular, spent nearly three hours most enjoyably. Mr Tom Jennings was the compeer. Films of international matches and of the S.F.A. tour of America and Canada were shown, and proved very interesting indeed.

Football Celebrities George Young, Jimmy Mason, Willie Redpath, and Jimmy Harrower, along with Jerry Dawson were given an enthusiastic reception, and along with Eric Caldow and A. Smith (formerly of Muirkirk Juniors), formed a quiz team with Jerry Dawson as Quiz Master, who I must say dealt very capably with a large number of questions fired from the audience. There were the usual Muirkirk “squeemers” that had the audience in stitches. There was a warm reception for Muirkirk Juniors team who were runners-up in the Ayrshire Cup competition in 1953. Mrs Ford handed over the watches, and the recipients were: — A. Smith, W. Connell, A. Craig, E. Caldow, C. Crawford, F. McDowall, J. Telfer, H. McConville, J. Currie, J. Higgins, R. Moore, and T. Hanlon. Sanny Smith, who was captain of the team spoke on behalf of the players.

A highlight of the evening was the football tennis match between Willie Redpath and Jimmy Mason against George Young and Jerry Dawson. The ball control displayed was quite an eye-opener to the football fans, but a bigger surprise was to follow when Willie Redpath and George Young broke their Scottish and British record by heading the ball to one another without break for 180 times. Their previous record was 122 times, and needless to say, both were given a standing ovation. George and Willie also gave a coaching demonstration in which they further displayed their ball control, which had really to be seen to be believed. One of the best sporting nights ever in Muirkirk. The “Evening News” devoted its centre spread that night to “Football Spotlight” on Muirkirk with pictures of Muirkirk teams, players and supporters.

## QUOITING CHAMPIONS

It was very interesting to come across an article of a successful Glenbuck Quoiting team, and I reproduce it here:—

Glenbuck's big day or, to be more correct, one of them, is recalled by an argument the other night in which we were called upon to help. It concerned the winning by Glenbuck Quoiting Team of the Scottish Cup, and this they truly accomplished in season 1923, after what must have been some of the closest in the history of the competition. Glenbuck visited Renfrew in the semi-final, and the eight-man-a-side teams actually drew at 82 shots each. Incidentally, the visitors were entertained by the famous Patsy Gallacher in his Railway Tavern. In the replay at Glenbuck, the home team won by 82 shots to 81—breathtaking stuff, indeed. The final was played at Barrhead, with Auchentibber in opposition, and again it was a "feenish and a hauf." We quote from the report in our files:— "When three rinks had finished, J. Borland was playing well for Auchentibber, and the scores went up 83 each. However, Captain Matt Park of Glenbuck, who was leading against Borland, had reached 23 shots, and caught the Auchentibber man bending, counting one at the next end, and finishing up with a "caul ane." Glenbuck had thus won the Scottish Cup by two shots. Then the heather was on fire, and for a time the Glenbuck supporters were boys again." And to make memories all the happier, here are the teams and the scores—

<b>Auchentibber</b>		<b>Glenbuck</b>	
Jas. Nimmo, J. Owens	14	Willie Cringan, Geo. Bain	25
D. Gillespie, R. Borland	25	W. Knox, D. Bain	10
J. B orland, W. Richmond	24	Matt. Park, David Bone	25
W. Borland, T. Gallacher	20	Geo. Davidson, Tom Smth	25
—	—	—	—
	83		85

## MODERNAIRES DANCE BAND

(Winners of the All Britain Championship at Manchester, 1953)



Back Row — GERARD LANG, WILLIAM WALKER, ROBERT WEIR, JAMES JONES  
 Front Row — ROBERT WALLACE, JOHN WILSON, TOMMY HILL, JAMES LANG

## A REVERIE

Sitting by the fireside I must have dosed off and I was back in old Glenbuck of my youth. I think the summers of yore must have been better. I can still remember the smell of the wild thyme, the hedge roses and the hundred and one wild flowers which grew in abundance in the glens around the village. Strangely enough, here in the South, with its alleged milder climate, we hardly ever see a wild flower in the fields. There I was, back again, trekking down the Douglas Road to Debog to pick primroses; then memories of the Old Fast Day, climbing Cairntable — picking cranberries and blaeberrries. Over the hill to “Broon’s Stane” was another favourite spot for picnics. That lovely cool spring on the hillside — I wonder, is it still there? Then there was the Ash Road from Blyth’s Buildings up the side of McKerrow’s meadow, past No. 1 Grasshill Pit, and through the viaduct, a lovely walk on a summer evening. Now, of course, both pits are gone, and the Ash Road has long since disappeared and the village is nearly derelict.

Going back still further, the Gala and the Davie Pits were still in full blast. What a treat to get a “hurl” up the Davie Brae in auld Jimmie’s coal cart!—The fact that the cart was used for purposes other than carting coal did not detract from our pleasure, and while Jimmie was loading up, over to the smiddy to watch Big Jock working his bellows or hammering on the anvil, and if per chance he was in a good mood and made us a “girr,” our joy was complete. A more sombre memory—“somebody hurt,” and then the solemn procession down the hill—no speedy ambulances in those days—how many lives must have been lost for want of immediate medical attention? Then schoolboys — the various maisters and mistresses — with of course Mr Rodger and Miss Bain pre-eminent, and happily still to the fore. The Auld Kirk, at one time well attended with a large Sunday School, alas, now a ghost of its former self, also has happy memories — the annual Soiree with “Airchie” and his magic lantern, and the trip to Ayr in the summer time. Even now, I can see the procession down the Glen headed by the Brass Band and “Wee Rab” carrying the flag. Of the various Ministers, apart from Mr McKenzie — who preached from time to time, the one of whom I have the best impression — I must have been very young — was the late Mr Montgomery of Muirkirk; he always finished his discourse with a quotation or a few lines of poetry.

All the old haunts and ploys of youth come back to me and with them old familiar names: Tait, Blyth, Ferguson, Wallace, Davidson, Menzies, Bone, Bain, Crosbie, Barr, Weir, Hastie, Hamilton, Brown, with many others which at the moment slip my memory; all of whom contributed their quota to the history of Glenbuck. I like to think my own forebears, “Auld Wullie and Maidie,” are remembered with respect by the older generation.

Finally, I wander up through the Crow’s Nest to the Cradle, and as I sit and smoke looking down towards the Loch or turning to the view down the valley of Ayr, I awake from my Reverie with the words of the poet running through my mind:—

“Thoughts drift pack to days gone past,  
Life moves on but memories last.”

(Reprinted from the “*Muirkirk Advertiser*”, 1954)

R.M.

## CORONATION YEAR

In 1953 the local celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth did a lot to take the mind of the austere days we were still living in. A local Committee had organised a very attractive programme of events, kicking off with a 10-mile cycle race. This was followed by a Fancy Dress Parade of Decorated Lorries and Cycles, and what an impressive sight it made winding its way through the village to the Victory Park, where a very comprehensive Coronation Sports were organised, and participated in by young and old alike, including races for the Married Men and Married Women. Later in the afternoon there was a Go-as-you-please Competition. In the evening Old Time Dancing was held in the Drill Hall, and there was a Treat and Concert for the old folks in the Ironworks Institute. At 11.30 in the evening a spectacular Bonfire at the Slag Bing lit up the skies. The day's proceedings were brought to a close with Modern Dancing in the Ironworks Institute from 12 midnight. Prior to the Coronation, other events had been held locally, and all-in-all the celebrations had been a great success. Then in the following month we had the Co-operative Children's Gala Day and crowning of the Gala Queen (Sheena Taylor), and this event was also enjoyed to the full by children and adults alike.

That year, with the Railway Station being practically isolated from the village, there had been a steady decrease in passenger traffic. In an effort to stimulate more trade, British Railways introduced a very attractive new service—"The Starlight Special." And very popular it was too — 79s for a round trip of 800 miles from Glasgow to London was a great bargain, and many locals took advantage of this offer. Locally W. B. R. Girvan opened a Grocery and Household Sundries shop in the premises known as the Wagon Road Cafe. Another nail in the coffin for Glenbuck was when their Co-operative members voted in favour of an amalgamation with Muirkirk Co-operative Society. Also, Mr James Burns opened a new coal mine at the opencast site near Bankend Farm.

The following year Morrison & Towle (Mrs A. Morrison and Mrs D. Towle) took over the business formerly carried on by W. B. R. Girvan at 79 Main Street.

Lambie & Moorhead (Joiners) opened a workshop at 107 Smallburn. Mr D. Malcolm of the Crown Bar had his licence transferred to Mr Russell Crosby.

## A NEW RALLY

I thought you might enjoy this piece from the issue of 23rd July, 1954:—This is the season for rallies—our cycling correspondent had quite a bit to say about the Cumnock Rally the other week, and seeing we are all on holiday mood, how about this one. A school teacher with a close Muirkirk connection was recently giving her class word meanings, and had dealt with the word "Rally."

Later she asked for examples of the use of the word.

One wee lad volunteered, "Motor Rally."

"Very good said the teacher, any more?"

There was a pause, and then shot up another wee hand. "Please Miss, sugar-rally!"

## OFF THE MAP

In his series under the above title in the “Daily Express,” journalist John Herries McCulloch last week (October, 1954, devoted his Monday morning column to an account of a day spent at Muirkirk. He described a visit to the grave of the Covenanter, John Brown at Priesthill, and also told a very interesting story of the organ in the E.U. Congregational Church, which we quote as follows:

“Back in Muirkirk I saw a wonderful little pipe organ which owes its preservation to the imagination and skill of the Rev. W. B. Stewart, minister of the Congregational Church. Its sweet music was heard 200 years ago in the London mansion of a former Earl of Galloway—his Eaton Square address is still on the back of it—and since then it has travelled more than any other pipe organ in the country. It was brought to Scotland about 150 years ago, and installed in the private chapel of Galloway House, near Wigton.

“When the Earl of Galloway built the Parish Church of Sorbie, in 1840, the Chapel was no longer needed and he gifted the organ to the Church at Kilmarnock, over in the Stewartry. Church union moved it to Creetownston, where it became a forsaken and silent relic. Its days seemed numbered, but the Rev. W. R. Stewart, who was then Minister of the Congregational Church at Carlieston, requested it for his Church. His request was granted. Fire destroyed Carlieston Church but the organ was saved. Once again it became a silent derelict, and its mellow mahogany was nearly broken up for firewood. And once again Mr Stewart saved it.

“He had become Congregational Minister at Muirkirk, and decided to install it in his Church. An estimate of £150 to bring it from Wigtownshire and install it scared him, so he got a carrier from Cumnock to do the job for £14. Then he went to work on it, removing all the 289 pipes, cleaning them, and replacing them. He tuned the instrument and wired it for electricity. Its mahogany was polished and its ivory keys cleaned. When the job was completed, a lovely little organ was filling the Kirk with beautiful tones which charm the ears of musicians. “To preserve something which is pleasant and beautiful is a worthy achievement in a world which spends so much time and money on destruction.”

An aftermath of this delightful little story is that Lord Galloway has heard of it and has avowed his intention of visiting Mr Stewart at Muirkirk and seeing the organ at the same time.



E. U. CHURCH, MUIRKIRK



SOUTHSIDE (INSTITUTE AND KAMES CHURCH)

## THE MELODY QUINTETTE



JIM MILLAR, JIMMY WILSON, CHRIS WYPER, JIM SHAW, JIM THOMSON, BERT DAVIDSON

Just prior to the turn of the 20th Century, Muirkirk had its own local poet, Thomas Floyd, who did much to preserve part of the history of the village, and his book, "Cairntable Rhymes," was a great success, and contained a wealth of historical interest, taken mostly from his own memory. He also recorded other aspects of days gone by in Muirkirk, and when reading events at Wellwood House, he produced the following article, which I think might interest present day readers. It was as follows:—

## GHOSTS OF MUIRKIRK



### *BEENIE*

Less than a hundred years ago superstition had still a firm grip on Scotland, and the belief in witches, fairies, ghosts, wraiths, warnings, omens, second sight, and old freits, greatly influenced the lives of the Scottish peasantry. Consequently, most villages in Scotland had a local spook or haunted house, and our own village, always in the front with everything good (and bad) had two — the old Wellwood House and Midhouse of Kames. From stories handed down to us, Wellwood House was haunted by a young lady known as Beenie's Ghost.

Who Beenie was when she was in the flesh, and what the tragedy was that prevents her from resting in her grave, tradition has left us guessing. In the Wellwood House there was an upstairs apartment known as Beenie's room, and this room was said to be her headquarters. When she took a notion to have a midnight ramble, she was seen to leave the room, flit down the stairs and glide away in the direction of the "Lang Plantin'." This plantin' extended from Entryhead to Haystackhill on the south side of the Cumnock road, and was composed of giant beech, ash, and plane trees. Some of the old trees may still be seen on the very edge of a later plantation. The "Lang Plantin'" was said to be a favourite howf of Beenie's, as she was often seen there walking under the trees weeping and wringing her hands. If she chanced to be disturbed she disappeared in the direction of Wellwood House.

On the stair leading to Beenie's room one of the steps was stained with several splashes of what looked like blood, and the servants when washing the stair always scrubbed the stain off, but the next day they were there bright as ever. About the middle of last century a Muirkirk joiner named Swinton was down at the Wellwood House doing some repairs, and one of the servants drew his attention to the step. He said he would soon sort that. So he removed the step and put in a new one. Strange to say, in less than two hours he was a corpse. To explain this, however, Swinton had been on the sick list for some time, and was taking a tonic prescribed by his doctor to be taken after food. The tonic was sent down along with his dinner to the Wellwood every day during the time he was there, but on that particular day, owing to some mistake, a bottle of poison was sent down instead of the tonic. Swinton, without noticing the difference, took it after his dinner, and died as stated above — a pure accident and coincidence. But superstition blamed poor Beenie.

## **GHOSTS OF MUIRKIRK (*Continued*)**

In the early sixties of last century a young man named Jack Grass was under-keeper on Wellwood Estate. He was a harem-scarum dare-devil, and was oftner drunk than sober. One night, after being up in the village drinking with some companions, he arrived back at the Wellwood in a very tipsy condition and declared his intention to sleep in Beenie's room. Although advised against it, he did so. The next morning he was asked how he had fared. He replied that he would never tell a living soul his night's experience, and that though they promised him the Wellwood Estate, he would never sleep another night in Beenie's room. Judging from the tipsy condition he was in when he went to bed, he must have spent the night fighting blue devils and pink snakes. Superstition blamed poor Beenie. All the same, from that night till he left the Wellwood with his employer (Mr Critchley), Grass remained a silent, morose, sober man.

About eighty years ago, the Wellwood Home Farm, which at that time stood a few yards from Wellwood House was occupied by an old lady named Mrs Mahoul. As she had spent most of her life on the farm, she was often asked for information anent Beenie and her life story. All the information she could give was that Beenie was just Beenie, and she whilst got a gliff o' her in the bygaun. Her information either proved Beenie's ghost was no myth, or else the old lady was endowed with a supernatural inferior complex. However, when the old Wellwood House was demolished in the late seventies of last century, Beenie must have changed her lodgings, as she has never been seen or heard since.

When some of the younger generation read this article I expect they will consider it "bosh." Nevertheless, Beenie and her "ongauns" were firmly believed in by the old folk of eighty years ago.

## **MIDHOUSE OF KAMES**

Midhouse-of-Kames was another old house said to be haunted. It stood on the side of the Springhill Road near where the present Midhouse Row terminates, and comprised a storey and attic, with a stable at one end and a milkhouse and byre at the other. As it is not mentioned in any of the books relating to the history of Muirkirk, its age can only be guessed, but judging from its aged and weather-worn appearance it must have been a farmhouse for a long period of years, and why and when it was reduced to the status of an ordinary dwelling-house I am unable to say. However, it was let as a dwelling-house in 1863, and a railwayman who had been transferred to Muirkirk applied for and obtained its tenancy, but before he occupied it the neighbours warned him that the house was haunted, and told him a number of hair-raising stories anent the strange "doings" of the spook or spooks. Some of the stories are worth repeating. An old shepherd named Tweedie, who had been employed at Midhouse and slept in the attic at night, said he was sitting at the fireside one night reading, with his dog lying at his feet, when he heard the sound of footsteps ascending the stair, entering the attic, walking round the floor, then departing the way they had come. Tweedie said he saw nothing, but when the footsteps were heard in the attic the dog gave an unearthly howl, leapt through the attic window, and was found next morning badly injured by the broken glass, and by neither

coaxing nor force could the dog be induced to enter the attic as long as it lived.

A milliner, named Miss Macfarlane, said she was one night working late, preparing hats for a wedding party. When she had finished she hung them on the snags of an old tree stump she kept in the attic for that purpose, and retired to rest. She lay a short time viewing the hats and calculating her profits, when without the least warning the stump crashed to the floor. In a fright she drew the bedclothes over her head and sobbed herself to sleep, feeling quite sure the hats were destroyed and that she was ruined. When she wakened in the morning she was overjoyed to find the stump standing, with the hats on the snags undamaged as she had left them.

A Mrs Gibson said her sister had occasion to pass Midhouse one winter night at a late hour. She arrived home in a fainting condition, and told them that when coming past Midhouse a white lady suddenly appeared at her side and kept step with her till near the foot of the square, when she vanished as suddenly as she had appeared. The girl's fright developed into a severe nervous break-down which proved too much for her, and she died shortly afterwards.

The railwayman, after hearing the above stories and a few more in the same strain, was half inclined to cancel his tenancy, but, on second thoughts, as it was a suitable house with a low rental (£1 per annum) he decided to risk it. Three years passed, and during all that time the spook or spooks lay low and did "nuffin." However, one night in November, 1867, three of the family (all boys) who slept together in the attic went up to their bed. They were scarcely under the blankets when a strange moaning sound commenced in the attic, apparently from some person in great pain. One of the boys whispered to his brother—"What is that, Johnnie?" He had scarcely finished speaking when bedclothes, boys, bed, and bed rungs were tossed on to the centre of the floor. And there they were — a mix-up of yelling boys and a sound as if two individuals were wrestling round the attic in a death struggle. When the parents heard the racket the father rushed up the stair, and pushing the door open, cried "In heaven's name what's that?" In an instant all was silent except the sobbing of two of the boys, the other one had fainted. Leaving the mother, who had arrived with a light, to attend to the boys, the father searched the closets, examined the window, and looked up the chimney, but could find no indication of anyone having been in the attic. After removing the boys downstairs he locked the door, and kept it locked till he obtained the tenancy of a house in the village. It has often been said that truth is stranger than fiction, and it was truly so in this case. I singled out the three detailed stories because I had absolute faith in the veracity of the tellers, and I can vouch for the truth of the attic incident, as the railwayman was my father, and I was one of the boys.

The old house was demolished a number of years ago, and the stones were used in the building of the shepherd's house nearer Springhill.

THOMAS FLOYD

Woodside, Muirkirk.

## NEW TRADERS

As the years progressed through the 20th Century in Muirkirk, changes in the business sphere became less frequent, and this was undoubtedly a symptom of a village in decline, and with rumours of impending pit closures throughout Scotland, the outlook was bleak.

However, some optimism was created when Miss Jean C. Brown opened a new business in 1955 at 105 Main Street (opposite Main Street School). This quickly became a popular shop, dealing in baby linen, Wool, China, etc. At this time it was announced that the Welcome Cafe was being carried on by Mrs M. Bone. This was also the year that Muirkirk Co-operative Society opened their self-service grocery and fleshing Branch at Pagan Walk. David Muir at the same time opened his cafe at Pagan walk. A very special event that year was the introduction of electricity into the Rows at Southside, and this was to make a tremendous difference to the households there.

The following year T. Johnstone & Son opened their new premises at Smallburn Housing Scheme, while Boland Brothers commenced a chimney sweeping and window cleaning service.

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## Old Muirkirk

From James Taylor's Photographic Collection.



MAIN STREET (WEST)

This photograph was taken in the late 1890's. The large building in the centre was Turner's Buildings, and was completely destroyed by fire in 1909. It comprised four shops and three dwelling houses. The white-washed thatched house on the left was a "Model," and was later converted into the Play Shed at Main Street School. The site of the fire was later used as a yard by Brown the Builder, and more recently houses the property of Mr James Currie.

## **RETURNED BY MOTHER EARTH**

This is a story with a happy ending, the events of which I remember very clearly. Just about the end of the Second World War, my mother (Margaret Thomson) lost her gold wedding ring. After a search, high and low, including some unlikely places, we came to the conclusion that the ring had probably slipped off my mother's finger while peeling the potatoes, and had been deposited in the dustbin along with other household rubbish. So this was emptied, too, but the evasive ring was not to be found. However, that was not the end of the story, because in 1957, while digging up some potatoes in the garden, she turned over some soil and saw what she thought was a child's toy ring encrusted in the soil. She picked up the object, and cleaning the dirt away discovered it was her own ring, lost for nearly 12 years. So, how much of a coincidence was that?

## **NEW VENTURES**

In that same year Gibson's Hairdressing Salon moved to more commodious premises at 107 Main Street. A new business also appeared with the announcement that Mr Hugh Moorhead was opening a Joiner's Workshop at Blackwood's Buildings, where the late William Blackwood & Son had served the Muirkirk people for many years as joiners and undertakers. The following year Mr James Gibson (Hairdresser) took over the business formerly carried out by Mr Brown at 109 Main Street. Mr James Gibson, Gent's Hairdresser) moved into his new salon at 89 Main Street (Victoria House). A few weeks later Mr Pringle opened his new business, The Cycle Shop, in the property next door. He had a wide selection of Cycles and Electrical goods on show. G. & M. D. Currie opened the new extension to their premises at 51-55 Main Street, for the sale of fruit, flowers, and vegetables. A new Hardware Department was opened by Muirkirk Co-operative Society at Pagan Walk. There were also changes in the Village. Robert Kirk gave up his Grocery business at 118 Main Street (next to Minnie Brown's); and David Muir opened a Petrol Filling Station at Smallburn (across from the Kames Club). At the top of the town a start was made on the new Council Houses at Bridge Street, and the face of Muirkirk was really starting to change.

## **THE GLORIOUS TWELFTH**

In the closing years of the 1950's there was a big decline in the birds being shot on the local moors. In 1959 it was as low as 29 brace, which is a far cry from the glory days when grouse were in great abundance around Muirkirk. The record of 400 brace in one day is now long gone, and who would have thought the present day scarcity would have been possible. Makes you think, at present there is not even the bleat of sheep on the moors, only the rattle of noisy quad bikes, who are making quite a mess in some places. "The march of time. . . ."

## **CLOSURE OF AULDHOUSEBURN GOLF COURSE**

For some time the future of Auldhouseburn Golf Course had been in some doubt, and the final nail in its coffin was the unrealistic grass cutting restrictions imposed on the Club by the resident farmer. As a result a special meeting of the Club was called when it was decided "to call it a day," and with no prospect of a new course, the members decided to keep the equipment and machinery, and to call in all the trophies. Bearing in mind

the isolated position of the Clubhouse, it was decided to offer this to Muirkirk Old Folks' Welfare Association. This was duly accepted, and the Clubhouse was removed to Smallburn, and after refurbishment, it was duly opened as Muirkirk Old Folk's Club in December of 1959. Muirkirk's oldest miner, Mr Tom Ross, had the honour of performing the opening ceremony, by turning the key in the lock of the front door.



THE 9TH GREEN AND CLUBHOUSE AT AULDHOUSEBURN GOLF COURSE

### **MORE CHANGES**

The new decade came with high hopes in a revival of the fortunes of our village, but truth to tell, most people were not too sure of what to expect, because they had seen for themselves how the changes in the village were affecting our way of life. The local Co-operative Society were very optimistic, and put great faith in the village, so much so that they decided in 1960 to introduce a Shopping Van Service, and this proved very popular, especially for older members of the community. The Co-op. did not forget the smokers in our midst when they introduced the new tipped cigarette — Rocky Mount! Then another Shopping Van appeared on the scene that belonged to C. & J. Rowe of Townhead. Mr Thomas Dunlop, who ran the Heathfield Petrol Station and General Store at the top of Glasgow Road, transferred this business to Mr James Gibson, 107 Main Street. Later its name was changed to Airdsmoss Filling Station. That same year the demolition was commenced of one of Muirkirk's oldest buildings, when the diggers moved in to raze to the ground The Black Bottle Inn.

Things were certainly changing! Another business to start up in Muirkirk was Bridge Electrics, who operated from 112 Main Street. And up Glenbuck way the Post Office changed hands after 68 years of service from the Muir family. In 1894 Mrs Muir took over and carried on till 1912. Mrs John Muir was in charge till 1946, when Mrs David Muir took over. The new Post Mistress was Mrs Anderson, whose husband had recently opened a small coal mine in the vicinity of Ponesk.

## **NEW LIFE FOR THE JUNIORS**

One local organisation feeling the pinch was our local Junior Football Club, and it got to the stage when it was decided in 1960 to disband the Club and withdraw from the League. A sad day for Muirkirk, it would seem, but a reprieve was in the offing, when at a meeting to consider the disposing of the Club assets, it was decided to rescind the minutes of the previous meeting, and the future of Muirkirk Junior F.C. was saved. The new President was Mr Thomas Lennox. But it was never going to be an easy job making a success of Muirkirk Juniors, and, not surprisingly, there would be many troubled times ahead, as we might add, as well as some pleasant memories of game played at Ladeside Park

## **A RECORD MADE IN MUIRKIRK**

Muirkirk has never failed to answer the call for a good cause, and this was the case in 1960, but what better way to tell the story than to reprint this letter from the "Muirkirk Advertiser":—

## **BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE**

(To the Editor)

Dear Sir,—On Monday and Tuesday, 21st and 22nd March, the Blood Transfusion Service paid its first visit to Muirkirk, when a most outstanding response was obtained from the citizens of Muirkirk, a total of 415 volunteers coming forward, and the Blood Bank benefiting by 360 donations. This is indeed a remarkable response from a town of its size, and I should like to express to all the volunteers our most grateful thanks for their donations of blood and our appreciation of the very high sense of public spirit which they show towards the sick and injured in our hospitals.

The Blood Transfusion Service requires 250 transfusions every day, and it is no small achievement that Muirkirk has been able to provide enough transfusions to maintain the needs of every hospital in the West of Scotland for approximately one and a half days.

I should also like to express our thanks to the many of the local ladies who came forward to assist our staff with rest room duties and teas for our donors, and we are also indebted to the churches, the cinemas, and the shopkeepers for their assistance to us in publicising our needs. We are also indebted to our local organiser, Mr Henry Scott, for the wonderful response, and to the senior pupils of Muirkirk School for their help in the recruitment campaign.

We hope to pay regular six-monthly visits to Muirkirk in the future, and I should like to congratulate one and all on the great success of our first visit.—Yours sincerely,

DOROTHY NELSON, Organising Secretary

15 North Portland Street, Glasgow, March, 1960.

That certainly made the chests stick out in Muirkirk — And rightly so!

## THE OLD FOLKS' RE-UNION

One of Muirkirk's most successful organisations over a long number of years was undoubtedly the Old Folks' Welfare Committee. This body of ladies and gentlemen put in a great deal of work to keep the coffers full, which enabled them to arrange various entertainments, etc., throughout the year. Apart from the annual trip, the one most anticipated was the Annual Re-Union, when the old folks were served a fine meal and entertainment, and a talk by an invited Chairman for the evening. Here is the list of guests at the 1960 event:—

### The Village

Mrs Brown  
Mrs W. Bradford  
Mrs Biggans  
Mr and Mrs T. Barrie  
Mr and Mrs L. Barrie  
Mr R. Barrie  
Mrs Min. Brown  
Mrs John Crosbie  
Mrs Cree  
Mrs Connor  
Mrs J. Campbell  
Mrs Dillon  
Mr and Mrs John Dempster  
Mr Fred Dickson  
Mr John Forsyth  
Mr John Fleming  
Miss B. Foster  
Mr and Mrs George  
Ferguson  
Mr and Mrs William Fulton  
Mrs Gilfillan  
Mr and Mrs James  
Girdwood  
Mr D. Gibb  
Mr John Gray  
Mr Tom Hogg  
Mr T. Haugh  
Mr John Hazle  
Mrs D. Hendry  
Miss Johnstone  
Mrs Kirkwood  
Mr James Loggie  
Mr and Mrs David Love  
Mrs J. McCrorie  
Miss N. McCall  
Mr A. McManus  
Mr and Mrs McGarrity  
Miss McKerrow  
Mr and Mrs J. Mackin  
Mrs A. Millar  
Mr John Mullen  
Mr and Mrs John Nelson  
Mrs Parker  
Mrs E. Ross  
Mr John Ross

Mrs Robb  
Mrs Steel  
Mr W. Shaw  
Mrs Stein  
Mrs J. Thomson  
Mrs Towle  
Mrs W. Taylor  
Mrs J. Vallance  
Mr James Wilson  
Mr and Mrs R. Wallace  
Mrs A. White  
Mrs James Wallace  
Miss Thomson

### Smallburn Scheme & Other Districts

Mr H. Anderson  
Mr and Mrs A. Anderson  
Mr W. Archibald  
Mr James Allan  
Mrs R. Allan  
Mrs T. Allan  
Mr A. Brown  
Mr and Mrs W. Bone  
Mr J. Bradford  
Mr R. Bradford  
Mrs G. M. Bain  
Mr and Mrs T. Begg  
Mr and Mrs M. Boland  
Mr J. Crawford  
Mr and Mrs T. Crawford  
Mrs Crosbie  
Miss J. Dempster  
Mr R. Dalziel  
Mr and Mrs W. Dow  
Mr Thomas Dempster  
Mr and Mrs James  
Davidson  
Miss L. Davidson  
Mr and Mrs A. Dempster  
Mrs Ford  
Mrs Frissie  
Mr and Mrs Frew  
Mr and Mrs Fulton  
Mrs Gold  
Mr D. Gibb  
Mrs M. Hill  
Mr and Mrs J. Hastie

Mrs Hannah  
Mr and Mrs Harrison  
Mrs Hunter  
Mr and Mrs Harrigan  
Mrs J. Johnstone  
Mr and Mrs Jamieson  
Mrs Lochhead  
Mr and Mrs Livingstone  
Mrs Lang  
Mrs W. Loggie  
Mr and Mrs A. Loggie  
Mrs McCall  
Mrs McFegan  
Mr and Mrs F. McDonald  
Mr T. McNally  
Mrs N. McKenzie  
Miss A. Marshall  
Mr and Mrs D. Mitchell  
Mrs Montgomery  
Mr and Mrs G. Murdoch  
Mr and Mrs D. Murdoch  
Mrs J. Murdoch  
Mrs A. Muir  
Miss Montgomery  
Mr and Mrs J. Moffat  
Mr and Mrs J. Menzies  
Mrs Peters  
Mr and Mrs G. Park  
Mrs Purdie  
Mrs Palmer  
Mr W. Queen  
Mrs D. Robb  
Mrs M. Robb  
Mr Thomas Ross  
Mr and Mrs W. Samson (a)  
Mr and Mrs W. Samson (b)  
Mrs Hugh Samson  
Mrs Spence  
Mrs John Taylor  
Mr A. Wilson.  
Mr Andrew Wilson  
Mrs Wallace  
Mrs G. Wallace  
Mr and Mrs Walker  
Mr and Mrs J. Weir  
Mrs A. Walker

## LADY BOWLERS LIFT N.C.B. CHAMPIONSHIP



LEFT TO RIGHT — MRS ROLLETT, MRS J. THOMSON, MRS DUNLOP, MRS HADDEN

This rink of Muirkirk lady bowlers did the Club well in the early 60's when they won the C.I.S.W.O. Ladies' Championship at Larkhall, by defeating Bridgeness-Carriden in the final by a single shot, after playing an extra end. In the semi-final they beat High Valleyfield by three shots. It is worthy of note that three of the ladies are old age pensioners. This made Muirkirk Club very proud.

### OUT WITH THE OLD . . . IN WITH THE NEW

While searching the files for information which may be of interest to readers, we sometimes hit a barren spell, and this would seem to be the case in the early 1960's. However one or two items did surface. The Regal Cinema, which had closed its doors in May 1960, took a new life in 1961. After alterations and refurbishment it was re-opened as the New Regal by Georgic Cinemas under the manager, Mr George Findlay, Sanquhar. The first film to be shown was "The Ten Commandments." Unfortunately, this meant the demise of the old Picture House at the Temperance Hall, which had been managed by Mr Findlay. This was rather sad as it meant the demise of a building which had come through a good passage of Muirkirk's history, and it meant that the "Advertiser" Office was now left in a rather precarious position. The result of which saw the start of negotiations to find new premises for the print works.

The Advertiser Office that year had been appointed agent for Butlin's Holidays, and quite a few locals booked their annual holidays there. Mrs S. McAtee moved here business to new premises at 114 Main Street. Doctor John C. Weir took over the medical practice of Doctor Thomas D. Duke.

### **“TRIGGER” HAPPY**

“Trigger,” one of the five pit ponies left at Kames Colliery, came up the pit for the last time that year, to spend the rest of his days in another environment. However, Trigger did not like the idea of coming up the shaft, so he was brought out via the Moor Heading, near Smallburn Housing Scheme. He fairly expressed his delight on reaching the open air.

### **AS ITERS SEE US**

Muirkirk has always had a good reputation for its friendliness, homeliness and hospitality and it was pleasing to note via a paragraph that at a meeting of the Western League a function to present a testimonial to former League secretary, Mr Hugh McAulay, was being discussed. One representative — from the North Section at that— proposed that the function be held at Muirkirk, which he thought was the most hospitable place he had ever visited. Very nice indeed, but how often have we heard similar comments?

### **BINGO**

There was not much happening in the village in 1962, but perhaps a sign of the times was the formation of the New Regal Bingo Club which was to hold a weekly session on Monday evenings. Also the newly altered and refurbished Co-operative Central Grocery Shop was re-opened

### **GLENBUCK REMEMBERED**

From the files of 1962 I reproduce an article which I am sure will be of interest to football fans—

#### **MARCHING ON**

Glenbuck as a village may be but a tattered relic of the old days, but the big sporting news at the weekend prompts us to think that, like “John Brown’s Body” of the old song, “its soul goes marching on.”



We refer to the achievement of Bob and Willie Shankly, members of the famous footballing family of Glenbuck, whose prowess on the football field played a big part in Glenbuck’s magnificent record over the years.

Since the end of their playing days, Bob and Willie (Left) have proved themselves just as successful in the managerial sphere and each would surely have one of their greatest moments ever on Saturday, when their teams won their respective League Championships. Bob, who manages Dundee, steered his club to win the Scottish First Division League championship for the first time in its history of almost seventy years; and Willie’s club, Liverpool, won the English Second Championship to gain re-entry to the First Division next season. A wonderful and possibly a record-breaking performance for two footballing brothers, and we offer them our heartiest congratulations and wish them continued success in the years ahead.

## COVENANTING HISTORY

While researching Muirkirk's history it is almost inevitable that some article on the Covenanters will emerge, and this certainly was the case in a perusal of the Advertiser's 1963 file, and I thought it would be of interest to reproduce it in full here:—

### COVENANTING HISTORY

The correspondent's letter on last week's issue re Covenanting History and the death of Richard Cameron has prompted us to look up the booklet, "Popular Guide to Douglasdale," by the late Mr John G. Galbraith, Douglas, first published in 1933, in which reference was made to Richard Cameron in a chapter under the heading of "The Sun Inn." We quote this in full.

### The Sun Inn

Although many of the older houses in Douglas have been removed, including the "Dungeon" and "Babylon," the oldest house still occupied is the Sun Inn, of which a back window lintel is dated 1621. This hostelry — probably the oldest licensed house in Scotland — stands right opposite the clock of St. Bride's.

On the eve of July 22, 1680, a party of Dragoons, under Captain James Bruce of Earshall, put up here after the battle of Aird's Moss, where Richard Cameron, "the Lion of the Covenant," had been slain, and one of the dragoons carried in a bag at his saddle the head and hands of the Covenanting leader. A sum of 5,000 merks had been offered for the capture of Cameron, dead or alive, so the soldiers spent a joyous night in this old building, their ghastly burden being housed in the upper chamber, the Stane Room. Next day the journey was completed to Edinburgh, where the severed limbs were displayed at the City gates.

In the bottom vaulted chamber, now used as the Inn bar, Hackston of Rathillet and four other prisoners were confined for a night. Claverhouse's men, about the year 1684, were frequent visitors to the Sun Inn, and held high revels within its walls. The upper chamber was at one time the Court Room of the local Barony Court, while the lower portion, with its sturdy door and six-feet thick walls, was used as a prison. Doubtless prior to even this the Sun Inn was an outpost for defence against attack on Douglas Castle, and the tradition of an underground passage connecting the old building with St. Bride's and Douglas Castle bears out this contention . . .

There is another chapter in the Guide concerning Covenanting days, and this concerns

### James Gavin's House

It seems curious that, despite the prominent part that Douglasdale and its inhabitants played in the troublous times of the Covenanters, no public memorial to commemorate this connection has ever been erected. Although it is said that 1200 men from this district joined the ranks and served under the banner of the Covenant, and the doing of Douglas natives roused the ire of Claverhouse and his Dragoons, it was left to one of the local victims of the persecutors' violence to erect the only memento of this stirring period of Scottish history. We refer to the lintel erected by James Gavin, the Covenanting Douglas tailor, over the entrance of his home in Main Street., which is still pointed out to visitors.

This stone, roughly carved with his own hands, bears the date 1695, the initials of himself and his spouse, and in the centre the shears and

goose pertaining to his craft. The scissors in this case carry a bigger significance than that relating to tailoring, for the story is told that when Gavin was seized by the dragoons they brutally cut off his ears with his own shears. He was latterly condemned and transported to the island of Barbados as a slave — a common punishment then meted out to such rebels. The stout-hearted Douglas tailor survived even this test, and ultimately returned to his native village, built his house, erected the stone, and there died in peace.

An interesting tradition is related concerning the capture of Gavin. He was known to be in hiding in the vicinity of Douglas about the year 1684, when many Covenanters were compelled to seek the “moor and the moss-hag.” One day, when a party of Dragoons were searching in the vicinity of Ironsilloch or Townhead Burn, they heard a dog barking. Following the animal, it innocently led them to the very entrance of the cave wherein its master, James Gavin, was hiding. Probably the dog had accompanied someone who had been conveying food to Gavin; had remained with its beloved master, and in its eagerness to defend him thus led to his arrest.

The vicinity of this cave was unknown for a long period, but comparatively recently a fall of earth disclosed the entrance to a cave by the bank of the burn. On investigation, evidences of occupation were discovered, and it is believed that this was the actual hidey-hole of Gavin in these olden days.



MAIN STREET, DOUGLAS

## FURTHER CHANGES

More changes were to be witnessed in Muirkirk in 1963. Neil Shaw started a Chimney Sweeping and Window Cleaning business, and operated from 44 Wellwood Street. After many years of serving the Muirkirk public Mrs Sarah McAtee (nee Boland) decided to call it a day and closed her millinery shop in Main Street.

There was also a change in the licensed trade when Mrs Isabella Lang (nee McKenzie), was granted the licence for the Masons Arms Hotel at 170 Main Street. Big changes, too, at the Co-operative premises in Main Street, when a new Hardware Department was opened in the old Drapery Department, and this was accessed from the Central Grocery Branch next door. Then Robert Young & Son (the business, then in the hands of Tom Young) moved from his Masonic Hall shop to premises next door to Douglas Crosbie. And Muirkirk was stunned by the announced of the proposed closure of the Muirkirk to Lanark railway passenger service, which was not altogether unexpected.

## “THE IMMORTAL MEMORY”

When loud the blast o' winter blaw,  
And a' the ground is white wi' snaw  
And simmer's but a dream,  
Though mony years hae slipped awa',  
He still is maister o' them a',  
Wi' nature for his theme.

Though hail may skite against the pane,  
And win' may blaw in driving rain,  
His bright poetic fire  
Still stirs the kernal o' the breast;  
Tae hear his sangs, the very best,  
What mare could man desire?

Twa hundred years hae noo gone by  
Since first we heard wee Rabbie's cry  
Within the auld clay biggin;  
A Januar' blast his birth did greet,  
And hanselled him wi' rain and weat,  
That blew in through the riggin'.

'Twas he who charmed Auld Coila's fells,  
Her far-famed streams, her lanes and dells,  
Where lark and mavis whistle;  
He'd stop his horse and his ploo,  
And write a wee bit verse or two,  
On daisy, moose, or thistle.

He sang o' love and bonnie Jean,  
Her witching smile, her sparkling e'en,

And mony a lass forby;  
He wrote their names in matchless style,  
By Ayr, and Doon and Ballochmyle,  
In sangs that live for aye.

Whene'er he got a line tae clink,  
Oot cam' paper, pen and ink,  
And musing went his fancies;  
Immortalised a holy pair,  
Satires like "Holy Willie's Prayer,"  
Or tramps in Poesie Nansie's.

He taught twa Ayrshire dugs tae speak,  
He made twa brigs gi'e ither cheek,  
Created Tam o' Shanter;  
He penned his lines tae ilka freen,  
Wi' mony a love sang in between,  
And ca'd him Rab the Ranter.

There's mony a spouter roun' the brod,  
Since first he turned the Ayrshire sod,  
Or winked at a lassie;  
And every year frae coast tae coast,  
"The Memory's" gi'en wi' mony a toast,  
And drank frae mony a tassie.

He preached the brotherhood o' man,  
And friendship, love for every clan,  
And as this old world turns,  
Ne'er heed the Bard's imperfect line'  
But social join in, "Auld Lang Syne"

## KAMES COLLIERY DRAW

The £830 prize won by Kames Colliery in the 1964 N.C.B. National Improvement Competition was allocated at a draw in Muirkirk Community Centre. The prizes (in Premium Bonds), went to the following employees:

**1st Prize—£250**  
Farrell, William

**2nd Prize—£100**  
Barrie, Thomas

**3rd Prize—£80**  
Hughes, Frank

**4th Prize—£20**  
Murphy, James  
Gray, Robert  
Hillditch, John

Moran, James  
Park, James  
Dunsmore, Dan  
Strickland, James  
Kirkwood, William  
Taylor, Campbell  
Crawford, James

**5th Prize—£10**  
Walker, Andrew  
McLeod, Reginald  
McIntosh, John  
Palmer, Thomas

Lennox, Thomas  
Fulton, William  
Frew, Thomas  
Eaton, William  
Mackin, Thomas  
Lochhead, Frank  
Short, James  
Park, David  
Murphy, James  
McKie, John  
McCabe, Michael  
Park, James  
Hillditch, John

Davidson, John  
Grant, Alex.  
Rattray, Alex.

### Consolation Prizes

(Books)  
Mitchell, Thomas  
Park, James  
Davidson, John  
Leslie, David  
Samson, James  
Hannah, William

## SHOP CLOSURE

At this time also the closure was announced of the business in Main Street carried on by Jean C. Brown. Selling wool and small merchandise this had proved a very popular shop over the years, and its closure was a disappointment to many Muirkirk shoppers. Sam Hillditch started a new business under the name of Enterprise Workshops at 50 Glasgow Road, next to the Church Hall, and formerly Callan's Smiddy, and was to cater for the motoring fraternity.

## LAST PASSENGER TRAIN TO LANARK



The last passenger train to leave Muirkirk for Lanark in October 1964, after British Railways decided to discontinue the line, closing the stations at Inches, Douglas West, Happendon, and Ponfeigh.

In my perusal of the files of 1967 this one took my attention, and I reproduce it here in full:—

### **LOCAL CONNECTION**

It was interesting to note a reference to our own parish in an article, "In Ayrshire—Without Burns," by James Anderson Russell, which appeared in a recent issue of "Scottish Co-operator," and we feel that the following excerpt will jog Glenbuck memories in particular:—

My own connections with Ayrshire are quite strong, and I have always been greatly drawn to the county, even without the impulse of Burns. The connection is strongest with the parish of Muirkirk. Most people probably approach that mining centre from the A74 at the Douglas road-end. A few miles then suffice to bring you to the Lanark-Ayr border at Glenbuck, but with Muirkirk but four miles further on. A more exhilarating entry, however, can be made by coming over the long stretch of moors from Strathaven, passing half-way Dungavel Lodge, the former shooting lodge of the Duke of Hamilton. It was for here that Hess was making in 1940 when he had to come down at Eaglesham for want of fuel. A far cry from those stirring uplands to the gaunt prison of Spandau, before which I mused a little when in West Berlin a few years ago. The Lodge is now a training centre under the National Coal Board. Many a time I have come this way. In my youth it was by cycle, though I recall back in the first war, when on summer holidays from school, I had my first run in a motor car. This marvellous vehicle made the return by Loudoun Hill and Darvel, and was a thrill indeed.

Muirkirk certainly seemed out of the world, and still creates that impression by its comparative isolation from the main centres of the County; the suggestion was once facetiously made that the easiest way to deal with it would be to transfer it to Lanarkshire!

It was my great-grandfather, Robert Russell, of Leadhills, who went to Glenbuck, where he became toll-bar keeper and inn-keeper, acquiring also an interest in a pit. His son, in turn, married Margaret Anderson in Muirkirk, giving me my middle name. However, the name most of all associated here is probably the unique and glorious one for a football team—the Glenbuck Cherrypickers !

### **FIGHTING FOR WORK!**

At this time Muirkirk was coming through a dark spell. We had lost our Lanark rail link, the imminent closure of Kames Colliery would soon be upon us, and the Rail link to Ayr was also about to be severed. But Muirkirk was not going to go down without a fight and an "Industry for Muirkirk Committee" was formed in an endeavour to find work for the local community. Their efforts caught the attention of the National Press, and the following appeared in the "Sunday Post:"

### **MIGHTY MUIRKIRK**

When the N.C.B. announced that they intended closing Kames Colliery at Muirkirk, Ayrshire, it looked as if the village was doomed.

But the villagers are determined their village will survive. They organised dances, etc., to raise money. Shopkeepers gave £50. School children raised £20 by singing round the doors. Now, with the money raised, they are

advertising on TV that there are factory sites and 1300 willing workers available in Muirkirk. That's the old fighting spirit.

Thanks "Sunday Post," and, of course to all the others who have drawn attention to our efforts in the current campaign.

## **LIFE GOES ON**

Life in the village had to continue, and changes were always taking place. Mr and Mrs Matthew Walker relinquished control of the Derby Cafe at Glasgow Road, and a new Cocktail Bar was opened at the Masons Arms Hotel. Later on Mr and Mrs Loggie Bradford took over the Derby Cafe. Mr R. D. Holland took over the licence of the Central Bar, and at the same time Mr George Wallace relinquished the licence for Wallace's Bar (former Rennie's Bar).

## **DIGGING UP THE PAST**

Here is an interesting article which was taken from an old news-cutting (name of paper unknown) published in 1882:—

### **MUIRKIRK**

Here, also, progress has been made, though, to some extent the pleasure has been marred by the feeling of acrimony which prevails, and which shows itself at every turn.

### **CHURCH MATTERS**

The members and adherents of the Established Church petitioned the heritors to be allowed to renovate and re-seat the church, offering to raise the necessary funds by voluntary subscription. This proposal was sat upon by a majority of the heritors present at a meeting called to consider the matter, on the plea that it would lessen the sitting accommodation. The members renewed their petition, and this time it was agreed to re-seat the area of the Church, to introduce hot water pipes, and to paint and clean it — the necessary expense to be borne by the heritors, with the exception of £100 to be raised by the congregation to pay for the heating apparatus. These improvements are presently being made, and meanwhile the members are worshipping in the U.P. Church.

Rev. John Robertson was inducted to the pastorate of the E. U. Church in place of Rev. L. King, who went to Falkirk; while the Rev. Father Lafferty succeeds Rev. John O'Neil in the R.C. Church, the latter having been transferred to Old Birnie. The chapel has had an addition added to it so as to make it also serviceable as a school room.

A branch of the Halleluiah Army, under the charge of two young ladies, has been established here, and is doing good work among the lower classes.

A Blue Ribbon Army has also been established, while the Good Templar Lodge continues to make progress. The monthly social meeting under the auspices of this Lodge is well worthy of imitation, and cannot fail to be beneficial.

## **DRAINAGE SCHEME**

For some time a drainage scheme for the village had been on the tapis, and after a good deal of playing at cross purposes and wasting a lot of money, it was agreed to go on with a scheme for putting in new kerbstones and laying the gutters anew. A committee was appointed to see this carried out, and it was done accordingly. After the work was finished the question came up for settlement—who should pay for it? One party held that those within the drainage district alone were liable; others contended that the whole Parish should be assessed. Ultimately a motion was carried assessing those within the drainage district only. The inhabitants held a public meeting and protested. The Board of Supervision upheld the protest; and so the matter as it stands is a “petty kettle of fish,” that there will be some fun in boiling.

## **SLAUGHTER HOUSES**

A raid was made on the slaughter houses during the year, when some of them were found to contain a privy in one end and a horse stall in the other, with the meat hanging up between, while all were more or less in an unfit condition. A vigorous warning from the Local Authority had some effect, though it is open to question whether they are as well yet as they should be.

## **SCHOLASTIC**

Nothing of great interest has occurred in the scholastic line. The Board, after a deal of parlez vouzing, has agreed to build a house for Mr Blaikie at Glenbuck.

## **ELECTION**

The election in March was a keen one, the two sides being the Angusites and the Howatsonians. After a stiff fight, Mr Angus’s party were the victors, though they had a narrow run for it. The two clergymen now on the Board have on one or two occasions shown their independence in the matter of voting, and thus things as a rule are going sweetly in this direction.

## **INSPECTOR OF POOR**

Mr Thomas Hight, inspector of poor, etc., having died, Mr Robert Leslie, stationmaster, was selected from a large number of applicants to fill the vacant office.

## **CHURCH OF GLENBUCK**

Early in the year application was made to have Glenbuck formed into a quoad sacra, which was eventually accomplished, and a handsome church has since been built and endowed with Rev. John Wallace as its pastor. Mr Wallace is an earnest Christian worker, and is a power for good in the Parish. The credit of this is due to Mr Howatson, the popular laird of the manor.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Science classes were carried on in both of the Public Schools; the one by Mr Donald teaching “Agricultural Chemistry,” and the other by Mr Cunningham on “Magnetism and Electricity.” Both had a good share of

success. Too much cannot be said in favour of these classes as a means of giving the sons of working people a chance to get on in life.

## **POLICE BURGH**

Could but the inhabitants be brought to see the benefits which they would derive from having Muirkirk formed into a Police Burgh, a few years would make such an improvement in it as is scarcely now conceivable. There are too many opposing interests at work, however, to hope that this will soon be accomplished, though nothing better could possibly happen.

## **A NEW VENTURE**

The big event of Muirkirk in 1968 was undoubtedly the opening of Muirkirk Working Men's Club at the top of the town, and it was to prove a very popular place for many years to come. The Club provided a much needed venue for entertainment, etc. Then another new social facility appeared when the British Legion Social Club opened their adapted Club premises in Smallburn. At the scheme Mrs M. Stitt took over the shop of George Bain & Son at Pagan Walk.

## **THEN THE BAD NEWS**

However, the popular Cycle Shop, managed by Mr James Pringle, in Main Street closed for business. Then there was the feeling of utter disbelief with the closure of Kames Colliery, when it seemed that all the hopes of the village had disappeared in one stroke. Another sad blow was when cracks appeared on the walls of Furnace Road School, and the building had to be closed.

## **BETTER NEWS**

On the plus side, an extension at the Muirtex Factory at the old Drill Hall, was looked on as a vote of confidence on behalf of the firm for the future of Muirkirk.

## **COAT OF ARMS?**

Over the years the question of a Muirkirk Coat of Arms keeps popping, and to put the matter to bed once and for all, here is a "Seen and Heard" article from the "Muirkirk Advertiser."

Quite recently there was a query about a Muirkirk Coat of Arms, and we remembering seeing a piece of pottery a number of years back with what appeared to be a Coat of Arms, with a castle as the main feature. Our townsman, Mr Steve Bradford has a "Muirkirk" brooch with the castle motif and a small, indistinct embellishment on either side, and his interest and curiosity prompted him to write to the Court of the Lord Lyon at Edinburgh. A reply gives the information that there are no villages with coats of arms. However, some were permitted to use the Coat of Arms of the principal local landowner.

We know that the district had titled landowners in the persons of the Earl of Loudoun, Lord Douglas, the Duke of Portland and Sir Wyndam Anstruther, but it may be that the "arms" depicted under the name "Muirkirk" on the pottery and brooches were perhaps added for souvenir purposes.

Over the years the anniversary birth of Robert Burns has always been celebrated with great enthusiasm by local organisations, and I thought it fitting to reproduce a column on the occasion of a special Burns anniversary, in the hope that it will be of interest to present readers, and I quote—

## **Centenary Celebrations of the Birth of Robert Burns, 25th January, 1859**

At this time of the year especially it is interesting to receive a copy of a report which we know will be read with great interest by Muirkirk folks everywhere. (It is evidently taken from an old newspaper cutting or an ancient minute book).

### MUIRKIRK

Burns Centenary was solemnised in a manner befitting the occasion. At noon the two sister lodges of St. Andrew and St. Thomas met at the Masonic Hotel and after being marshalled into order were joined by St. John of Jerusalem's encampment of Sir Knight Templars. All then proceeded to parade through the town and Ironworks to excellent music by the Newmilns and Muirkirk Instrumental Brass Bands.

After the procession St. Thomas and St. Andrews Lodge dined in Mr Allan's Hotel and spent an agreeable and harmonious evening.

The encampment of St. John of Jerusalem, No. 28, composed partly of masons of 40 and fifty years' standing, proceeded to Mr Kay's Black Bull Inn, where they had a most elegant and sumptuous repast. The cloth being removed, Mr C. McDonald, E.G., after—as is usual on such occasions, toasting Queen, Royal Family, Army and Navy, etc., proceeded to give the toast of the evening, "The Immortal Memory of Burns." Having briefly referred to a few of the leading events of Burns' life, he said "The fact of his songs being sung by all classes, being enjoyed by the peasant and giving pleasure to the poor, enlivening the cottage and driving gloom from the ancestral hall, being heard in the broad forests of the "far west," was sufficient proof of the high order of genius possessed by Robert Burns." The speaker then finished by drinking to the "Memory of Burns" with silent honours. Mr William Johnstone, the oldest Templar in Muirkirk, if not in Ayrshire, sang with great feeling, "The Farewell to Tabolton Lodge." As he remarked that he was now a very old man and that this might be his last visit to a Masonic Lodge, that when he came to the last lines of the song—

"One round, I ask it with a tear,  
To him, the Bard, that's far away"

the old man's heart fillet, and there was scarcely a dry eye in the room. Among the other toasts Mr David Ross, C.G., gave the "Memory of Sir Alexander Boswell." He said that he remembered about forty years ago being at the laying of the foundation stone of Burns Monument, and that Sir Alexander presided over the twenty-four lodges that met upon that memorable day, that he would never forget the mirth and harmony Sir Alexander caused to prevade the meeting, now excelling himself in singing Burns', and occasionally delighting brother masons with some of his own.

## MASONIC BALL

In the evening there was a Masonic Ball to which each “brother” brought a sister. Mr Allan’s ballroom was finely decorated with evergreens for the occasion. Dancing was kept up with spirit to an early hour. There was also a public dinner by the inhabitants of Muirkirk—A. Aird, Esq., Crossflatt, being Chairman and Mr C. Howatson, Manager, acting as Croupier.

## LOOKING BACK

The late 1969’s and early 1970’s saw the face of the village changing quite rapidly, and in 1969 O’Brien’s Hairdressing Salon at Pagan Walk was taken over by Mr A. Murray (A. Gibney). At the other end of the village Muirkirk Bowling Club was granted a drinks licence, and further up at the top of the town Muirkirk Working Men’s Club built an extension to their main hall.

It was the same story in the first year of the new decade. Robert’s, gent’s hairdresser, opened up for business in Pringle’s old shop. D. & D. Muir’s Smallburn Filling Station was taken over by Morris Pearce. Muirkirk Co-operative Society decided to close its Kirkgreen Branch, which had served the top end of the village faithfully for a long number of years. Another blow to the entertainment aspect of the village was the closing of the New Regal Cinema. That same year saw the demolition of the old Picture House, whose history went back to the last century, when as the Temperance Hall it became the Mecca for all sorts of entertainment in the village, and it held memories dear to most folks of Muirkirk. Sam Hillditch moved his Enterprise Workshop to 73 Glasgow Road (Heathfield).

Amid all the gloom one bright spot was the increase in grouse on the local moors, when on the Glorious Twelfth some good bags were had, one totalling 200 brace, which was the largest for some number of years. A change which caused some concern locally was the Transfer of Engagement of Muirkirk Co-operative Society Ltd to the Scottish Co-operative Retail Society. But here we are in 2010, and the “Store” is still there. The big story that year was undoubtedly the building of a new Primary School on the old Irondale House site, after the Furnace Road building had developed cracks due to the underground works below the school. A big eyesore was also removed from the Main Street with the demolition of Victoria Buildings, which for a long number of years had housed quite a number of businesses, with dwelling houses up stairs. Older readers will remember the Fire Station, which was housed next to the Close, while on the business front we had the shop of John H. Preston, the Barber, and as a boy many a hair-cut I had there. My recollection was that you had to be on your best behaviour or there would be no hair-cut! I was always intrigued by the white tiles on the walls of this shop, but older clients said it used to be a butcher’s shop. Victoria Buildings was also known as Meikle’s Row, after the family that built it. It started off as a single row, and later the upstairs portion was added, with entry being gained through the Close and up the stairs to the long landing. I started my married life here in the house above the Close, and what a marvellous view we had of Cairntable from the living room window.

Yes, days long gone, but not forgotten.

Here is a piece by a local poet which might just appeal to the footballing fraternity in the village:—

## A FOOTBALL SONG

There's mony a time as you journey through life  
 Things happen that make you feel sad;  
 You get wat tae the skin, or your horse disna' win,  
 Or the eggs you thocht fresh turn oot bad;  
 But ae thing abune a' the ithers,  
 Tha'ts shairly the hardest tae thole,  
 Is when ane o' the backs that ye swaggered were cracks,  
 Kicks the ba' through his ain bloomin' goal.

Tae lie waken wi' toothache the hale lee-lang nicht  
 And hear the clock chap a' the oors;  
 Tae hae put in the seeds and got nothing but weeds  
 When the things that you wanted were floo'ers;  
 Tae be oot o' a job, aye, and tryin'  
 Tae exist on the beggarly dole,  
 Disna' rile ye sae sair as when ane o' your pair,  
 Kicks the ba' through his ain bloomin' goal.

Tae be wearyin' sair for a reek o' the pipe,  
 Tae hae looked till your een start tae squint,  
 Tae hae matches an a' and a cutty (pipe] sae braw,  
 But naething ava tae put in't;  
 Tae be telt that ye've either tae "draw" or gang hame  
 When you wanted a "place" at the coal,  
 Disna' gie you a stert or gang tae your he'rt  
 Like the ba' birling through your own goal.

But don't be ower sair on the lad for his slip,  
 Tae err is no' onything new,  
 He's maybe nae don, but the boots he has on  
 May be faur ower big—**even** for **you!**  
 So let us be fair tae each other,  
 And oor he'rts wi' this maxim console—  
 The world's greatest men make a slip noo and then  
 And kick the ba' through their ain goal.

JAMES DONAGHY,  
 Montreal.

## THE TEMPERANCE HALL

Previously, I mentioned a bit about this former old Building in Muirkirk, and I have since unearthed an article produced by my predecessor, Mr John Samson, and should be of interest to older members of the community. It reads:—

The Temperance Hall, which in later years became better known as The Picture House, was erected about 1884, and what an important event to the village that would be indeed. We remember being told that when it was built, or just afterwards, a terrific gale blew the roof off the new building, but whether it was the original or replacement roof that we remember right up till the main hall was demolished just a few years ago, the solid, semi-circular and extremely well built super-structure was a lasting tribute to the workmanship and the materials used in these days. Its solidity was apparent in more recent years when the otherwise substantial walls began to show the strain of its weight.

### Geordie Lees's Brae

The site now cleared was part of a field owned by Geordie Lees of the period — the Temperance Hall Brae was then known as Lees's Brae, and it was on this field that most of Muirkirk's visiting entertainers pitched their tents and performed for the visitors.

When one considers that in those days the local workers' holidays seemed to consist of the Saturday following the Cattle Show in June and the old Fast Day in July, a visiting "show" between times must have been of extra special significance. In our own youth we have heard the "auld anes" of the period refer to these entertainments with enthusiastic appreciation. Incidentally, there was no "booking up" for the holidays at that time. The June holiday invariably consisted of a picnic to the top of Cairntable (weather permitting) and the July holiday of a day trip to Ayr for a paddle in the briny.

### The Hall

Returning to the Temperance Hall with its fine main and lesser halls, ante and committee rooms, it naturally became the hub of village life, social and otherwise. Meetings of all kinds, public and committee, weddings, dances "big" and public, the flower and bird shows, concerts, contests—vocal, variety, and instrumental—and entertainments, from the magical to the melodious, in both halls all contributed for many years to keep this a busy, though strictly-run establishment.

Friendly Societies, like "The Rechabites," "The Gardeners," "The Foresters," "The Shepherd's," "Band of Hope," and the "Good Templars," etc., all had their headquarters here, and events which will still remain fresh in our memory are the Co-operative annual socials (sometimes nick-named "Guzzles"), in which really top-line artistes invariably appeared—musical artistes we mean, although there were the usual gourmants' (big-eaters), too—the childrens' operettas and the early old folks re-union. Also prominent were the Salvation Army (who built the Hall), who usually had two active lassies conducting meetings for the youngsters and adults in the lesser hall. Then came the advent of "The Pictures," from the "magic lantern" shows came the periodic visits from the travelling "moving pictures" and eventually the hall became a permanent cinema, although concerts, socials, and theatrical productions, etc., were put on from time to time, with the

seats being removed after the show to make room for the dances which followed into the “wee sma’ ‘oors.”

### **“The Advertiser Office”**

About the same period as the Hall was built, Mr William Shaw Smith, a Carnwath man, with printing and stationery experience in Lanark, Edinburgh, Alloa, and Arbroath, set up a small business in Main Street, and was in his third premises — all within a stone’s throw of the Temperance Hall—when the office perished along with an ironmonger’s shop and houses above in a disastrous fire in the two-storey red sandstone building similar to and adjoining that still standing just west of The Stile.

Then the composing room of “The Advertiser” was transferred to the Lesser Temperance Hall, with the machine-room and machinery, which had escaped damage in the fire, being re-erected behind the Hall. So it was that the demolition of our old printing office last week removed the last traces of the Temperance Hall.

### **A New Chapter**

“Gone, but not forgotten,” you might say, but, happily, it is just a case of “off with the old and on with the new,” for the site is earmarked for a housing development which will play an important, though perhaps not so conspicuous a part in Muirkirk’s future.

## **BACK TO THE SEVENTIES**

In 1971 Marty’s Boutique opened a shop at 89 Main Street and W. Beck and R. Park started a Painting and Decorating service from 20 Shawknowe Avenue. A very important event in Muirkirk’s history took place with the opening of the I.F.E. Wing and Primary School. The Derby Cafe at 9-11 Glasgow Road came under new management, with M. Gray as proprietor. That same year extensive alterations and decoration were completed at Muirkirk Bowling Green, with a new locker being added to the rear of the old building, as well as a kitchen. The following year G-K Wear opened a new clothing factory at Furnace Road in the School Dining Hall next to the Printing Office.



TEMPERANCE HALL BRAE

Continuing his articles on a bygone era in Muirkirk, Mr John Samson, former Editor of the "Advertiser," wrote —

## **THE REGAL CINEMA**

The demolition of the Regal Cinema, now in progress (1972), will end another most important chapter in the life of Muirkirk, and to most of our older readers especially, will recall very many happy memories of youthful days.

The building was formerly one of our local churches, the U.P.C. (United Presbyterian Church), which, if my memory serves us right, merged with the Free Kirk at Glasgow Road. The U.P. Church was then transformed into a hall, named the Dundas Hall (after the Rev. John Dundas, possibly the last U.P. Minister in Muirkirk).

The Dundas Hall in turn became a tremendously important centre of recreation and culture in our village life, and performed many of the functions which had formerly been vested in the old Temperance Hall. Although a smallish function suite compared with the Temperance Hall, the Dundas Hall filled the bill admirably for many years, with its entrance vestibule, the stair on the right leading up to the gallery, the hall proper and stage; and below a lesser hall and small committee room.

Many important and memorable functions come to mind as we recall this happy establishment. Socials, weddings, silver weddings, political meetings (very amusing in those far off-days), band, choir and orchestral concerts. We remember for instance, a visit of a very talented choir from the Irvine Valley, under a Mr Brown, and which, with some professional assistance gave a thoroughly commendable performance of Handel's Messiah to a large and captivated audience;



DUNDAS HALL

Our own Mr John Devine's choral and orchestral concerts, and not forgetting a number of well-produced children's operettas and kinder spiels to which he devoted his life ungrudgingly; visits of the famous S.C.W.S. and other well-known brass bands of the period; the socials of the old Muirkirk Lapraik Burns Club, with the revered chairman, the late Mr Archibald Freebairn, presiding in the old and still well preserved chair of the Poet; the Ornithological Society shows, travelling and well-known variety and dramatic companies; the after-midnight dances when New Year fell on a Sunday or Monday; a Salvation Army Wedding; sales of work and carnivals, etc, etc; and in the Lesser Hall mining student socials and other lesser meetings and committee sessions (all of the greatest value and importance to Muirkirk at that time)

Later Mr James Muir from Lesmahagow took over the hall for use as a cinema. The building was extended for this purpose, and became a modern and imposing centre of entertainment. Most unfortunately, our brand new cinema had only been in existence for a short period, when it was gutted by fire, but the redoubtable owner soon had it functioning again in its intended purpose, and it was a cinema to be proud of, with its handsome and life-like murals of several notable local scenes on its high walls. Many important meetings were held there on Sundays, but, of course we were now in the cinema era in which Muirkirk, with its two cinemas could and did offer a surfeit of talking picture entertainment on no fewer than seven nights a week, and local inhabitants and hundreds of visitors on Sunday nights took full advantage.

Then, as everyone knows, the cinemas took the slide with the advent of wireless and T.V., and the Regal was disposed of to Mr George Findlay, the former "opposition leader" at the Picture House (Temperance Hall). Mr Findlay carried on gallantly until the Regal was no longer an economic feasibility, and we all know the end of the chapter now. Still, memories are valuable things . . .

OCTOBER 15, 1936. PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

**Public Notices.**

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**Dundas Hall, Muirkirk, for Only 3 More Nights.**  
Tonight (Thursday), Friday, and Saturday, Oct. 15, 16, 17. Change of Program.

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BIG SUCCESS OF THE EVENING

## Follies Vaudeville Co.

Over Two Hours Exp. cns Train of Talent. . . Vaudeville's Biggest and Best Show.

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**THE GREAT HILLARDS,**

World-renowned Conjurers and Illusionists . . . Featuring the Sensation of the Century.  
2500 Challenge Problem—The Unsolved Trunk Mystery. . . Also the Magical Brewers.  
Come and have a drink

The Famous **DUVAL,** Unique—Novel  
**DECCA SISTERS,** **DUVAL,** The Yodeling Ventriloquist.  
Singing and Dancing the Blues away. . . The Popular Scotch Soprano.

**GEORGE WALTERS,**  
The Renowned Scotch Comedian.

**Crazy Comics.** **Billy Benson,** **Kitty Ford,**  
Pianist and Piano-Accordion Expert. . . The Mystic Maid.

Weird and Wonderful—  
**MARTIN BREEDIS,**  
The Wonder Man of the Age, performing Feats of Strength never attempted by any other Man.

**FREE GIFTS NIGHTLY—Come and Get a Present.**

---

Most Refined Show Touring. . . Nightly at 8 o'clock

**PRICES—** 1/6 (Reserved), 1/-, 6d Children 6d and 3d.  
Seats Booked at the Hall No Extra Charge.

**ALL-FUN CHILDREN'S MATINEE** on Saturday at 2.30. Children, 3d.

In the last of Mr John Samson's articles on Bygone Days he chose to recall the days of Charles Howatson of Glenbuck as follows:—

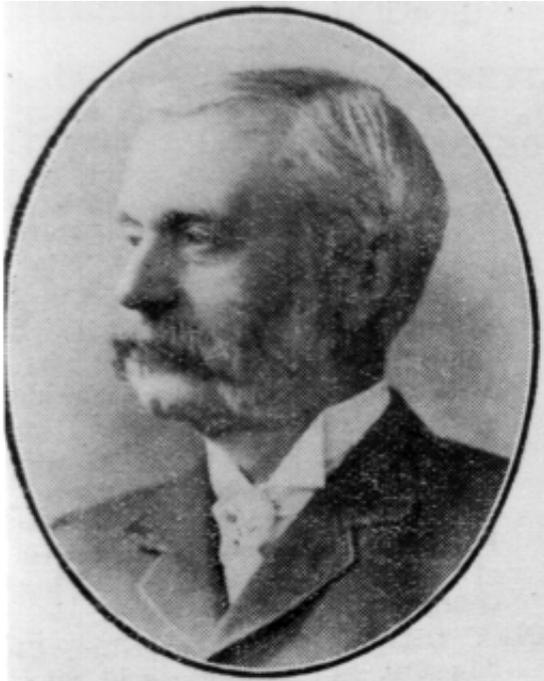
From our Issue of August 13, 1908

## GLENBUCK AND ITS LAIRD

"The Scottish Field" in its issue for this month contains reading of more than passing interest alone to the inhabitants of Muirkirk Parish, viz. an article entitled "Glenbuck House . . . . ."

The frontispiece of the current number shows an excellent likeness by Elliot & Fry of the genial Laird of Glenbuck. Although an old man, for he is now 76, Mr Howatson still retains his pristine energy and distinguished appearance.

G.E.T., the writer of the article, briefly alludes to the mountain passes and glens through which the good Lord James swiftly and silently advanced about the time of Loudoun Hill (1306-07), to attack and destroy, on three



separate occasions, the English Garrison in the Perilous Castle of Douglas, and there is no doubt that these wilds around Glenbuck were the favourite haunts of the great ancestor of the Douglas family in his days of hardship and oppression; as they also were, later on, the hunting grounds for deer and stag in the days when peace and prosperity returned.

He also refers to the saying of the Earl of Angus, grandson of the famous "Bell the Cat," about the skirts of Cairntable, and his ability to keep himself there against the whole English host. Even at the present day these wild, swelling hills must exhibit an appearance little changed during the centuries; so that the traveller who has visited the district of John Brown's mournful story had viewed the same scenes as the martyr saw, and has looked upon the most solitary and melancholy wilderness in the whole of Scotland south of the Forth.

In point of time, however, there is a rather interesting historical incident which the writer had omitted. When Robert Paterson (Scott's Old Mortality) was a man of about 30 years of age, he gave great offence to a small detachment of Prince Charlie's Highland army, then returning from their unfortunate expedition to Derby, 1745-46. Paterson told these men as they were passing his house in Morton Parish, Dumfriesshire, that their retreat might have been easily foreseen, as the strong arm of the Lord was evidently raised not only against the bloody and wicked house of Stuart, but against all who attempted to support the abominable heresies of Rome. For this candid piece of opinion the Cameronian got his house plundered and himself marched off as a prisoner. The Highlanders allowed him to escape (he was of no use to them) when they reached Glenbuck. From this place they made their way to Lesmahagow, where they rejoined a portion of the

main army. Lesmahagow at that time was plundered and partly destroyed by the Highlanders. The Parish minister had given great offence to them in that he and some of the parishioners had in some traitorous manner caused the apprehension and subsequent execution of Macdonald of Kinloch Moidart, whose ghost is still alleged to haunt the side of the manse.

The following is the story as told by a well-known Muirkirk man who lived for twenty years in the old Manse at Lesmahagow. It is now transformed into the stables of the Commercial Hotel. "One dreary moonlight night, as the minister of Lesmahagow was taking a walk out of the town, he chanced to meet a stranger muffled up in a long cloak. Curiosity prompted him to turn his head, and at the same moment the wind blew the stranger's cloak aside, disclosing clearly to the Minister's view a glimpse of the kilt he wore underneath. Mr Hamilton, at once, by a short cut, reached the town and, having given the alarm, a body of men laid in wait and caught the stranger near the upper part of the village. He proved to be Macdonald of Kinloch Moidart, who was travelling the country unattended, having been sent back by the Prince from England, on a mission to the Western isles. This unfortunate gentleman, at whose house Prince Charles landed on his first arrival, and who held the office of his aide-de-camp, was taken from Lesmahagow to Edinburgh, and there executed. Some time after the Battle of Culloden, as the Minister sat in his room, and his daughter, a strong-minded woman, lay in her bed, the door suddenly opened and a tall Highlander slowly stalked up the apartment. The Minister was aghast, for he recognised his visitor as Macdonald. The apparition stood for some time as one in a brown study, and then walked slowly out and so down the stairs. The daughter rose, and she and her father, taking the candle with them, examined the street door, which was found locked and barred from inside. Tradition still maintains the place is haunted, though our authority says he never saw anything there.

What "Old Mortality" thought of his enforced jaunt to Glenbuck about Christmas in 1745 is not recorded, nor the appearance of the village either, although Aiton about fifty years later, mentions both it and Muirkirk in anything but felicitous terms. In Glenbuck, what a contrast are the garden plots, white-washed cottages and general cleanliness to Aiton's account of one hundred years ago, when the age of the houses could be approximately determined by the size of the manure heaps at each side of the front door, before which in rainy, and some times in fine weather too, was a pool of brown water in which children and ducks dabbled in equal contentment. (See Aiton's Survey of Ayrshire in the Baird Institute, Muirkirk).

As G.E.T. in the "Scottish Field" remarked, Glenbuck (and Muirkirk, too), instead of being spoken of with opprobrium, as Aiton justly did in his day, can now be put forward by himself and others as model villages regarding neatness of taste and sanitation.

A very interesting but short biography is given of Mr Howatson. It is not our intention here to enter into this subject, for many here know of it and anyone anxious to learn more can easily become a possessor of the "Scottish Field." We will only remark that his has been a strenuous life; and that although locally he is credited with a few faults by various grumblers, no one can impugn his diligence, perseverance, patience, temperance, love of improvement, and general desire to see the countryside do well. Neither can anyone deny that by the exercise of these qualities he has accomplished a

great deal of benefit to the Parish in many ways as well as improved his own fortunes. There never was any strongman yet, read or heard of, without his "unfreens," as Bailie Nicol Jarvie described a class of Roy Rob's enemies. The famous Thomas Carlyle has left on record the statement that the true improver of his country is that man, who has made two blades of grass to grow where one was only in former times, and in this light, Mr Howatson must be judged at present.

In horticulture, take his square walled garden on the brae face. The difficulties encountered here to get "the soil fruitful nevertheless," must have been, though upon a small scale of magnitude, something similar to Peter the Great's troubles in founding the handsome city of St. Petersburg. We have seen not only his gardens "which are fruitful," but the vinery and peach houses. Knowing a little of these matters we considered the results before our eyes as marvellous at the elevation of nearly 1,000 feet. Had it been Dumfries or Ayr, or even Cumnock, we would not have been surprised, but Glenbuck, of all places, filled us with astonishment.

As to agriculture, we shall quote: "At the same time Glenbuck Estate itself has been immensely improved by its owner. Draining and liming have been carried on upon that land, replacing most of the old bleak heath with a sweet green sward, natural grasses and clover. Plantations have been made on exposed parts, which afford much-needed shelter for the flock.

But it is to his almost intuitive powers as a sheep breeder (for neither he nor anyone else could explain in words how the grand results are achieved), that Mr Howatson's name has become a household name among the flock masters of our country. We are told for instance that he has so managed to improve the old Glenbuck breed of black-faced sheep, which he partly acquired from the late Mr James McKersie, that the average weight of a fleece has gone up by about two ponds, and that the monetary value of the sheep has advanced in equal proportions. This is surely making two blades of grass come where only one grew formerly. Then, by judicious selection of his rams and ewes, he has overcome a terribly difficulty in a wild and cold region as regards the early birth of lambs. According to the "Scottish Field," these came to be born woolled all over with so thick a natural coat that the severest weather had no effect on them.



GLENBUCK HOUSE

The photographs in the "Scottish Field" in connection with the article are very good, and what is better, are very true to nature. Still we think a view of the other side of the front would have produced a more artistic effect. The New Rock Garden and the Glen Path are lovely glimpses of scenery, the latter looking almost tropical in the richness of its vegetation. The Entrance Lodge is a very clever and true exposition of "the art."

There is beside a picture showing a few of the numerous gold and silver trophies Mr Howatson's stock has won on many occasions, together with handsome acknowledgments from the public and his friends on outstanding changes in his busy life. In the centre of the journal there is a capital photo, by Brown of Lanark, of a shearling ram, "Morning Sun of Glenbuck," which gained the first prize at the Highland and Agricultural Show at Dumfries, 1903, being at that time the TWELFTH shearling ram in succession, bred by Mr Howatson, gaining the first prize at the Highland Show . . . .

(We can only think and wonder nowadays at this fantastic record)

## CRICKET QUERY

From time to time mention is made of a Cricket team in Muirkirk, and I take the opportunity to verify that there was in fact two cricket teams operating in the village in the early 20th century. They Were:—

*Muirkirk Evergreens*—S. Binning, J. Rodger, Jr., J. Henderson, J. Rodger, Sen., H. McLean, W. S. Smith, J. Phillips, Doctor Barbour, H. Bell, R. Adamson, and George M. Smith.

*Wellwood Nomads*—J. Robertson, C. McIntosh, A. Grant, J. Gavin, W. Strawbridge, H. Hume, T. Floyd, J. McCorqudale, M. Holden, T. W. Buchanan, and C. Hibberd.



MUIRKIRK EVERGREENS

## RECREATIONAL GLENBUCK

The Public Hall at Glenbuck played a big part in the recreational lives of the villagers, and was well patronised in the early part of the 20th century. Carpet bowls was a favourite with the locals, and on one occasion a challenge match between Glenbuck and Inches resulted as follows:

<b>Glenbuck</b> —J. Milliken		<b>Inches</b> —R. McCulloch	
J. Hamilton		J. McMillan	
J. Wallace		R. Crawford	
D. Drylie	22	J. Steele	10
J. Allison		T. Rankin	
D. Blyth		W. Frame	
J. Anderson		D. Hamilton	
W. Hastie	16 — <b>38</b>	A. Calder	19 — <b>29</b>

A blizzard one Saturday in 1913 caused the scheduled football match between Glenbuck Cherrypickers and Cronberry Eglinton to be cancelled, and the Games Committee of the hall took the opportunity of organising a double-handed carpet bowls tournament, for which there was a large entry. The finishing stages resulted as follows:—

### Semi-Final

William Brown & George Bone 9; James Davidson & James Allison 5  
Peter Jackson & John Anderson 8; James Cameron & John Milliken 7

### Final

William Brown and George Bone beat Peter Jackson and John Anderson

In another Carpet Bowling tournament the result was:—

1<sup>st</sup> — A. Smith & J. Anderson (Cheese) 9

2<sup>nd</sup> — J. Dalziel & D. Barr (Potatoes) 6.

At the same time a Summer Ice tournament drew a large entry and the result was as follows:—

### Semi-Final

James Menzies and Sam Allison 8, Adam Smith sen. & James Davidson 7.  
John Barr and George Wallace 7, Alex. Park and John Bain 6.

### Final

James Menzies and Sam Allison 10, John Barr and George Wallace 5.

## LIGHTSHAW PIT DERBY

That same year the annual football derby game between teams representing Lightshaw 9-ft and Lightshaw 6-ft. was played at Toll Park, Muirkirk, and ended in a 4-4 draw. In the replay the 6-ft boys ran out winners by 3-1. The teams were:—

9-ft—McAuley; A. Dempster, J. Dempster; Hogg, Bradford (capt.), W. Samson; Ross, McCall, H. Samson, Colthart, Murray.

6-ft.—Murray; G. Kilpatrick, Archibald; A. Scott, Hamilton, W. Scott; R. Gebbie, G. Gebbie, Gilfillan (capt.), J. Kilpatrick, Robb.

# SIR WALTER SCOTT

## *The Muirkirk Connection*

I was quite surprised to come across an article I had previously missed in the 1913 files of the "Muirkirk Advertiser," which I found interesting, and thought it worthy of inclusion in my notes. Here it is in its entirety:

### SIR WALTER SCOTT AT MILTON LOCKHART

In the May number of Chamber's Journal, from the pen of the Rev. Thomas Cassels, there appears an excellent written article on the above subject. While the article is interesting to all Scotsmen, it is not without local connection. In the treatise the writer gives an account of an interview he had with an old man, who lived near Carluke, who had actually seen and spoken to Sir Walter Scott. Formal introductions over, the old man (Mr Purdie) said he was a clockmaker to trade, and was employed that January day in 1831 repairing and setting up one or two clocks which had been recently brought to Milton Lockhart, and while he was still busy with his little wheels and pinions the carriage with the famous visitor drove up.

"Were you wanting to see him?" I asked.

"Was I no? We a' wanted a keek at the Tillietudlem man."

"And you saw him?" I said to Purdie.

"I did that. No' when he arrived, but a wee while after. I was cleanin' the escapement o' ane o' the clocks at a wee table when he cam'. He had been ootbye, an' looked gey tired. He jist drappit doon in the first chair he cam' to."

"What was he like?"

"Man, he had a face like a haggis!"

"Did you hear him speak?" I asked.

"Did I no! Man, we had a crack the gither, him an' me. Ye see, the chair he sat doon on was jist beside me, an' I'm thinkin' he couldna be near anybody without talkin' to them."

"Do you mind anything he said?"

"Mind! Af course I mind. I mind it a'. Ye see, I was in Lanark next day, an' Mr Mingies, the minister, garred me go through it a' to him; an' then Provost Hutchison had me into his shoppie, an' him an' twa-three mair speered me a' about Sir Walter, for they were rale ta'en up about him. Sae that fixed it in ma mind like."

"Well then tell me."

"Oh, he began about clocks. "Mister Peevot," he says, "Why does a clock warn?" "Peevot" was the name clockmakers gaed by in thae days, jist as we ca'd a cobbler a "Souter."

"So he asked you why the clock warns three minutes or so before it strikes?"

"Ay; an' of coorse I let him see hoo it was, frae the ane I was workin' at."

"Well," I asked Purdie, "what else?"

"Weel," he replied, "when I had tell't him about the wye a clock warns, says I tae him, "Here's something in your line, Sir Walter." "An' wi' that I whupped aff the dial sae that he could see the foreplate. Noo the clock wisna

a new ane. It had been in a clockmaker's haun's afore, an' the chap scratched something on the brass foreplate—as young Peevots wud whiles dae. I thocht it wud interest him, as I let him see it. He couldna read it; nor did he try. He was ower brin', but I telt him whit it was, for I was aye a guid reader."

"What was it?"

"Jist twa lines o' a sang—naething mair. It wad hae been rale nate if they had been his ain, but they werna. They belanged to as guid a man, though, an' that's Rabbie Burns:

"I will loe thee still my dear  
While the sands o' life shall run."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, he gied a bit lauch. "That's no' bad," says he. "It mixes Love an' Time thegither. It's a fine text for a clock. I wunner wha the sentimental Peevot was?" says he; but I could gie him nae licht on that, for I didna ken masel.

I asked the old man Purdie if he remembered anything else.

"Oh aye," he replied. "I bided aboot the hoose that nicht. I sleepit in the stable-laft, an' I gied a haun' at yokin' the horses in the mornin'. When Sir Walter Scott was comin' oot I gaed doon amang the servants that were staunin' aboot to see the last o' him, an' he saw me amang them an' cried me ower to him. An' then he speered me ma name. "Purdie!" he says. "I hae reason to ken that name." An' he put a shillin in ma haun'."

"And is that all now that you mind about him?" Tell me, did he look frail as he got into his carriage?"

"Ay, he did that; but a' the same he was in a steve hurry, an' slippit as they haunded him in. There was a mason chiel there, an' I heard him cry, "Canny, Sir Walter! Canny!" "An' that's the last I heard."

There need be little doubt, I think, as to the identity of the "mason chiel" in Purdie's story. He could not be anyone but John Greenshields. This man was living then with his parents on the Milton-Lockhart estate. He was a working mason but was a genius with his chisel, and his sculptures have an abiding place among the masterpieces of Scottish art. Scott was greatly interested in him. In his "Journal," under 18th January, 1829, he wrote: "We went, the two Lockharts and I, to William's new purchase of Milton We found on his ground a cottage where a man Greenshields, a sensible, powerful-minded person, had at twenty-eight (rather too late a week) taken up the art of sculpture."

On the occasion of the second visit, in 1831, Greenshields met Scott again. In the interval the formal had grown famous, for his statue-group of the Jolly Beggars had been exhibited and applauded in Edinburgh. The figures were original; they were true. They were the work of a man who, like Burns himself, was a man of the soil, and owed no debt to any school or master. It was then universally admitted that here was the man who could transfer in living stone to future ages the features and form of the greatest of Scotsmen, who we all knew to be fast approaching the limit of his mortal span. So, when the two men met once more at Milton-Lockhart that July day of 1831, there was in the sculptor's mind the thought of the task tacitly assigned to him. "Greenshields was at hand," writes Lockhart and he (Scott) talked to him cheerfully, while the sculptor devoured his features as under a

solemn sense that they were under his eyes for the last time. Next morning at the hour of departure, as I would gather from what Purdie told me, Greenshields, "the mason chiel," was either helping Scott into his carriage or anxiously watching, and his "Canny, Sir Walter! Canny!" was the farewell of those two leal and great-hearted Scotsmen.

The word might well have been addressed to Greenshields himself. He, like Scott, overworked himself. He was not "canny." He produced, indeed, many fine statues; one notably of Sir Walter, the "Sic Sedebat" statue, which pleased Lockhart, and is now in the lower Parliament Hall (Advocates' Library), in Edinburgh. Another is that which is familiar to all who know the Western Highlands, and which, we may be sure, the "Author of 'Waverley,' would fain have seen—the statue of Prince Charlie by Loch Shiel, where, carved in stone, the young Chevalier stands gazing up Glenfinnan, as if harkening to the pibroch of Lochiel.

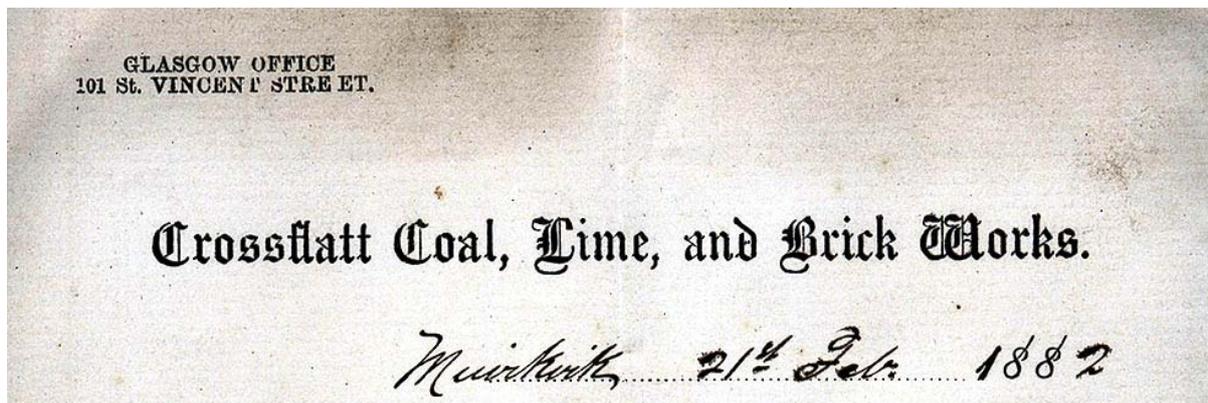
But these and many other labours brought too soon the end. In the year 1835, at the age of forty, in the little cottage at Milton-Lockhart, John Greenshields died. The last effort of his genius had been to execute a model in clay for the Scott Monument in Glasgow. It is a fine piece of work. The figure stands erect, one foot slightly advanced, the left hand grasping a book, the right arm and shoulder wrapped in a shepherd's plaid.

Another hand — Ritchie's — cut in stone, the statue itself, which stands now, colossal, impressive, on the eighty-feet high column in George Square, Glasgow. The original clay model which Greenshields fashioned is still in existence. It rests now in a (\*)house beside high Cairntable, not very far from the road along which Sir Walter Scott came into Lanarkshire, visited the tombs of the Douglas's in St. Bride's, and saw for the first time together Clyde's waters sweeping round the green knowe at Milton-Lockhart.

(\*) Chalmer's Manse. Rev. Mr Greenshields is a grand-nephew of the sculptor.

---

Chalmer's Manse is still standing to-day it being now the Manse-house of Muirkirk Parish Church, and is situated next to the Muirkirk Angling Clubhouse in Smallburn. Incidentally, so is Chalmer's Church, which is the building next to Bert Parker's house at Glasgow Road, where Mr Greenshields was the Minister from 1890 until 1929.



From time to time the "Advertiser" files can throw up some interesting data, and this was the case concerning a man very well-known and respected in our village during the second part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It was as follows:—

## REMINISCENT

The mention made some time ago in these columns anent the centenary celebrations of the birth of our national poet, Robert Burns, in Muirkirk, and of the opinion hazarded that few, along with Mr Charles Howatson, who were then present were with us now, has brought to light the name of another gentleman who is still hale and hearty, and took a prominent part in the Muirkirk celebrations in 1859. We refer to Mr John Meikle, M.R.C.V.S., Sunderland. Mr Meikle presided at the Masonic festival at the centenary celebrations above referred to, held in Mr Allan's Hotel (the Masons' Arms). The mention of few being now with us has also unearthed other interesting facts. It is a far cry to 1859, but it is still further to the Church Disruption in 1843. Reference to an old print reveals the fact that "Mr Meikle was born in Muirkirk, a small Ayrshire town, with many memories of the Covenanters, and these memories and influences have been factors in moulding Mr Meikle's religious life. Just when the ancient Kirk of Scotland was being rent in twain by the disruption and the conflict which preceded it, Mr Meikle was a boy of eight or so, sitting in Muirkirk Parish Church, eagerly taking in the story of the wrongs which the insensate State was inflicting upon Christ's Church. His old minister led his people right up, as one might say, to the door of Tanfield Hall, and then left them. He failed to sign the Deed of Demission, but most of his congregation 'came out,' and with them young Meikle." The gulf between the Churches is now, happily, pretty well bridged. Mr Meikle, it would appear, takes a very great interest in the religious life of the people. In 1857 he was ordained a deacon in the Free Church at Muirkirk, and an elder in 1863, and since 1877 he has been a member of the Session of St. George's, Sunderland, while for about thirty years he has been Session Clerk, being honoured in recent years through being presented with an illuminated address by his fellow office-bearers of St. George's Presbyterian Church. He has been an indomitable Sabbath School worker, and on the completion of his fifty years' work amongst the children he was presented with a gold watch, a Diploma of Honour, &c. As a preacher he is well known and sought after in the North of England. This worthy native's example is one that all might with advantage endeavour to emulate. Mr Meikle is well known as a visitor to Muirkirk, and delights in renewing acquaintanceship with old friends. He has always retained in his heart a very warm corner for the people of Muirkirk, and, as well as through old associations, he is still interested in the village, through his being proprietor of Victoria Buildings. Mr Meikle is an ardent Liberal in politics and only at the last election travelled from Sunderland the day before the poll to record his vote in the Liberal interests. He shortly addressed a meeting in Furnace Road School, when it was plainly seen that he was simply effervescing with enthusiasm.

*Footnote.*— The row of houses east of the Clydesdale Bank in Main Street was known as Meikle's Row, see page 101, and Mr Meikle was responsible for adding the upstairs dwelling houses to Victoria Buildings.

He also treated Muirkirk old folks annually to a meal and entertainment.

## SESSION RECORDS OF MUIRKIRK

Under the above title in the "Kilmarnock Standard," Mr Alfred Charles Jonas gives some interesting extracts from and some equally interesting notes on the Session Records of Muirkirk. Much of interest from the same source has already appeared from the pen of Mr J. G. A. Baird, and published in a handy volume, "Muirkirk in Bygone Days," but a few of Mr Jonas' quotations and remarks seem fresh, and are as follows:—

The *Statistical Account*, written in 1837, informs readers that until about 1626 Muirkirk consisted as part of the parish of Mauchline, and that the earliest entry in the parochial register of the latter is the 17th January, 1670, and, further, that the first entry in Muirkirk register is dated in the year 1739.

The Kirk of Muir, or Muirkirk, is stated by Paterson and the *Statistical Account* to have been built in 1631; the former adds that when it was built, "there does not seem to have been a single house in the vicinity" (hardly a sufficient reason for building a church there). This may very well have been the case, when the area from Mauchline, at least, to the borders of Lanarkshire, was covered by a partially dense forest. Confirmation of this is found in the Charter of Alexander II., when he granted to the Church of Melrose "the lands of Mauchline and pastures *in the forest*: the land of Douglas, and the fishing of the river." There is every likelihood that the forest covered what was called by Keith "Machlen or Muirkirk;" nay, further, in the Charter of David I. granted to Melrose, he speaks of "timber in the forest of Selkirk and Traquair, and between Gala and Leader Water."

Now, in the proceedings of the Commission of General Assembly (1649) the following is found: "The Commission for planting of kirks the division of *Machlein* parish." How is this to read along with the previous quotation, where it is stated that the Kirk of Muir was built in 1631? But is it not also worth notice that in the Scottish History Society's publication of the General Assembly records, 1646-49, not a word, so far as I can trace, is mentioned of Muirkirk Church? From the same authority we learn that in 1650 Mr Thomas Wyllie was minister at Mauchline, and, being "called" to Edinburgh, the Commission refused to allow his "transportation," and he was "appointed to remain at Mauchline."

Connected with my first note, Paterson states the Campbells were the principal families in the parish; these were "Campbells of Auldhouseburn, Wellwood, Eshawburn, Over Wellwood, Middle Wellwood, the Browns of Waterhead, Tardors, Riccart (Richard) of Burnfoot, and land called Netherwood." John and William Campbell of Over Wellwood suffered very much in the troublesome times of 1684. These two were scarcely men when both were seized by Lord Ross's troop, at Wellwood hill, and taken to their home, where their father was searched for and the house pillaged, the only charge against these young fellows being that they had two bibles in their possession. They were carried prisoners, and ultimately lodged in "the Dean" at Kilmarnock, then the property of the Earl of that ilk.

In the first year from which my previous extract is made, on 8th June, "Present with the Minister, Hew Campbell, Terdoes, John Blackwood, and the rest of the Elders: the case of Jonat Richart was continued." The arbitrary manner in which sessions used their powers is illustrated by a decision on 6th July, 1659:— "The qlk day it was appoynted by the Sessioun

that non of ye parischonneris should receavefamillis Jonat Richart, in respect of her disobediencies in not bringing her testimoneal from the last place of abode.”

On the 6th July, 1659, “Present with the Minister all the Elders, The qlk day the parishchuouneres of Strathaven presented a supplicatioune subscribed to ane contributioun from us for repairing certain Bredges, qlk was condesendit unto and ten pounds Scotis given to them.” At the meeting “27 february, 1661, Present with the Minister all ye Elders. The Mr Hew Campbell became cationne for Johne Mirchell Turnourhill,” etc. This Campbell figures often, being for many years an elder and an active worker in the session.

In the last-mentioned year we find the name “lerpryke.” Whether this is the original form of the name in question; certainly it is variously spelt in other minutes. There is, however, little doubt but that from this family sprang John Lapraik, the erstwhile farmer and poet friend of Burns. From the work of Mr Hugh Paton of Edinburgh (1840), Lapraik was born in 1727, at the farm of Laigh Dalquhram (Dalfram). Dalquhram is mentioned by Woodrow in his list of fugitives, against whom Charles’ proclamation of 5th May, 1684, was issued.

It was common to most, if not all, kirk sessions to fix an hour at which ale houses were to cease the supply of drink, and also the price to be charged. It was in many instances settled by sessions that a certain number only should be invited to a marriage. Those about to be married had to deposit a named sum of money with the session.

With respect to the latter, we find that, on the 17th July, the session ordained “yt there sould be no uplifting of the consignes for marriage for the space of three quarterre of a yier after the marriage neither of these yt are lyeing presentlie nor of these yt are to come.”

The practice, so observable to-day, of persons gathering at church doors after service (not invariably discussing the merits of the sermon), is not what may be called seemly; that such a practice existed centuries ago, and was condemned, is to be learned from the following:

“The quhilk day it was appoyntit by the Sessioune and ordained to be entimate the nixt Lord’s day, that nou after sermon endit sall be founden standing in the Church yeard or upon the grien, bot sall presentlie betake them to there homes, as also yt non shall goe awat from the Church beteixt ye Sermone,” etc.

In the year 1666 we are told of payments made for “glaisen and wyreing” the church windows; for buying iron “for repaireing the Bell.” There are numerous entries of a similar kind, such as for mendin the “Kirk yaird dyke: mendin the Kirk style lock: the sclatter for mendin the Kirk 2 lb. 18 s s.” “To ane poor man has his house burnte 12 s s.”

The servant question has, in some way or other, forced itself upon most of us: would matters be improved if we reverted, somewhat, to the regime of the period when an act of session was passed “yt non shall receive any servents from other congregations wt out testimoniels.”

Among the many ills flesh is heir to, the following is possibly new. It, however, probably referred to ague: "2 May, 1671. The said day their was given to Jonat Bege poore quho was lyeing of the trimbling fivere, two merks and ane halfe." On the 9th August the "charme" worker agrees to "give ane public confessioue."

In 1671 the sum of £5 was fixed by the session as the amount to be placed with them before proclamation.

On the 12th February, 1673, the following is interesting, but wants amplifying, with respect to the "Merble chamber." At the revising of accounts paid, among those specified is, "and to the sclatter for naills and for repaireing of the Merble chamber at the Kirk to extend to threttie four pond ten shillings four pennies." The minute of 24th July is most interesting: "The qlk day Mr Hew Campbell presented to the Sessioun that as ane heritour he wanted ane seat, and that there was ane seat bouldit by the heretour of Wester Netherwood together with some others within the parish, and now seeing there is no heritoure that can pretend any right to that seat, therefore the Elders all unanimuslie together with Lishaw yonger, Shaw, Criennock Maines yonger, Crossflat, John Ritchart of Burnefoote consented that Mr Hew should remove the fabricke of the old seat and builde ane new for himself upon the conditione that quhensoever the Kirk shall devidit, he shall take qt place the devidit shall appoynte him."

The old-fashioned precentor has practically died out, and it is not likely that such a one as Dean Ramsay tells of (the precentor of Fettercairn) will ever appear again. We, however, have evidence of how precentors were paid at Muirkirk in 1693: "The whilk day George Allane was chosen to be precentor and to have 20 shillings of each pair of folk yt is to be proclaimed."

On the "4 day of December, 1692, Archibald McNahre being called upon did compeir and confessed," etc. "He willingly offered 40 schilling of penaltie," which: "was instanlie appointed to be given to James Wilson for bigging the Kirk yeard yeats. This was a speedy and perhaps convenient method of paying church accounts. The defaulter might well claim to have paid for the "Kirk yeard yeats."

The extract which follows is one of local and general historic interest, and it is very doubtful if the information here given could be easily, if at all, found in any other single source. The session meeting from which the extract is made is dated 25th day of June, 1697. "In obedience to the sd summons compiered the whole Elders and Heritors, William Campbell of Mid Wellwood, James Campbell of Grinnock Maines, Thomas Brown of Neither Wood, Andrew Brown of terdoes, John Campbell of Orhousburne, William Aird of Weslate, John Ritchart of burnfoote, John Aird of Eshawburne, Thomas Bryce of Glenbuick, John blackwood of Airds green, heritors; and of tennents John blackwood in Hall, John Samsone in limburne, Alexander Wilson their, Thomas Wilsone in Watterheid, James Weir in Blacksyde, Heugh Merrie in Muirmylne, John allan . . . haw, with the Minister and Elders did all unaninously, non gainsaying, appoint the outter Chamber at the Kirk for ane schoolhouse, and three pound upon each hundreth pound of valuatione which will extend to seventie pounds, our valuation being 200 and 300 and 20 pounds."

It will possibly be a little interesting to refer to some of the persons above mentioned. William of Middle Wellwood in 1685 was taken prisoner for the reset of his brother; both were taken to Edinburgh, thence to Dunottar; and afterward banished to New Jersey. Having gained freedom, the following year William was taken by Craigy's troops and put in prison, in Canongate tolbooth, but after a considerable time was let off by payment of a fine.

James Campbell of "Grinnock." The original of this place-name is a little difficult to fix. "Greenock," it has been said, is derived from Gaelic "Grianaig," sunny bay.

Greenock, or, as it was more anciently named, "Grenhok," had no existence as a separate parish before 1646, and as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century only consisted of a few thatch-covered houses; it had no harbour, and almost as little trade. In the "Grinnock" quoted we have the place-name existing in 1673. It was at Greenock Mains that Thomas Richard, a man of eighty, was trapped by a pretended friend and executed by Colonel Douglas at Cumnock.

Thomas Brown of Nether Wellwood was an heritor at this date. Paterson only mentions him as having a sasine of land in Middle Third in 1705.

Andrew Brown of Tardoes was of the same stock as those of Waterhead. John Campbell of Auldhouseburn also possessed Crosflat, at least in 1646. John Richard of Burnfoot here mentioned is named by Paterson as of Burnfoot, only in 1714. Paterson admits, with regard to Eshawburn, that he has no notes respecting it. In my extract we have "John Aird, of Eshawburn, heritor in 1697," at least. "Glenbuick" (Glenbuck) is where Messrs Finlay & Co. of Glasgow formed lochs or reservoirs about the year 1802 for supplying their works at Catrine.

A new phase was introduced into Muirkirk civil and religious life by the fact that on "28th Feby., 1700, The qlk day the sheriffs commissione to Midwellwood and Terdoes to be Sess baillies according to the act of Parliament not only for punishing Civile scandalous persons, but able to put the act of parliament in executione for regulating the poor was delivered to them and they expected, and the Minister with consent of the Sess and heritors, was given to Midwell wood to be keiped."

Another remarkable lapse of memory is reported on the 19th January, 1701, when Thomas Kennedy was brought before the session for "that he was weiving upon the Lord's day which he declared was not wilfully done but ane mystake" etc. Among those proposed for elders on 25th February, 1704, was John Lickprivick of Dalquhran. The next month he was objected to, on the ground that he had taken the "Test." It was stated that, for this offence, "he had given satisfaction." The session, however, withdrew his name, "that they might not give offence to anie other." With respect to Lapraik (Burns's), shortly mentioned earlier in these notes he succeeded his father in 1754, and died in 1807, aged eighty. The John Lickprivick of Dalquhran, in the above extract, was, in all probability, his grandfather.

Very particular were sessions over the keeping of the seventh day: so in the records being dealt with many were the "acts" passed concerning its observance. Yet it is most strange that, with respect to the keeping of public-houses, which was so jealously guarded by kirk-sessions, we find in W.

Stephen's *History of the Scottish Church*, quoting from the Assembly's records, that ministers sometimes "kept open taverns," and those reverend tavern-keepers were exhorted "to keep decorum." A servant named "Margaret taillour" had brought herself within the grasp of the ever-watchful session, and on "18 Jarrie, 1706, the Minister and all the Elders being present, after prayer, terdios told that he had hoden ane Court and had appointed her upon ane Lord's day to come to the most patent Kirk door and their to be put in the *Braidone* their to stand all the time betwixt the second and last bell ringing in the fornoon."

Concluding these notes from Muirkirk session records, I may be permitted to say that the only safe method of acquiring knowledge of the ancient history of any particular part of the country is to find whether there is any incontestable evidence obtainable from public records, or local documents or inscriptions. Certainly we possess such evidence wherever kirk-session records are found. Details of daily life as they existed in the several localities, at the same period, will I venture to say, be found more exact, and, in certain particulars, absolutely true, in such records as we have been dealing with.

## **THE LESSER TEMPERANCE HALL**

As borne out by the previous article, there can be no doubt that religion played a huge part in the history of Muirkirk, and readers will find the following letter to the Temperance Hall in Main Street, Muirkirk, to be of some interest:—

169 West George Street,  
Glasgow, 17th April, 1884

The Chairman of The Temperance Hall Committee, Muirkirk.

Sir,—Mr Charles Howatson of Dornel claimed and received payment from the parish Minister of Muirkirk, the sum of £97 10s 8d, the amount of the patronage compensation, with the intention of devoting the money to some public purpose connected with Muirkirk. We are now instructed by him to state that he proposes to hand the money to your Committee to assist in the erection of a Working Man's Reading or Coffee Room in connection with the Temperance Hall. The only condition that he makes in connection with the gift is that on the 1st January of each year, the first 23 verses of the 6th Chapter of the Gospel by St. Matthew, and the 13th Chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, be publicly read in the Hall in the forenoon by a Presbyterian Clergyman.

The money will be paid over as soon as building operations are commenced. We shall be glad to hear whether the Committee will accept the gift.

We are, Sir, Your obedient. Servants  
(Signed) Maclay, Murray & Spens.

Note—This was accepted and the result is The Lesser Temperance Hall, which was occupied for so many years by "The Muirkirk Advertiser."

# THE WHYTE DYNASTY

A few years ago Hugh Hamilton, son of Mr and Mrs Neil Hamilton, Steven Crescent, Muirkirk, who was working at Glasgow (as a bus driver, I believe) was in contact with one of his workmates, who it transpired had found two photo albums which had been thrown out for refuse collection in a street in the city. He had retrieved them and wondered whether Hugh would be interested in them. He certainly was, and found they had a Muirkirk connection. The albums which were in fairly good condition, contained about 100 photos pertaining to the Whyte Family from this district, and there was also a MacDougall connection. Knowing I had a keen interest in all things pertaining to Muirkirk, especially of an older age, Neil very kindly said I could have them.

The photographs which I scanned on to a Disk, are certainly of the Whyte Family who were part of the village scene so long ago in Muirkirk. So I started to do some research work. The scenes of a local nature in the albums were as follows:—

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Photo 01 | Muirkirk Parish Church   |
| 04       | Sunday School Picnic (easily recognised as a field near Crossflat) |
| 05       | Furnace Road Corner (about the beginning of the 20th Century).     |
| 20       | Tibbie's Brig  |
| 31       | Tibbie's Brig  |
| 42       | "Cauld Watter Spoot."  |
| 43       | Sanquhar Moor *  |
| 44       | Sanquhar Moor *  |
| 35       | Wellwood House   |
| 46       | The Boiling Well *   |
| 47       | Sanquhar Moor *  |
| 48       | Near the Coutburn *  |

### Also of local interest

- |    |                                   |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 28 | James Park Whyte Memorial Card    |
| 37 | Post Card, 1909                   |
| 53 | Rev. Mr Montgomery's Letter, 1898 |
| 90 | Reverse of Photo No. 89, 1906     |
| 91 | Duncan MacDougall Memorial        |

### Photographs Identified

- |    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 09 | Adam Whyte and Family      |
| 55 | Cousin Hugh and Adam Whyte |
| 66 | (Manchester)               |
| 75 | Adam Whyte and Wife        |
| 76 | Tommy and Jennie           |
| 77 | Wee Snookie                |

**Recorded Deaths in "Muirkirk Advertiser"**

- 1917 THOMAS WHYTE, Entryhead, died 18th July, aged 80 years.  
 1922 ADAM WHYTE, Furnace Road, died 20th January, aged 62 years  
 1923 CATHERINE WHITE, Haystackhill, died 11th March, aged 72 years.  
 1953 JANET WHYTE, Manchester, died 29th October  
 1930 JOHN WHYTE, Railway Buildings, Smallburn, 14th Oct.  
 (Haystackhill)  
 1957 MARY JANE WHYTE, 19 Wellwood Ave, late of Wellwood, died 12th  
 Aug.  
 1972 CATHERINE WHYTE, at Ayr, died 1st October, aged 78 years.

It was evident from what I could learn that the Whyte family had been well-respected in the district for over 200 years, but I found it rather difficult to obtain the information I was seeking. Then I remembered the following poem by Tom Floyd, which speaks for itself:—

**TAM WHYTE**

If when in the village ye pass Meikle's Raw,  
 Ye'll see a wee signboard nailed up on the wa'  
 Whereon in big letters the name is displayed  
 O' Tammias Whyte, Senior, a tailor tae trade.

For twa or three centuries, or longer than that,  
 Tam's worthy ancestors hae wuppit the cat,  
 An' Tammias aye tells as he whups in the steeks,  
 "A Whyte made auld Adam his first pair o'  
 breeks."

Esteemed an' respected by a' ye may ken,  
 He's dubbed by his cronies "the wale o' guid  
 men"

In fac', it's a plesure, as mony can tell,  
 Tae meet an' forgether wi' Tammias himsel'.

An auld residerter, an' reared in a schuil  
 When folk leaved on parritch an' dab-at-the-stuil;  
 Yont three score an' ten, he's aye workin' awa',  
 An' spen's his spare time wi' a hobby or twa.

A hobby o' Tam's is the Clachan's folk-lore,  
 Its legends an' animals he kens by the score,  
 An' a' its traditions since it was begun,  
 An' found by degrees a sma' place in the sun.

An' a' the auld ruins that lie roon about  
 Tam prods their foundations an' traces them oot,  
 Then rakes up their story an' gleans frae the past  
 Wha built them, wha owned them, wha leaved in  
 them last.

The clachan's antiquities, though they are few,  
 Tam mak's it a hobby tae study them too,  
 An' mony a ramble an' tramp he has ta'en  
 Tae view an' examine some crannog or stane.

In fac' the hale pairish Tam kens tae an inch,  
 Frae west o' Laigh Wellwood up by tae  
 Darnhinch,  
 An' a' its grey mountains an' laigher knowe-taps

The streams o' the pairish, each river an' brook,  
 He quaintly describes in his manuscript book,  
 An' ilka wee burn frae Bogheid tae Hareshaw,  
 Dod, Tammias can tell ye the names o' them a'.

Again, oor auld worthy, as you will surmise,  
 Gaes in for collectin' moths, beetles, an' flies,  
 An' mony an' e'ning Tam spen's wi' his net,  
 Explorin' the pairish for what he can get.

An' should a rare insect appear on the scene,  
 Sae anxious is Tammias tae see't on a preen,  
 Though bord'rin' on eighty I'm certian an' sure,  
 Tam sprints for that insect at twal miles an' oor.

Tae view his collection is truly a treat,  
 There's moths, jenny-spinners, an' meg-mony-  
 feet,  
 An' butterflies gethered frae moorland and dell,  
 An' some gey an' rare anes cocooned by himsel'.

Perhaps ye will scoff me, an' laugh when I say,  
 I've tauld but the hauf o' what Tammias can dae,  
 For aye in the spring-time an' lang simmer 'oors,  
 He adds tae his hobbies an' cultivates floo'ers.

He dabbles in fossils, an' searches the stanes,  
 An' studies wi' plesure the ancient remains  
 That prove a Creation lang vanished an' past,  
 Ere man frae the Gairden o' Eden was cast.

Aquainted wi' sorrow, nae stranger tae grief,  
 Tam finds in his hobbies a welcome relief,  
 An' reaps in this world o' venom an' strife  
 The pleasure an' peace o' weel ordered life.

Then a' ye time-wasters that warm 'Culloch's  
 dyke,  
 Ye widna-sole hatchers, or ony sic-like,  
 Just imitate Tammias, an' ramble abroad,  
 An' study through Nature the wonders o' God.

The subject of the foregoing poem was more familiarly known as “Tammass” Whyte. He was a tailor to trade, and had his shop at Meikle’s Row in the Main Street (between the Clydesdale Bank and Victoria Buildings). Tammass was a local historian and held a vast amount of information about Muirkirk in days gone past, and his collection of moths, beetles and insects was extensive; as was the fossils he had gathered locally over his lifetime. My mentor, Mr William Shaw Smith spoke highly of Tammass, and said if you wanted to know anything about Muirkirk, Tammass was your man. Another well-known member of the clan was John Whyte from Entryhead, who also contributed much to the village and published a fine book of poetry in 1926, entitled “Musings in Wellwood’s Vale.” Unfortunately I don’t know the connection between Thomas and John Whyte.

From about seven years of age I lived with the family at 21 Wellwood Avenue; upstairs was the McLuskies, through the wall was Mr and Mrs Andrew Clark; and upstairs was John and Kitty Irvine who lived with their aunt Mary Jane Whyte, who was connected to John Whyte the poet. I remember Miss Whyte very well, and she used to ask me in to do small “jobs” for her, like changing light bulbs, etc. I found her to be a very nice person, and obviously a well educated one. I did not realise at that time that she was connected to the Whyte family which I am at presently researching.

Here are two photographs I reproduce for a comparison. Is there a resemblance?



JOHN WHYTE, POET

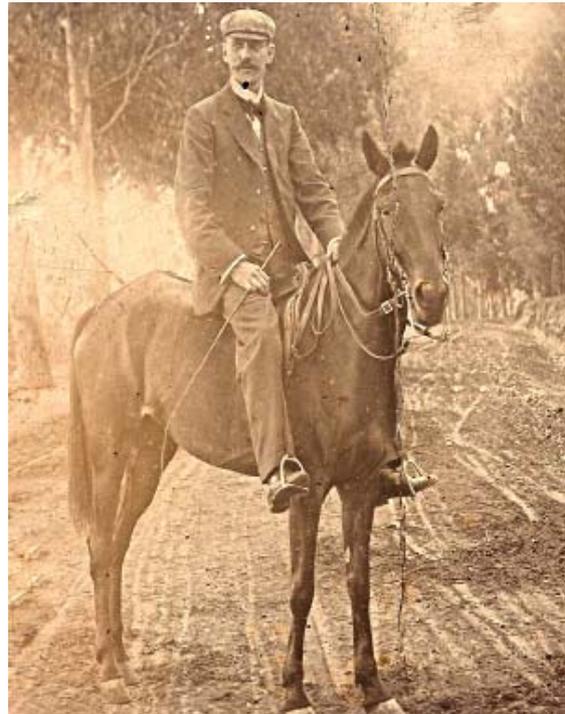


PHOTO FROM THE ALBUMS

Hopefully, I will be able to throw some more light on this subject at a later date. Information would be appreciated.



## MORE ON THOMAS WHYTE

An obituary to the above person appeared in the "Muirkirk Advertiser" in 1917, and was written by Mr Charles P. Bell, a well-known local historian of that time. It brought a good deal of light on the life of the deceased, and was as follows:—

### THE LATE THOMAS WHYTE

This week we have to record the death of a man well-known and respected by everyone in our village. We refer to Mr Thomas Whyte, who was born in the Garronhill about 80 years ago (1837). His father's name was Adam Whyte, and both father and son were tailors to trade. It is this Adam Whyte who vouches that Burns, our national poet, knew about most of the farmers in Muirkirk, whilst Burns himself was still a lad about Alloway. [Burns Chronicle No. XXIV, 1915].

In these days it was common, indeed it was quite a rule, for tailors to visit farm houses and do tailoring ("whipping the cat"), and it is just probable that the sartorial profession did not always suit the fancy of Mr T. Whyte, for whilst still a youth, we find him in London engaged in the Scoto pack trade, and also we know he, for a time at least, worked for the Iron Company in Muirkirk in the capacity of a time-keeper.

As a young man, Mr Whyte left Muirkirk and went to Govan, for several years working there at his own trade. But before he left here for the Glasgow district, Mr Whyte, like some of his sons still alive and in "the pink," had not been the least averse to see a little active service if such were required. This day he saw and handled two ancient pieces of fiscal Governmental manufacture, which tell a story plain and convincing, and this is a tale of over "50 years ago." One is a large-sized policeman's baton, turned in a lathe, with suitable monogram carved thereon, and the other is a replica — no, we are putting the cart before the horse. We would like to say that the present Special Constable arm badges are replicas of the armlet Mr Whyte had when the Fenian Scare occurred about the year 1865. It is also a well-known fact, whilst a citizen of Govan parish, Mr Whyte acted a volunteer's part in connection with the (Butts) Fire Brigade.

Then Mr Whyte, having been married, thought it best to return to his native soil, there to remain for ever and aye. His loving wife, Helen Marshall, came with him. She belonged to Chapelton, a village about 2 or 3 miles north of Strathaven. We understand, on the authority of Mr Thomas Weir and others, that what is sometimes termed "the house warming" took place in the premises occupied by Doctor Carruthers — at that time tenanted by Mr Adam Whyte and Mr Robert Pearson, draper in Muirkirk. Mr and Mrs Whyte took up house in the tenement partly occupied by Mr Cook, grocer.

Shortly thereafter, Mr Whyte became a Freemason. Whether he was initiated in Glenbuck, Govan, or Muirkirk, we don't pretend to discriminate, but this is a point that can be easily settled. He evidently was a "good mason."

Like the great majority of mankind Mr Whyte had a humdrum life here, yet out of this humdrum existence the finer qualities of the man evolved. His wife was an invalid for many years, and Thomas Whyte did all that a man could do, both for her and his family. It was fated, too, that in

these hard times he should lose three pretty daughters — Agnes, Bella, and Nellie, the latter two dying at a time just when they were becoming able to be of some help to their parents.

Very little news can be told to the inhabitants of Muirkirk regarding the last thirty years of Mr Whyte's life, for what *one* knows all know. He was able, diligent, well behaved, had a high opinion of himself (which we are glad to say he could justify if occasion demanded), and above all, he was an antiquary. Like his kin in this respect, he hoarded up and prized articles which the commonality regard as rubbish. What percentage of value is in his unique collection of old coins, moths, butterflies, flags, books and manuscripts, we do not pretend to demonstrate, for although we have glanced at the same, and admired all which we saw, we are unable to determine the value thereof. Still we know, that at least two skilled men gave their opinion to the heirs and executors of Mr Whyte, and this was that nothing of these curios should be destroyed meanwhile.

Regarding horticultural affairs Mr Whyte was a high authority. He and a few, some still alive (Mr Scott Brown, e.g.), are the originators of the Flower Shows in Muirkirk, and although younger men could at long length beat the old hands, this was owing to the inflexibility of their standard methods which the younger men did make flexible. About a dozen years ago Mr Whyte became the recipient of some well-deserved testimonials from the Muirkirk Horticultural Society. We understand he prized these highly, and they are still to be seen as good as new.

It was no wonder then that his fellow Masons gave to their old comrade the highest honour that can be bestowed regarding funeral rites on Friday last, when all that was mortal was laid to rest in the Old Churchyard, amidst every manifestation of regret. As well as a large representation of the public the brethren of St. Thomas turned out in force, and a Masonic service, at once beautiful, instructive, and impressive, was conducted at the graveside by Bro. James R. Wilson, R.W.M., 201, and Bro John Henderson, B.D.

C.P.B.

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## JOHN WHYTE

We can now fast-forward to 1930, when in the "Muirkirk Advertiser," the death of Mr John Whyte was recorded as follows:—

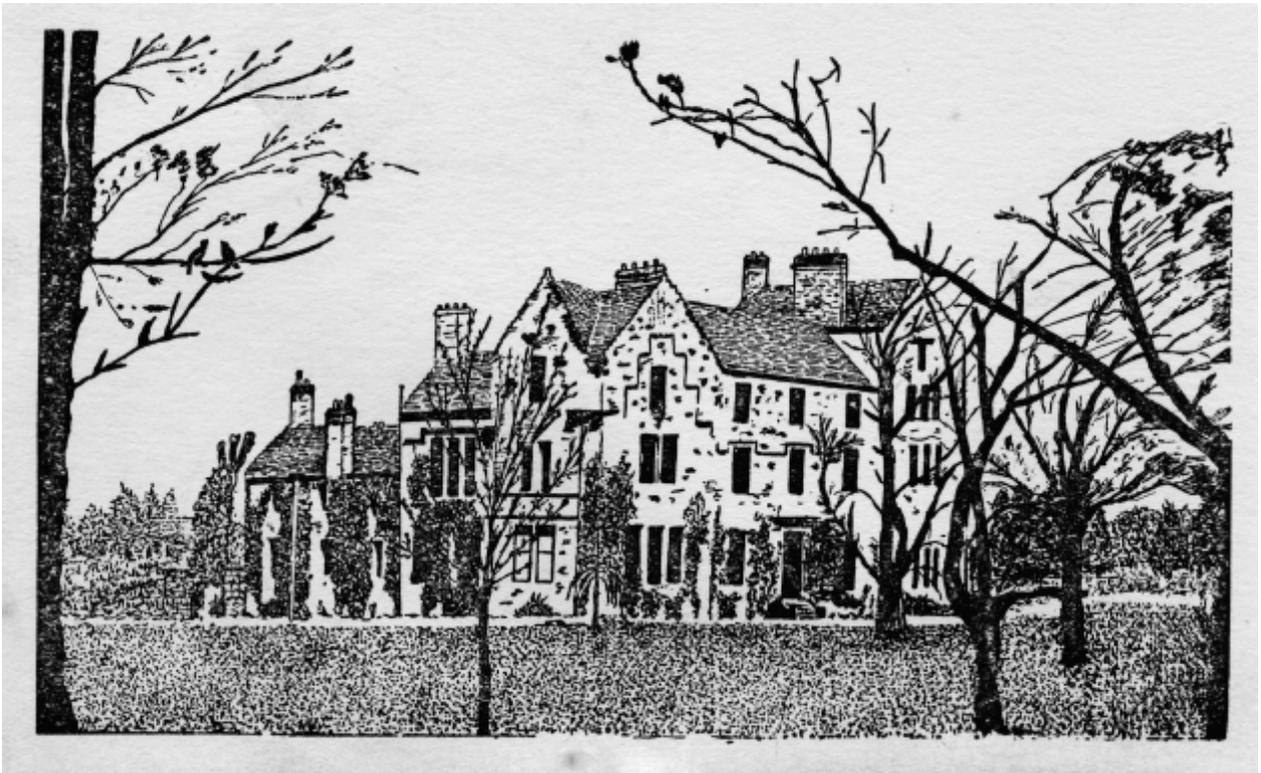
It is our sad duty this week to record the passing of a well-known native of Muirkirk, in Mr John Whyte, who breathed his last on Tuesday morning (14th October) at the residence of his daughter, Mrs Irvine, in Smallburn, where he had made his home for some time. Mr Whyte had reached the long age of 78 years, and had not been too robust for a considerable period. His poetical effusions have from time to time appeared in our columns, and a few years ago he published in book form under the title of "Musings in Wellwood's Vale," and as the whole edition was issued by subscription, copies are not now to be had. While with the publication of his poems, Mr Whyte attained perhaps his fondest desire in that way, on the other hand the loss of his help-meet in life visibly shook him, and in all his poems written since she proved part of the theme. He was a student and poet of Nature, even the snail and puddock coming under his review. The

last of a family of thirteen, his father was a tailor in Muirkirk, and John for a time followed his father's calling. For a few years he worked in the forge at the Iron Works, then he took to draining locally and afterwards in the Highlands, returning to the parish to drain and finally work on Wellwood Estate, from which he retired as a pensioner a number of years ago. Much as one regrets the passing of these links with other days, it is only the course of Nature, and according to John Whyte himself—

“Man may be likened tae a tree:  
In opening' youth its leaves we see,  
Syne it appears in flo'ery pride —  
Sends oot its branches far and wide.

When Simmer comes, its frit is seen  
Firm on the stem—young, fresh, an' green;  
When Autumn's ripenin' coorse has run,  
The frit that's ripe draps tae the grun.

Come Winter, ah! whit chinge is there —  
Nae bud, nae leaf, o' blossom bare,  
Bent an' decayed through Nature's laws,  
Then tott'rin' tae the grun it fa's.”



WELLWOOD HOUSE

**FARMS IN MUIRKIRK**

(From a Booklet, published in 1923)

<b>Farm</b>	<b>Post Town</b>	<b>Occupier</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Aikencleugh	Muirkirk	James Findlay	
Auldhouseburn	Muirkirk	J. & W. McGillivray	
Burnfoot	Muirkirk	Frank McKerrow	
Chapelhouse	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Crossflatt	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Dalfram	Muirkirk	William Scott	
Darnhunch	Glenbuck	Thomas J. Pate	
Garpel	Muirkirk	Gavin Gemmell	
Glenbuck	Muirkirk	Chas. N. Howatson	
Grasshill	Glenbuck	Hugh Baird	
Greenock Dyke	Muirkirk	James Anderson	
Greenock Mains	Muirkirk	William Foster	Blackface Sheep
Hall	Muirkirk	John Wight	Blackface Sheep
Lightshaw	Muirkirk	James Lawson	
Middlefield	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Nether Wellwood	Muirkirk	James Anderson	
Nether Whitehaugh	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Netherwood	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Over Whitehaugh	Muirkirk	Hugh Anderson	
Priesthill	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Priesthill, Dipple	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Priesthill, Blackside	Muirkirk	James Clark	
Spireslack	Glenbuck	Arch. Robertson	
Tardoes	Muirkirk	Andrew Semple	
Townhead	Muirkirk	William Murdoch	Blackface Sheep
Upper Wellwood, East	Muirkirk	Buchanan Bros.	
Upper Wellwood, West	Muirkirk	Buchanan Bros.	
Waterhead	Muirkirk	James Clark	
West Glenbuck	Glenbuck	James McKerrow	



CROSSFLATT BRIDGE, (LEFT)

## OLD TOKENS

My Book, "Cairntable Echoes," is forever throwing up interesting contacts, and the most recent one was an E-Mail from Eric Hodge from Poulton Le Flyde in Lancashire, looking for some information on Muirkirk Ironworks, and while I was able to help him, I was pleased when he provided me with photographs of the old Tokens used by Muirkirk Ironworks, and dated 1800. This was really interesting, as I have heard older inhabitants mentioning these tokens. They were given in leu of wages by the ironmasters at Muirkirk Furnaces, and could only be used to purchase goods and essentials from the old Ironworks Store, which I can remember. Eric tells me that they have been over stamped by the Mill at New Lanark, and it makes me wonder if such a system was used there. It is questionable if the Muirkirk workers at the Ironworks ever saw real money for their labours, as the rent for their "Company" houses was taken off their wages each week. Here is a photo of the said tokens:—



## OLD MEDALLION

Continuing on the same theme, on taking over the Printing business, I found the following Medallion. As both my predecessors, John Samson and William Shaw Smith, were interested in ornithology, it is a safe bet that this belonged to Muirkirk Ornithological Society. There was no inscription on the reverse.



## ANOTHER MEDAL



This seems to be the season for medals, and it was interesting to receive an E-Mail from Yvonne McKerrell seeking information about a Gold Medal (left) she has in her possession. Unfortunately I was unable to throw any further light on the matter. The inscription on the medal reads: "Presented to A. McAlpine by a few friends — Glenbuck, Nov 1897." Yvonne was able to track down the death certificate, which showed A. McAlpine died on 18th June, 1909. A report of his death in the "Kilmarnock Standard" made reference to quoting and his support for the legendary Tammy Bone. I could find no mention of McAlpine in my records, but if any reader can help with additional information, I would be pleased to hear from them.

## THE WEMBLEY WIZARDS

In my search of the files for information on the above Medal, I came across a very interesting article which should appeal to local football enthusiasts. It read as follows:—

### OUR LONDON LETTER

There was a Scottish invasion of London over the weekend (1928), and a most successful intrusion at that. The men from the "land o' Cakes" really took possession. The invasion began in the early morning, when quite a number of gaily-coloured woollen and tartan Tam o' Shanters were to be seen in the streets near Euston Station.

At the boat Race in the forenoon the Scottish brigade were both seen and heard, bagpipes and all. Some of the visitors evidently meant to make a day of it, for one Muirkirk lassie resident in London, had a tryst to meet five Muirkirk laddies. No, no; not at different times, but all at once, and that at 7.30 in the morning, to show them around, and she did it. The Scots were in good form, and many were wearing Tammies here who wouldn't have walked along a street at home with one for a £1, unless it was in his pocket or in a parcel. Really, it looked as if most of the 80,000 spectators at Wembley arrived via Baker Street station. In the carriages human beings were packed like herrings in a barrel, and the trains in some cases moved off with the carriages so full that the doors couldn't be shut. "Here, shove up a bit there," came a sentorian voice, the possessor of which could only see into the carriage. Inside the carriage with the writer of these notes was a cosmopolitan crew, but all were quiet. In the stuffy atmosphere the "tammied" individuals were either half asleep, yawning, or sick and suffering from what they termed bad beer, and they were yearning for Wembley and the open air.

Inside the Stadium the Scots had wakened up. They were largely in coteries of a dozen or two, and they made the welkin ring with the broad stuff. We were in good company. The King and Queen of Afghanistan and the Duke of York were there. Or was it they who were in good company that day?

Everybody knows that Scotland whacked England by 5 goals to 1, and the play of the Scots is considered to have been the finest ever witnessed. The only thing England won was the toss.

Naturally, as the goals were put on the Scots were jubilant. The first one came inside two minutes. The welkin rang, and from the din there was no difficulty in gauging the strength of the Scottish contingent. Also, out came the bottles, and these were handed round — to Scots only

John Barleycorn soon made his presence felt, and the second goal was not scored ere “Mac” in front, a burly fellow with sandy-coloured hair, got up, and waving his arms about, offered to bet even money that England wouldn’t win. Then in went No. 2, out came the bottles again, and Mac was offering even money that England wouldn’t draw. When the third goal went in, bottles again, and Mac was getting bolder, getting up and offering to bet that England wouldn’t score, and stating that he had intended returning to Scotland that night, but that he would stay the week-end now. With the fourth goal, bottles again and he was wagering that England wouldn’t get a corner kick, at the same time assuring all that he’d stay all the week in London. After the fifth goal, and bottles again, Mac’s exclamation was — “Hear, I say, boy’s; it’s no’ fair!” Then spectators began to leave, and as each passed him Mac shook hands and took good-bye. But he was himself gone when England got their goal.



Coming out of the Stadium one Scot said to another — “We’d hae won last year tae if we’d haen thae backs,” to which his mate replied — “Ay, but thae backs were in lang claes last year.”

In striking contrast to most matches north of the Border, the language was above reproach. Even the Englishmen were lost in admiration of the pretty play of the Scots. In the evening, especially in Tottenham Court Road, the Doric was heard on every side. The weather was really not too bad, and the Scots certainly enjoyed their visit.

## MUIRKIRK CURLING CLUB

Although long before my time, Muirkirk Curling Club played a prominent part in the sporting life of the village, and was one of the oldest such clubs in Scotland. The Muirkirk Club had its own medal, and it was interesting to find this article in the file of February, 1929, viz.:—

“The local Curling Club medal is quite an antique. It is of silver, about the size of, or perhaps a little larger than a five-shilling piece, and about the thickness of a sixpenny piece. Of course silver was silver when it was made in 1823, as it is yet, naturally. It is inscribed as follows:

MDCCCXXIII.

MUIRKIRK CURLING SOCIETY

An ice stane and a guid broom cove,  
Will warm us like a bleezing lowe.”

Between the date and the couplet there is engraved on the medal the form of a party in the act of delivering a curling stone. The player is clad in ancient garb, with lum hat complete, in striking opposition to the plus-fours of today.



The fact that the Club has long been extinct makes it very difficult to find information about its history, added to the fact that the last minute book of the Muirkirk Club went missing. The Royal Caledonian Club did not list Muirkirk as one of its members, but did produce a list of non-affiliated clubs, which gave Muirkirk's date of formation as 1784. This can be confirmed by a report in the “Cumnock Express,” dated 16th February, 1884, which mentioned the centenary celebrations of Muirkirk Club, when it stated “At this happy an enthusiastic gathering, which was presided over by J. G. Baird of Muirkirk and Adainton (with connections to Muirkirk Ironworks), the secretary — Alexander Donald, schoolmaster (Main Street School, affectionately known as the Donald School), gave an interesting account of the history of the Society, from which, in the absence of records, we may be allowed to quote:—

“The celebration of the centenary of a society wakens up imagination, and is a particularly suggestive occasion. In the first decade of the eighteenth century all Scotland was in agitation over the loss of the Edinburgh Parliament; and as debate followed debate the fury of the people grew more intense, till at length the Duke of Hamilton summoned all the Lowlanders to muster to the fray. Muirkirk made a brave response, and raised a large volunteer corps, which only awaited the signal to march on Edinburgh. Now, it was the sons of these

patriots who met in 1784 and founded the Muirkirk Curling Club; hence-forth they believed that 'peace bath her victors no less renowned than war;' they beat their fathers' swords into curling -stones handles, and studied war no more; living with such blood in their veins could never sit through the long dreary winter ingle-cheek in

"The auld clay biggn'  
An' hear the restless rattons squeak  
About the riggin'."

. . . . These old farmers were public-spirited, and beguiled the tedium of winter by playing at the kuytiny stane. A stone was obtained in the channel of the river; a niche was chipped out for the forefinger and thumb, the stone being partly cuist or cuited along the ice. Then came large hemispherical blocks, the handles being fixed at one side."

One of the few earliest documents found is dated 1791, when reference is made to a match between Douglas and Muirkirk, and it is added that nearly thirty years had elapsed since the two clubs had met, thus carrying the existence of a curling society in Muirkirk back to 1760 . . . . The regular minutes begin in 1783, and continued up till the closing date."

Interesting to learn that Douglas club was formed eight years after Muirkirk, in 1792, and was affiliated to the Royal Caledonian Club. It was called Douglas St. Bride's Curling Club. From the Douglas minutes it was noted that Thomas Brown presented his account for carrying curling stones to Muirkirk, amounting to six shillings, which, being examined and approved, orders were given to the Treasurer to pay the same — also five shillings to the officer as his salary. The Douglas Club kept up a series of matches in the neighbourhood, including Muirkirk, Lesmahagow, Lanark, and Crawfordjohn.

That was as far as I could get digging up information about Muirkirk Curling Club, although it was interesting to learn that in the early days the clubs were called "Societies!" I have heard older members of the community mentioning curling rinks in Muirkirk. It was a well-known fact that their was a curling rink at Airdsmill Cottage, and the outline can still be seen there, and the rink was filled via a take "take-off" from the River Ayr. There was also a rink at the Ironworks, and this was probably when the Lade was frozen over in the winter. Mention is also made in the "Advertiser" files of curling ponds at Wellwood and Greenockmains. The more recent one was of course in the Victory Park, and I think this must have been created long before the park was opened. I remember it well, it being situated where now is the putting green, and it doubled up as a tennis court in the summer months. It was said that there was a curling rink near the Sware Brae, past Kirkburnhead Farm.

It is a pity that the records of such an old society in Muirkirk have been lost, as I am sure they would have thrown up some interesting facts about our ancestors, and a way of life in the village. As a tail-ender it is interesting to learn that in early days the curlers did not lean on the broomsticks when delivering the stone, but used a "crisp" which was an iron cross with prongs at the end of a wooden shaft which fastened on the ice to give them better balance.



## THE MUIRKIRK FARMERS SOCIETY

Older residents of the village used to talk about Muirkirk's annual Cattle Show, and I understand the last one was held at Auldhouseburn Farm in 1906, and I was delighted to come across an article from the "Advertiser" files about the formation of the above Society, which was responsible for holding the Cattle Show. Here it is in its entirety:—

Quite recently there was some discussion locally as to when the last Cattle Show was held, where it was held, etc. Now we have come into possession of the first minute of the Society, the first meeting being held on 11th July, 1845, and at that distant date there will be probably be little cause for argument. . At the same time, the names mentioned may be interesting to our local historians in unravelling the locations of the various farmers mentioned.

On the 11th July, 1845, the following gentlemen met and proceeded to form a society to be called the "Muirkirk Farmers Society" :—Messrs Alexander Aird, David Lapraik, James Whyte, W. W. Officer, David Anderson, Quinton Campbell, David Moffat, and John Gray.

Office-bearers were appointed as follows:—

President - W. M. Alexander, Esq., of Ballochmyle.

Vice-President - Alex. Aird, Esq., of Crossflatt.

Treasurer - James Whyte, Esq.,

Clerk - John Gray & David Anderson, David Moffat, David Lapraik, Quinton Campbell, Jas Allison, J. McMinn, and G. Gemmell were chosen as Councillors. The meeting likewise agreed to have a show of stock this year, on 8th of August.

The new Society were evidently determined not to waste time, for, right away, they decided on the classification — three for bulls, five for cows, six for sheep, and five for horses, and judges were nominated, all at the first meeting, mind you. Dalgig, Carmacoup, Dalmellington, Hazelmain, and Dalblair were proposed.

At a meeting on 23rd July, the Chairman said he had "spoken to Messrs Begg and Kay for the Slag Bank at present rented by them, which they had agreed to give, and the Committee being of opinion that it was well fitted for the purpose, agreed that it should be taken. It was decided that the dinner after the show should take place in the Black Bull Inn."

Muirkirk, 8th August, 1845—the Committee of management met this morning at 8 o'clock, and settled the amount of premiums to be given as first and second prizes in the different classes of stock. Should any person come forward to lift these premiums, although it was fully expected that no one would do so, since it was the general wish that all the subscriptions and donations for this year should be allowed to lie in the Treasurer's hands in order to constitute a fund. . . . . Shortly after four o'clock the judges, members of the Society, and a few friends, amounting in all to 64, sat down to an excellent dinner in the Black Bull Inn, at which Alex. Aird, Esq., of Crossflatt, officiated as Chairman and J. Whyte, Esq., banker, as croupier. Then follows the prize-list.

At a meeting on 6th November it was intimated that, as some of the members who were due premiums had drawn them from the fund, there was at present in the hands of the treasurer the sum of £9 3s 3d. The Clerk likewise reported that at their exhibition on 8th August there was shown 246 head of stock. Thanks were rendered to Messrs Kay and Begg for their great kindness in granting their field in which the show was held. The meeting next took up and discussed the subject of the new disease in the potatoes, and came to the opinion that they should be taken up as dry as possible, then to be carefully hand-picked, and put into small pits well ventilated, and mixed with dry ashes and sand. It was agreed that the subject for discussion at the next quarterly meeting should be — the best season for ploughing lea and other lands for a white crop, what are the best oats for this district and when they should be sown, and also what are the best grass seeds for sowing down our pasture lands.

At a subsequent meeting it was the general opinion that lea lands should be cut as early in Spring as possible. The oats recommended were Red Sandy Oats, Black Tartar, Early Angus, Red Pats, and Barbauchlie, with the Sandy Oats best for this district. The red oats was also spoken of very favourably, it being mentioned that the meal which it yielded was good, the straw sweet, and that it bled well upon the barn floor. The greater number of the members recommended perennial; rye grass and red and white clover for sowing down, and the quantity for sowing a Scotch acre was — Perennial rye grass 2½ bushel, red clover 4½ lbs., and white clover 4½ lbs.

The next discussion was on the best kinds of turnip seeds and the best season for sowing them, and the best manures for the turnip crops. The turnip seed spoken of most highly was Skirving's Improved Purple Top as a general crop, and for spring feeding the Swede was most prized, while for the purpose of feeding cattle at the latter end of the year to keep up a liberal supply of milk, the White Globe or Red-top White was recommended. The manure chiefly used and recommended was well-made farmyard manure, and about 35 square yards to the square acre. The members were of the general opinion that all the artificial manures were a perfect hoax.

So much for local farming almost 100 years ago.

#### EDITOR' FOOTNOTE

Listening to our elders recalling those far-off days' leaves no doubt that Muirkirk Cattle Show was a very important event on the local calendar. On the morning of the show the village was agog with the farmers from the Parish bringing their sheep, cattle, and horses to parade before the judges. The event was usually held at the Holm at the foot of the Smallburn, although, latterly on several occasions, Auldhouseburn Farm was the venue. Muirkirk Brass Band was there to blend their music with the sounds characteristic of such events, and most of the villagers turned out to view the scene, and, the men folk especially, to take more than a passing interest in the trots which was a feature of the Show. Although the show was confined to the parish, there was generally a high standard of quality about the exhibits, and it took a really good specimen to win a prize. The horse trot was at first also a confined event, but latterly the sporting fraternity introduced an open event, which attracted entrants and bookies from over a wide area. Yes, it must have been a real gala day, right enough.

According to my informant, Cattle Show time was the popular season for weddings, and, if the farmers had a busy time and, perhaps anxious time, getting their favourites ready for the big show, the ministers were just as harassed getting all their charges ready for "the big show-down." (Here, here, what's this?—Ed.) Half a dozen marriages in one night seems to have been a common occurrence in those times.

## THE WAR EFFORT

From the "Seen and Heard" column of August, 1942, I reproduce the following article:—

Week by week the activities of the Woman's War Guild are recorded in our columns, and while we are all well conversant with the fact that a steady flow of work pours in for the benefit of the Red Cross and for locals on active service, I am certain that the figures for the aggregate of the work done will give Muirkirkers at home and elsewhere, and especially the actual workers themselves, a well-merited feeling of pride.

From data supplied by Rev. John Henderson, B.D., we find that from the formation of the Guild on October 16, 1939, till July 31, 1942 the Guild has produced for the Red Cross the following:—

Pairs of Bed Socks	403	Operation Stockings Prs	29
Suits of Pyjama	178	Pillows	5
Knitted Vests	145	Knitted Blankets	16
Vests	121	Treasure Bags	312
Nightshirts	106	Handkerchiefs	36
Helpless case shirts	50	Eye Shades	6
Children's N/Dresses	50	Operation Towels	2
Bed Jackets	41		

That was for the Red Cross. Now look at what had been made for our own folks on active service, including the Merchant Navy:—

Pairs of Socks	3880	Helmets	1017
Prs Seamens Socks	86	Scarves	1302
Prs M/East Stockings	10	Pairs of Gloves	888
Pullovers	1069	Pairs of Mittens	617
Cardigans	6	Pairs of Cuffs	56

Adding all these together, and treating a pair as one article, we find that the surprising aggregate of 10,432 articles was reached on the date mentioned. The good work is, of course, going on, and is just as important as ever. Nevertheless, these figures are very gratifying indeed, and considered in terms of working hours, reflect the greatest credit on the workers who so willingly sacrifice their time and effort.

## QUOITING IN MUIRKIRK PARISH

In the first half of the 19th century right through to the middle of the 20th century, the sport of outdoor quoits was very popular throughout Scotland, and Muirkirk and district, including Glenbuck, was no exception. Being born at Albert Place and spending my very early days next to the quoiting rink at the Masons Arms Hotel, I was well acquainted with the sport, and knew from the outset that it had a keen local following, made evident by the large crowds which attended the big matches there. The clinking of the steel quoits hitting each other and the target pin became a very familiar sound in the district. Of course, I was far too young to understand the game, and by the time I was older, the sport was in decline. It was evident from listening to the older generation in the village



that quoiting generated a lot of interest. This was borne out by the fact that in Muirkirk, apart from the Masons Arms Quoiting Club, there was also a Club and rink just above Bankhead Pit to the left of the Auldhouseburn road (the outline of the rink can still be seen to day), and there was another at the bottom of the "Quarry Hole," down from Ladeside Park, which was the home of Southside Quoiting Club, and a lot of quoiting took place at these three venues over the years, although the Masons Arms was where the big challenge matches took place, with renowned Scottish and English champions taking part.

Firstly, I should mention a bit about the mechanics of the game. There were several forms of quoiting throughout Great Britain. The Long Game was

played in Wales and Scotland, and the Northern Games was played in the North of England, where it is understood the pitches were 18 yards long. The Scottish game in the late 19th century through till the present time was played on a green pitch 21 yards long. 3 feet square clay quoiting beds enclosed in a wooden frame were situated at each end of the pitch. The clay was about eight inches deep. In the centre of the bed a metal rod 1 inch in diameter and 18 inches long with the top flush with the clay was inserted. The object of the game was not to encircle the pin, but to try and get the quoit as near the pin as possible. The quoits were normally made of steel, no bigger than 8.63 inches and with a hole no less 3.4 inches with no limit on the height or weight. A typical quoit would be 7 - 9 inches in diameter, having a hole 5.5 inches and weighing anything from between 6 and 11 pounds.

The village of Glenbuck was justly proud in being able to produce arguably the finest quoter in all of Great Britain, and reached heights of excellence that no other player could equal. He was none other than Tom Bone, who was born in Glenbuck in 1868, and was only twenty years of age when he won his first competition at Cumnock in 1888 by defeating the renowned James McMurdo. The following year he won the Scottish Championship from Watters of Lochgelly. He won many matches, culminating in one of the most historic games every played in Scotland for the Championship of Great Britain, when Tom Bone beat James Hood of Liverpool, the English Champion, by 61—27. The Glenbuck miner lightened up the world of quiting with his immaculate play and sporting personality, and was respected by fellow opponents both in Scotland and north of the border. He first won the Scottish Championship by beating Watters of Lochgelly in 1889. Many historic battles took place between these two men. One of the most historical matches ever played in Scotland was that for the Championship of Great Britain between Tom Bone and James Hood of Liverpool, the English Champion. The match was played at Motherwell, and the Glenbuck man was in such deadly form he beat the “auld enemy” by 61—27.



One of the most prestigious competitions in Scotland at that time was the Ballochmyle Silver Quoit competition. Bone won this handsome trophy no fewer than 14 times, proving just how consistent he was. His first win at Mauchline was in 1890, and his 14th victory was secured in 1909. On checking through the records it was interesting to note that David Bone from Muirkirk won the Silver Quoit in 1887 and 1878. James Bone (Tom’s brother) won this competition on two occasions—1886 and 1888—a truly remarkable feat. Bone died in 1916, but a pit accident left him without the sight of one eye, and he was never the same man again, and he was unable to do himself justice, and he played his last game in 1915.



And this brings us to Muirkirk quiting, when I was pleased to discover that the village had produced its own champion in the person of John Kilpatrick. John’s achievements spoke for themselves, starting in the mid 1920’s, and winning his last one in 1948 (in one spell of ten years he won the Championship six times). He won three Scottish Cup badges with three Clubs—Greenock, St. Rollox, and Cowlairs.

In the A. G. Hales Shield (open to Scotland) he won it three times in five years, winning the trophy outright. He was also successful in the Darvel Shield competition winning in eleven times—six times in succession, competing against all the crack quoters. He won the Wyllie Challenge Cup for the Glasgow Competition so often that he was requested

to keep it! By 1926, he had won eighteen Championship matches in succession.

He defeated the English and Welsh Champions in every International match in which he played, and captained the Scottish team on several occasions. At the beginning of his career he won twelve of his fourteen matches. His biggest money match was for £200 against R. McBride, the well known Larkhall quoter, and John won. This is undoubtedly a record to be proud of, and John Kilpatrick played a brand of the game which kept the worthiest of opponents in the background.

In September, 1936, Kilpatrick retained his Scottish Championship when he beat J. Anderson, Heriothill, in the final by 61 shots to 42—this being the fifth year in succession John had won the Championship.

The foregoing comments on quiting were prompted when I was allowed to photograph a pair of local quoits which came to the surface in a garden shed, following the death of Mr Gavin Lochrie, who lived in Hawkshaw Terrace. The quoits belonged to his uncle, Jim Lochrie. They were in a poor state, covered in rust, but I managed to get them cleaned up sufficiently enough to reveal the name stamped on quoits which, of course, was Jim Lochrie.”



## OLD PIPE

Also from the same source I was privileged to see and photograph this old “Briar” pipe belonging to the late Jimmy Lochrie from Hawkshaw Terrace.



## L.O.L.

In the 20th Century Muirkirk had a very active Loyal Orange Lodge, including a Ladies Section, and a Juvenile Lodge. It was quite a common occurrence to see Orange Walks here in Muirkirk, when outside Lodges were travelling to other areas they would sometimes stop in our village and entertain the residents with their usual brand of music and marching songs. Below is a photo of the local L.O.L. No. 270 regalia.



## ROLL OF HONOUR

Below is reproduced the names of the 89 men from Muirkirk Parish who fell in the First World War, 1914—1918. These names were engraved on the War Memorial Gates at the entrance to the Victory Park. This was made possible by the money raised by public subscription. The Memorial, which in its day was a most impressive one, was unveiled in 1922. Over the gateway are the words:—

*“In loving memory of the Muirkirk men who fell in the Great War, 1914—1918.”*

Pte.	Garret Allison	R.S.	Pte.	Thomas Kerr	Mach. Gun. C.
Pte.	John Archibald	R.S.	Pte.	William Kirkwood	5th R.S.F.
Pte.	Robert Archibald	R.S.F.	Pte.	Peter Laidlaw	Mach. Gun. C.
Pte.	Charles Baird	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	John Y. Laing	Black Watch
Sapper	George Baird	R.E.	Cpl.	James Lawson	Scott. Horse
Pte.	Joseph Bernard	R.S.F.	Pte.	Simon Lindsay	Lpl. Scott.
Pte.	Robert Barrie	Ennis Fus.	Pte.	Frank Marshall	2nd S. Guards
Lieut.	Thomas Bell	R.S.F.	Pte.	William Marshall	R. Scots
Pte.	William Black	Canadians	Gunner	William Mathieson	R.F.A.
Pte.	Richard Boland	R.S.F.	Pte.	David Millar	Black Watch
Sapper	Andrew Bone	Canadians	Cpl.	Walter W. Millar	R.H.A.
Cpl.	John Bone	H.L.O.	Pte.	Andrew Mitchell	Ayr. Yeo.
Sergt.	Joseph Bone	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	John Murphy	5th R.S.F.
Pte.	Thomas Bone	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	Thomas Murphy	Seaforth Highr.
Pte.	James W. Boyes	45th Mach Guns	Pte.	William McBride	7th R.S.F.
Pte.	Hugh Cairney	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	Charles McClure	H.L.I.
Gunner	George Caldwell	R.F.A.	Lt.	Arch. McDonald	King's Afr. R.
Cpl.	Andrew Carnduff	H.L.I.	Sergt.	James McDonald	5th R.S.F.
Pte.	Robert Campbell	Black Watch	Pte.	D. McGowan	R.A.M.C.
Pte.	Thos N. Campbell	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	David McIntosh	Black Watch
Sergt.	John Clement	A. & S.H.	Pte.	William McIntyre	Machine Gun C.
Pte.	John Close	H.L.	Pte.	Hugh McKay	A. & S. H.
Pte.	Hugh Collow	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	John McKay	5th R. S. F.
Pte.	John Colville	Canadians	L. Cpl.	John McMillan	R.S.F.
Pte.	John Cranston	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	John McMorran	R. Scots
Pte.	John Devlin	Irish. Fus.	Rfm.	James G. Noble	R. Irish Res.
Cpl.	Thomas Dunsmore	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	Hugh Park	Seaforth Highrs.
Pte.	William N. Easton	Scots Guards	Lt.	Walter J. Patterson	Camrn. Highrs.
Pte.	Dan Ferguson	Loch. Camrs.	Capt.	W. S. Pirrie, D.C.M.	5th R. S. F.
Pte.	Harry Ferguson	Loch. Camrs.	Pte.	Walter Reid	Seaforth Highrs.
Piper	James Findlay	R.S.F.	Pt.	John Samson	R. Scots
Gunner	Robert Findlay	R.F.A.	L.Cpl.	Thomas Shaw	Camern. Highrs.
Pte.	Hugh Gibney	Seaforth High.	Pte.	Archibald Sloan	R. Scots
Pte.	Alex.C. Girdwood	R.S.F.	Pte.	Peter Smith	H.L.I.
Pte.	Robert Gordon	R.A.M.C.	Sergt.	W. Sowden	5th R.S.F.
Gunner	Hugh Greenwood	R.F.A.	Pte.	John Taylor	Loch. Camrs.
Pte.	James Hamilton	Camrn. Highs.	Stkr.	James Thomson	HMG "Terrible"
Gunner	Thomas Henderson	R.F.A.	Pte.	William Torbet	Royal Scots
Pte.	William Hendry	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	Pte. David D. Weir	Canadians
Sergt.	David R. Hodge	King's Lpl. Regt.	L. Cpl.	David H. Weir	5th R.S.F.
Pte.	James Hogg	5th R.S.F.	Pte.	Frank White	R.S.F.
Capt.	Thos. C. Houston	R.A.M.C.	Pte.	James Wood	5th R.S.F.
Sergt.	Hugh Hurse	R.S.F.	Gunner	Charles Young	R.F.A.
Cpl.	Don Johnstone	R.A.M.C.	Pte.	Daniel B. T. Young	Scott. Rifles
Pte.	James Kerr	Glas. Highr.			

## OLD CLAY PIPES



These were the old clay pipes which came to light following the death in 2010 of Gavin Lochrie. They originally belonged to his uncle, Jim Lochrie of Hawkshaw Terrace.

## WAR RELICS



Also uncovered at the same time and in the same house are these bayonets from the 1914-1918 war years, belonging to Howard Harrison. They are from the Second World War and are of American make.

## WAR MEDALS



Mr Howard Harrison was also the owner of these two War Medals. The second one was inscribed: — 22168 Pte. D. WATSON, H.L.I., 1914 —1918, who I understand, was a relative of the same Lochrie Family, who lived in Hawkshaw Terrace. The first one (1941—1945) was not engraved.

## WASHING DAYS



Another item of interest which turned up at the same time as the foregoing items was this old mangling machine, but it was not as old as the ones I remember. There was a lady (Mrs Anderson, I think) who lived across the street from the printing office on the Temperance Hall brae, who took in “mangling” and I took sheets, etc. of my mother to be put through the mangle. The above one looks to be a bit more modern. Mrs Anderson’s was (or so it seemed to me) a huge contraption, and I could barely reach up to the handle — those were the days!

## CANADIAN VISITORS

In May, 2010, I was very pleased to have a visit from Alex. and Margaret (nee Bone) McCall, who were here on a 4-week break from their home in Ontario, Canada. As a young married couple they left Muirkirk in 1957 to start a new life in the country of their adoption. Alec, who was well liked, started his working career as an apprentice grocer with Muirkirk Co-operative Society, and he also acted as van man delivering the morning milk. He was always interested in sport, and was a great football enthusiast in his younger days, being part of the budding stars who played in the Victory Park every Sunday! I might add that Alec packed a good shot when he connected properly. He was also a keen follower of Muirkirk Juniors, and I remember going to an away game with him to Maybole. We travelled by train from Muirkirk Station, changing trains at Ayr, and returning by the same route — yes, quite a journey. Alex was also a fervent Rangers' supporter.

The couple settled in Canada quickly, and Alex. carved out a good career for himself in the expensive mineral production and selling industry. We had plenty to talk about when they were perusing my old photographic collection. Older residents may well remember his father, William, who was Manager of the Muirkirk Co-op., but died a comparatively young man in 1939. Alex raised a family of twin girls and a boy, who in turn produced triplet girl grandchildren for the Muirkirk couple! — and from their photos Alex. and Margaret can be very proud of their family. Margaret's parents were Duncan and Mary Kennedy (whose father was a butcher in Muirkirk, and the field between the Caravan Park and the Railway Station was called Kennedy's Park, where he kept the cattle awaiting slaughter). Alex. and Margaret certainly stirred up a lot of old Muirkirk memories for me, and it was a real pleasure meeting them again.



THE AUTHOR (CENTRE) WITH ALEC. AND MARGARET MCCALL

## THE KYPE MONUMENT

This year (2010), in late spring, along with my wife and Bobby Ward, we visited this Covenantan Memorial, which marked the site, where in the killing times, supporters of the Covenanters' cause gathered for religious meetings. This was my first visit to this site, and immediately we could see that it was the perfect place for the supporters of the Covenanters to hold their religious meetings. There was a deep hollow where the congregation could gather out with the sight of any intruders, and there were plenty of vantage points on the surrounding high ground for sentries to be posted, who could warn of the approach of the Dragoons, giving the Covenanters plenty of time to disperse.

The surrounding countryside has changed since those days, and the site is now surrounded by forestation, but it still retains that remote and tranquil appearance which attracted the Covenanters in the first place. There is a forestry road and footpath leading from the "White Brig" on the Strathaven Road, through the plantations to the Memorial, and it is really well worth a visit. It is just over a six-mile round trek.



THE KYPE MEMORIAL, NEAR AUCHENGILLOCH

## MUIRKIRK ORANGE LODGE

Further to my previous comments regarding the Orange movement in Muirkirk district, another piece of memorabilia which has come to light and is worthy of being included in the history of Muirkirk. This refers to a Past Paster's Jewel presented by the local L.O.L., Lodge Heatherbell, Muirkirk, No. 270, to one of its more distinguished members. He was none other than a founder member of the local Lodge in the person of Mr David Lochrie. David did a lot of sterling work in the early years of the Lodge, and occupied the position of Worthy Master during the years 1956 -1957. The Jewel mentioned was as follows:—



LODGE ST. THOMAS  
No. 201

This Lodge, as well as being part of the national Masonic history, has now the distinction of being the oldest local organisation still in existence in the Parish. Pictured here is the Medal produced to mark the Bi-Centenary of the Lodge:—

1798 — 1998

## REFLECTIONS . . . . .

At this point in time (May, 2010) it would seem appropriate to reflect on the village of Muirkirk itself, and perhaps find a clue to just where the future will lead. I have always been an optimist so far as the village of my birth is concerned. But now, with seventy-seven years behind me, seems a good time to sit back and take a good honest look at what is going on in Muirkirk (or what is not). I'm afraid it does not make for pleasant reading. I have been fortunate enough to have lived through some of the happier times of life in the village, and also some of the more sad ones. It seems to me that Muirkirk was a happier place when the villagers were not endowed with many of the material things in life which were more abundant in the prosperous communities of Scotland. Nevertheless, Muirkirk was a happy place, and the spirit of togetherness was always more evident when times became harder, and when we were tested by local tragedies, which was all part and parcel of like mining communities throughout the country. Muirkirk had suffered badly in the General Strike which was followed by the miners strike in 1926 when the workers lost out to the coal owners and returned to the pits worse off than when the strike started. And yet, when World War II. was declared it heralded yet another episode in the long history of the village, and again the Muirkirk people came out on top. No other community in the land did more than Muirkirk in providing clothing, food, etc., for our armed forces, just as they had done in the First World War. The 1939-1945 War seemed to knit the community closer together, and then when the war ended, the welcome home parties for returning soldiers said it all, and Muirkirk experienced a happiness and contentment not all communities enjoyed.

Following the War, another age was commenced in Muirkirk — the age of football. This saw the re-emergence of junior football in the village, and it was to play a large part in taking Muirkirk through the austere years into the second half of the 20th Century. While this was going on we failed to see the changes being made to Muirkirk. Families drifting away to other climes, small businesses closing, the closure of the passenger rail services; and the Kames Colliery Disaster did not help matters; and eventually the closure of the village's largest source of employment at Kames Colliery; and of course the gradual run-down of the Works had a detrimental effect on the prospects of the village. And over the years our bus services have been slowly diminishing, and we are now more isolated than ever before — No bus service to Strathaven; no bus service to Douglas; our only escape route is via Cumnock, and using this route we must be prepared for longer journeys, as inevitably the route takes in other outlying places.

In earlier times, the coal industry was the saviour of our community — our prosperity and future had depended on this. So is it not rather ironic that perhaps this industry (or its offshoots, the opencast mining) is going to send Muirkirk down the same path as Glenbuck, because we can now see the opencast workings gradually encroaching the village boundaries on both sides — The Powharnal site near Boghead and the Airdsgreen and Glenbuck sites on the east side. The argument was that the opencast mining was a necessary evil that provided jobs for the district, but now we must wonder if these self same jobs are going to sound the death knell of our community as we know it.

A very disturbing development which does not augur well for the future is the number of houses up for sale (21 at time of writing) — the largest total that I can remember. We know the economic climate is not good, but at least the housing market in Muirkirk could always move, albeit slowly. The conclusion is that if we cannot stem the out-going migration from the village, then we really are in trouble. The Muirkirk Enterprise Group, headed by Mr Jim Currie, has done well to attract grants for local schemes, and attracting hill-walkers to our district, but it has done practically nothing to attract new jobs to the area. Local people need local jobs, and looking back, our troubles really started with the closure of Muirtex Ltd., the clothing manufacturer, who employed a large female workforce, who injected a lot of money into the local economy. It was the women's wages that gave most households a larger income so that they could enjoy the extra luxuries in life.

The East Ayrshire Car Club promised much for the village when they constructed the racing track at Southside. Truth to tell, their contribution to the local economy is practically nill, and there are some who think they are more of a nuisance than anything else. It is much the same story with the egg-producing plant at Auldhouseburn, and although there has been an added development there it has not reflected on the employment situation in the village. Much regret has been expressed with the venture being built on the old Golf Course, which holds many pleasant memories for older inhabitants. It would be better if all the local bodies could get together and present a united front in their efforts to secure a brighter future for Muirkirk. Muirkirk Golf Club has done well to survive, and that is encouraging, but it is a different story with Muirkirk Bowling Club, our oldest sporting organisation, and the trouble here is not financial, but the lack of members. Muirkirk Junior F.C. face a bleak future, and here the causes are financial, lack of resources and apathy.

As it is, we can only look towards the future with some trepidation, and my thoughts go back to our local poet, the late Thomas Floyd, when he penned the following so many years ago:—

## MUIRKIRK

When God made oor planet, an' said it was guid,  
 There still was some glauber He hadna got rid;  
 A lang while He pondered, then said wi' a smirk—  
 "I'll mak' a bit village, an' ca' it Muirkirk."

He steered up the glauber, an' made a lang street,  
 Then twa or three sidewings tae mak' it complete;  
 But finding He still had some glauber tae spare,  
 He added the Ironworks and Linkieburn Square.

He then took the village an' plankit it doon  
 In midst o' wild muirlan's, cauld, dreary, an' broon,  
 Whaur reigns siccan winters, an' blashy win's blow,  
 An' when it's no' rainin' there's share tae be snaw.

When strangers and tourists come cyclin' its way,  
They shake an' they shiver, they growl, an' they say  
"Fag en' o' creation, a beastly auld hole—  
The warst place in Scotland, a second North Pole.

"An' if they should cycle alang its main street,  
A mixture o' mankind they're shair for tae meet—  
Scotch, English, an' Irish, an' "Taffies" frae Wales,  
An' apes wha wear trousers tae hide up their tails.

An' if it should happen tae be pey nicht,  
An' a' the "pub's" skailin', they'll see a sad sicht  
O' frail genus homus, hoo low he can sink,  
Enslaved by his passions—a victim tae drink.

An' then for impidence, bad mainners, and cheek,  
The bairns o' the village can fair tak' the leek;  
For ere they can toddle or taught for tae spell,  
Can use siccan language, 'twad mak' yer een stell.

Then shairly, O shairly, ther's something amiss,  
When fate mak's me leave in a village like this,  
Whaur it snaws, an' it thaws, it freezes, it rains;  
God made it wi' glauber — it glauber remains.

Did Tom Floyd know something which we don't know?



THE OLD MANSE

The following interesting article appeared in the "Muirkirk Advertiser" in May, 1930, and I am sure will be of interest to those with a local connection:—

## **TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF MUIRKIRK 1930**

Alphabetically Arranged

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With the summer season now upon us the usual influx of visitors may be expected. For their benefit the following description of the various places of interest in and around Muirkirk has been made, and it is hoped it will also be of interest to the native :—

**Adam's Stone** - Site where the martyr of that name was shot in the spring of 1685. A spot one dreams about. Situated in the leafy shade by the Wellwood Burn, here one gets the full benefit of the romance of the Covenant. This stone is about 200 yards west of Wellwood Farm.

**Ayrs moss (Airdsmoss)** - About three-and-a-half miles west of the village, off the Cumnock Road. Site of a skirmish in July, 1680, when Richard Cameron and eight of his followers laid down their lives in adherence to their convictions. This spot, which is seen from the road and railway, may be approached in dry weather with little inconvenience.

**Ayr (River)** - River flowing through the village dividing it into a North and Southside. A former generation altered the course of the river to make room for a slag bing, while the present generation are doing their best to remove the same bing. Fish may be caught in the river at intervals, the catch usually varying according to the veracity of the angler.

**Bungalows** - Modern form of domicile copied from the Hindoo. Living in these stamps one with the hall mark of respectability.

**Cairntable** - Thought by the natives to be the highest in all Ayrshire. Lies S.E. of the village, and towers 1,944.936 feet above sea level to the third decimal place. A cairn on its summit stands as a memorial to those of the village who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War. There are also ruins of other cairns constructed by former natives trying to make a mountain out of a (mole) hill, but even a mountain cannot, by taking thought, add one cubic to its stature.

**Crossflatt** - Sheep-breeding farm, and favourite for its favourite walk with the villagers. Many a young man not matrimonially inclined has succumbed to the charms of the gentler sex while strolling over the velvet surface of the Crossflatt road.

**Deil's Back Door** - Famous picnic resort on the Glenmuir, about six miles south of Muirkirk. A beauty spot around which is woven a few tales not dealing with his

**Satanic Majesty** - His Nibs so far has not made his bow before any of the present generation.

**Eglinton Arms Hostel** - Relic of the horse age, but now the Hotel Cecil of the village. The landlord is nothing if he is not a philosopher; and this is what he says:—

A man's life is full of crosses and temptations. He comes into the world without his consent, and goes out against his will.

If he is poor, he is a bad manager. If he is rich, he is dishonest. If he needs credit, he can't get it. If he is rich, everybody wants to do him a favour.

If he is in politics it is for money; if he is out of politics, he is no good to the country. If he does not give to charity he is a stingy wretch; if he does, it is for show.

If you save money you are a miser;  
If you spend it, you're a fool;  
If you get it, you're a twister;  
If you don't get it, you're no good.

Life is just one d— thing after another, but why worry when a guid dram can be had at Johnnie Smith's Hotel.

**Elephants (White)** - See Viaduct.

**Furnaces** - Another relic of what used to be. Some of the older natives have had cold feet since the fire of life illuminates not the sky.

**Glenbuck** - Hamlet four miles east of Muirkirk, famous for its quodam Cherry Pickers, and source of the River Ayr. Highest village in Ayrshire. Has been termed —“The Lost City.” Said to contain direct descendants of the first inhabitants of Britain. Once the centre of quoting glory, and now claims to have the best “doos” in the world.

**Garpel** - Tributary of the River Ayr, a clear, crystal stream coming to an ignoble end. Mentioned by Burns, and thought to be haunted. On its banks lived Tibbie Pagan (q.z.).

**Head Inns** - Famous Inn at east end. Apologies for parodising the effort of a well-known poet:—

Call here, my boy, if you are dry,  
The drink on you, and not on I,  
And if you're fond of glorious beer,  
Step in and drink with Willie Weir.

**Inches** - Six miles from Muirkirk, on the Douglas Water. Lovers climbing Cairntable usual return via Inches.

**Jungle** - Name given to certain district of the village by a former Doctor's wife. She evidently did not appreciate the fact of where her daily bread came from.

**Jail** - In Main Street, with accommodation for 0.001 of the population.

**Kames** - Chief coal mine in the district. Also describes mansion on side of River Ayr.

**Linkieburn** - Former domicile of furnace workers. A castle used to be in the vicinity. In the winter the sheep from the hills have a free run of the houses, hence the expression, "home-fed mutton."

**Middlefield Law** - Hill on north side of the village. Said to be last place in Scotland where a bear was killed (maybe it was a wolf). This hill shows evidence of having been a volcano in its youth. A short time ago a few of the "elite" tried to rekindle the volcano, but no lava has made an appearance up till time of writing.

**Moors or Muir** - Situated all around the village, and as free as the air you breathe if you keep the greyhound at home.

**Owls** - These may be heard at night or in early morning, and have a terrifying effect on the human who has had one over the eight.

**Pagan, Tibbie** - The female Burns, poetess of Muirkirk, (Cumnock and Kilmarnock). Lived by the Garpel, and now lies in the Churchyard. Composed many poems famous and infamous poems, but the natives can only tell you her famous couplet:—

I've come through varied scenes of life,  
But never was a married wife.

Which was not much to write about by a lady of her experience.

**Park Public** - The lung of the village, with tennis, putting, swings, etc. Commands an inland panorama second to none in Ayrshire.

**Priesthill** - Site of martyrdom of John Brown, "The Christian Carrier," who was shot by Claverhouse on May Day, 1685. Lies N.E. of Muirkirk, and is difficult to locate for the first time. A solitary spot where one feels the insignificance of all humanity.

**Pubs** - These are placed at convenient intervals from the one end of the town to the other.

**Quoits** - May be indulged in on both sides of the River Ayr.

**Reservoir** - Out on the moors south of the village, recently extended owing to increased demand for ablution in the Crescents, Drives, and Bungalows.

**Rookery** - One at Kameshill, and one in the Smallburn, where the rooks have not the attributes of Ariel.

**Sanquhar Brig** - Ideal for a picnic, one-and-a-half miles south of Muirkirk on the old Sanquhar Road. Boiling Well in the vicinity, but in latter years the well has gone slightly off the boil.

**Sewage Scheme** - Election slogan of former Parish Councillors. Where now shall we dispose of the offal?

**Smallburn** - The west end of Muirkirk, in which is situated the Pavilion (warm and cosy).

**Torhill** - East of the east end of Muirkirk, select and apart by itself. Limehouse, the abode of the translucent orient.

**Tups Park** - Out on the Sanquhar Road. Sanctum for gentlemen sheep. Favourite walk for young bloods of the village.

**Viaduct (Dismantled)** - This is the white elephant of the village. Cynics say there are other elephants, but this is jumbo par excellence. A railway was constructed from Muirkirk to the vicinity of Coalburn, completed, and then discarded. Now the pillars of the viaduct stand as a monument to—well—the elephant.

**Wardlaw** - Little brother of Cairntable, S.S.W. of the village. On its summit is a cairn to the memory of a former owner of Wellwood. This vicinity was a common rendezvous in Covenanting times.

**Wellwood Street** - The Park Lane of the village. To live here gives one the privilege of joining the Badminton Club.

**Wellwood House** - Dismantled mansion, one-and-a-half miles west of the village.

**Wellwood Crescent and Drive** - New houses with baths. See reservoir.

**X** - "The Unknown." At present X denotes the individual that is taking the little fishes from our burns by unorthodox means.

**Yellowstone Park** - Name given to village by American visitor. He laughed through his nose at his own joke: perhaps you will hear him at the "Talkies."

**Zoo** - See Jungle. Name given to local house where abides multifarious quadrupeds.

The benefit of holidaying in Muirkirk is the absolute freedom obtained by the individual; this is limitless. One may come here and give his tired body a complete rest, growing whiskers upon it, painting its face or making it drunk. Or if you are in for giving the body a gruelling, you can indulge in all the gyrations common to golf, tennis, bowls, or football, and at the same times you can free the body to writhe to jazz and negroid noises emitted from a group of hired assassins who will tear to rags anything that was once music.

Here then is a boost for our village! All the visitors get the freedom of the place for the fortnight; then we dump what is left of them on the train or 'bus, clean up the debris, and await with smiling mien the incoming of the latest victims.

ROY CROFT



Main Street at Store Brae



WALLACE'S PROPERTY, MAIN STREET, MUIRKIRK

Here is another tale of an older Muirkirk which I unearthed in my research work, and pertains to January, 1931, and is a story about the bridge which accessed the Crossflatt Road from the Garronhill via the “Sauny Brae.”

## BURNSIDE BRIG

On Friday last the new bridge was unable to cope with the swollen condition of the burn, with the result that the water flooded the roadway, and, but for the timely intervention of a householder, who, with the aid of a plank, deflected the water along the Isle Road, the houses at Burnside would have been flooded and considerable damage done. As it was, the road and footpath were cut up, and neighbouring field flooded.

o o o o o o

’Tis human nature to grumble, but, as I am excluded from that high, though sometimes snobbish class, I may be pardoned for following the example of my superiors. I am only Burnside Brig, and I am neither looking for the plaudits of the populace nor the solace of the few; my only request is the same as that of a schoolboy, who, the other morning as he traversed my rugged exterior, studying hard at an open book, absentmindedly exclaimed—“Lend me your ear.”

Everyone knows, or, at least, has noticed me. I know I’m nothing to write home about — just a rough, maybe dilapidated, wooden footbridge spanning the burn at Burnside, but for many years have I faithfully served my purpose, and, though I say it myself, good for several years yet, that is, if I’m allowed to stand.

I’m not a pessimist; my own experiences have shattered any pessimistic thoughts within me, but, truth to tell, a recent event has left me puzzling.

Can you imagine yourself in my position — a truly public servant, assisting various types of humanity across sometimes a few inches of perfumed (?) water, and sometimes a dark brown current. Occasionally, though only rarely, a loose rib, or should I say plank, causes a pedestrian to stumble, or maybe the “auld man” stepping gingerly home in the dark on a Saturday night slips on the joywheel of his own inebriation, and then as likely as not I am the recipient of some muttered curse. But does it cause me concern? Certainly not; a public servant never grumbles — outwardly. Yes, I’ve heard some bright ones in my time, and many a yarn could I spin about myself and my surroundings. But to my grievance.

Here was I, not broken-hearted (like the vocalist the other night), but quite content with my lot, until there appeared on the scene a number of workmen, and soon a sloppy, ugly mass began to take shape. “What’s this,” quoth I, “to interrupt my view; ’tis surely not a block of flats, or a Council bungalow?” But I was a bit out on my guess—it was neither; it turned out to be a bridge of reinforced concrete, no less. And more than that, I have concluded that it’s reinforced with something more than concrete, and that’s nothing less than pure “snash,” for what I’ve had to stand off this high-falutin’ gas-bag is absolutely unthinkable.

Still, I got some of my own back on Friday. I know the burn was fed up—she always is with tin cans, etc., etc., and I also know the road was fed up, for he was expecting to have his face “lifted” (a painful operation well known in society circles, I believe) to meet the new bridge. Well, the burn got excited and angry, and with the aid of the rain, swelled up a bit and came tearing down on the new bridge in a fury. But my neighbour was unperturbed, in spite of the fact that the water could not all pass through below his much-boasted-of figure. Worse was to follow. The water rose over the banks and flowed right up in front of the houses. I thought the houses were sure to be flooded, and, the burn told me afterwards another inch of water and they would have been, and had it not been for a man with a plank there would have been a few more inches. I bet that hulking brute of a bridge felt a bit smaller, but I had no sympathy for him. I was sorry for the road, though: like the onion, he was feeling all cut up.

If memory serves me right this is the first time the Burnside row has been flooded, and this is a “modern” improvement.

Now what I want to know is—am I not satisfactory enough for all the traffic which passes across the burn? I know I can accommodate pedestrians only, but where is any vehicular traffic to come from?

I am only an old wooden bridge, but my weather eye is open just the same. The new bridge had to be built; now, from Friday’s experience, it will have to be excavated to allow for a large flow of water, and the adjoining road raised to the level. Then the footpath and road in front of the houses are damaged, too.

What, it will relieve the unemployment? True, but will it not relieve you of more cash for the taxes you are constantly grumbling about?

Yes, human nature is a strange thing, grumbling most of the time. “I’m grumbling myself?” you say. Yes, but would you not if you were

BURNSIDE BRIG.

## MORE ON THE BRIDGE

The bridge at Burnside always appeared to be one of the main talking points in the village, and following the above incident, this little snippet appeared in the local press:—

The two old cronies met the other day, as usual.

Bob — “I didna see ye yesterday; was’t owre cauld for ye?”

Tam — “No, it wasnae owre cauld, but I thocht I wad jist tak’ a dauner up the toon for a change, so I gaed through the Garronhill, doon the Sauny Brae an’ ower the Fifth Brig, an’———.”

Bob (interrupting) — “The Fifth Brig! Whaur’s that?”

Tam — “Oh, yon ane at the Burnside.”

Bob — “But hoo is it the Fifth Brig?”

Tam — “Weel, the last wunnerfu’ brig was the Fourth (Forth) Brig, so this maun be the Fifth.”

Bob — “Oh, I see. Is’t feenished yet?”

Tam — “Feenished! Yon brig’ll never be feenished. They’ll aither hae tae blaw’t up or sink it!”

In days gone by a regular feature on the Muirkirk calendar was a Hobbies Exhibition. I can remember two such functions round about the end of the Second World War. One in particular was held in the Drill Hall, and although still a young lad, I was amazed at the quantity and quality of the articles on display, and it was quite apparent the village had a significant number of very clever residents. It would appear that this was the case even as far back as the late 1920's and 30's. I reproduce a report (in the "Advertiser") of one such exhibition held in 1931:—

## **HOBBIES AND HANDICRAFTS EXHIBITION**

Under the auspices of the Ironworks Institute, an exhibition of hobbies and various arts and crafts was held in the Institute at the week-end (December). On Friday, the opening day, Mr D. L. McCardel, convener of the Committee in charge of operations, occupied the chair at the opening ceremony, and after his introductory comments called on Mrs R. L. Angus, Ladykirk, to open the exhibition. Mrs Angus said it was a great pleasure to come to Muirkirk to assist in any way. She emphasised the value of a hobby, and caused some laughter when she remarked that, apart from a wife's point of view, a hobby often kept a husband from interfering with things with which he had nothing to do. In declaring the exhibition open she wished it every success. On the call of Mr Robert Steven a vote of thanks to Mrs Angus and Mr McCardel was heartily accorded.

On Saturday the Rt. Hon. James Brown performed the opening ceremony after a short address. Mrs Brown was also present, and the duties of Chairman were ably fulfilled by Mr John Young, J.P. Dr Warren proposed the vote of thanks.

On Monday, the third day of the show, Mr W. Wallace Lorimer introduced the proceedings, and Mr James W. Tweedie declared the exhibition open. At each of the ceremonies there was a large attendance.

### **THE EXHIBITION**

Seldom, if ever, has such a collection of treasures been placed before a village public as that which graced the Institute, and a visit to the exhibition itself proved that it surpassed even the wildest flight of imagination. Every available corner of space was utilised, there being upwards of a thousand exhibits. The entrance, the reading room, the billiards room, the main hall, and the ladies' cloakroom were all utilised for the display, the gymnasium for a tea-room and amusement stall, and the last remaining space — the gent's cloakroom — for a committee room.

Not only was the size of the exhibition astonishing, but the variety was extensive, and the main hall housed a collection of curios, antiques, fretwork, poker work, photographs and paintings, models, basket work, hand-painted china, wireless sets, numerous exhibitions from foreign lands, etc., etc. At the rear of the hall there was a magnificent display of furs and African weapons, ornaments, etc., which was probably one of the main features of the show.

The billiard room housed a splendid collection of geological specimens, as well as some fine examples of the taxidermist's art, and numerous collections of butterflies, moths, and birds' eggs, which must have involved considerable expense and trouble in their collection.

The reading room was devoted to the work of the ladies, and quite an extensive display of needlework, etc., graced the benches around the room. Conspicuous in this collection were several beautiful Paisley shawls, and on the whole the ladies deserved credit for this section.

Although the walls of the main hall and the billiard room were well covered with works of art, the ladies cloakroom was converted for the time being into a special gallery of light art (?). An extra charge was imposed for viewing the wonderful collection of bizarre treasures, and, judging from the visitors to the gallery, "The Request" was a successful exhibit.

Around the hall was a goodly band of attendants, ready to guide and explain to the visitors, although the explanations attached to each exhibit helped one to appreciate the exhibit itself as well as the work of the Committee.

In the tea-room a band of willing young ladies served out tea, while here one could enter the fun of houp-la, etc.

Music was supplied on Friday by gramophone, under the supervision of Mr J. Johnstone, on Saturday by the Parish Silver Band, conducted by Mr A. Love, and by the Amateur Orchestra, led by Mr J. Johnstone, on Monday, and their efforts brightened up the proceedings.

The exhibition was indeed a huge success, and Mr D. L. McCardel (convener), Mr James Pringle (secretary), and the Committee, are due the heartiest of congratulations on staging a display which must have entailed weeks of hard work and careful thought.



THE GREY MARE'S STONE

THE GREY MARE'S STANE is located on the west side of Wardlaw, a five mile walk from the village. In the picture, Bobby Ward and Betty Taylor, with Jura the Labrador.

## IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

In an older Muirkirk dog fights were a regular occurrence in the village, and was really quite a spectacle. In the earlier 1930's the following is how such a spectacle was described in the "Muirkirk Advertiser":—

### AFTER THE BATTLE

The late Mr Thomas Weir, of Co-operative fame, once expressed his opinion as follows: "There are reporters and reporters, but some reporters couldn't report a dug-fecht." That by way of introduction. It is said that every dog has his day, and it was one's day when two hefty fox terriers fell out in Main Street the other day, indeed, fell on each other's necks. It was noisy to start, with much cry and little wool, but the noise subsided as they lost their wind, and one held on to the other's ear like grim death, while the other far from showing the white feather, endeavoured also to get a hold. A hefty chap tried for a tail a few times before he got it, and when he did it was not the tail of the ear-worrier, which held on when even suspended in mid-air. Slaps were of no avail. At last they were separated, only to start again, and again the worrier got the other by the ear. Next a spectator aimed a kick at the couple—any of them. He was a bit short in his kick and his shoe flew off his foot and went high in the air, landing some ten yards away. There were three dogs, one possibly a referee. Next a lady appeared with a jug of water and stalked the naughty ones. But to everyone's surprise, where kicks and slaps had proved futile, this simple ruse had the desired effect. The referee departed with the vanquished, probably to console with him, and the victor, a bit tired looking, but probably happy, returned to his owner, an interested spectator, who leant down and gave him a pat on the back, which was more eloquent than words. It was a battle won by tactics. There was a goodly spectorate, who seemed to enjoy some amusing episodes, and everyone appeared both relieved and satisfied when it was all over. It is said that a boy once entered a butcher's shop and asked for a penny-worth of steak. "You're not to have a big to-day, Johnnie," said the jolly butcher. Quoth Johnny—"It's no' for my denner; it's tae mak' hinges for my rabbit hoose!" But after that "fecht," for something tough commend me to a "dug's lug."

Public Notices.

**The DUNDAS HALL, Muirkirk,  
TO-MORROW (FRIDAY) and SATURDAY.**

RETURN VISIT of  
**ANDREW P. WILSON and his Scottish Players**  
in his Latest and Best THREE-ACT COMEDY—  
**CRONY O' MINE.**

You will Remember "SANDY"—"Crony o' Mine" is Better Still.

"The Scotsman" said—  
" 'Crony o' Mine' is destined to take a  
Front Place among Scottish Productions."

Book Your Seats Early at Miss BLACKWOOD'S, the Post Office.  
Prices—Reserved, 2/4; Unreserved, 1/2 and 6d.

**Special Notice—**  
Friday's Performance commences at 8 p.m. Doors Open at 7.30.  
Two Performances on Saturday at 6.20 and 8.40.

Note.—Through pressure of engagements in the Cities, the above will be the only  
appearances of the Players in this District.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

## **“AULD LANG SYNE”**

Under this title the Rev. James Greenshields, B.D., (Prestwick), gave a talk in the Dundas Hall last night (1933) under the auspices of the Wellwood Church Women's Guild. The audience comfortably filled the hall, and the Rev. W. Greig Alexander, M.A., presided. The talk was illustrated by with lime-light views. Mr Greenshields (a former Minister of Wellwood Church), who was received with applause, explained that when he came to Muirkirk in 1890 he took up the hobby of photography, and to a large extent the views to be shown were a result of his hobby, but others had been added. The speaker took his audience through the parish, beginning at the Sorn Road, with views of: Townhead Farm, Dalfram, The Avenue, Nether Wellwood, Cameron's Stone, The old bridge over the Ayr at Nether Wellwood, March House, Haystackhill (where two cyclists on penny-farthings were seen), The Mill, Smallburn, Furnace Road, Old Linkieburn, Old Railway Station, Glasgow Road, Main Street with Muckle's Row in Single Story, Kirkgreen, Old Thatched Houses on the site of Madeleine Place, The Old School at Burnbrae, Burnt Ruins at Old Burnside, Auldhouseburn, Old Waulkmill, Glenbuck House, Priesthill and the Martyrs' Monument on the borders of Muirkirk and Lesmahagow, where the speaker took leave of his audience. Pictures of notable residents of other days were shown, and many interesting remarks made on most of these scenes, Mr Greenshields concluding with an eloquent tribute to the Covenanters in the fight for civil and religious liberty, of which we are now reaping the benefit.

The talk was very attentively listened to, great interest was shown in the pictures, and while many of the latter would be new to younger patrons their elder members had their memories refreshed. At an interval Mrs Fettes read "The Cameronian Dream," by Hislop, a Wellwood Shepherd, while Miss Ivy Loggie sang "Dae Ye Min' o' Lang, Lang Syne," to piano accompaniment of Miss Lizzie Wilson. Votes of thanks to the artistes, the lanternist (Mr Robert K. Wilson), Mr Greenshields, and the Chairman brought an interesting meeting to a close.

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The reason I reproduced the above report from the "Advertiser" was that it helped to solve a problem which has been bugging me for some time. In my photographic collection I have a selection of old prints taken from glass lantern slide negatives, and would you believe it, these are the same photos mentioned in this report. So I now know who took the photos, when they were taken, and where they were taken. I knew most of the views, but the ones of the thatched houses always puzzled me, but now I think the puzzle is almost complete, and I will reproduce overleaf some of the prints, along with my conclusions. Perhaps in years to come more light may be shed on this aspect of an older Muirkirk, of which I am very much interested in, and it is always gratifying to get more facts and articles concerning this period in the history of the parish. I would be pleased to hear from anyone with a contribution in this field.

My photographic collection can be accessed on line at:—

*"[www.ayrshirehistory.com](http://www.ayrshirehistory.com)"*

## LANTERN SLIDES OF OLD MUIRKIRK

Below is part of my collection of lantern slides of Muirkirk from days of old. The top two thatched buildings are possibly at Burnside. The left hand image may be of the School at Burnside. The third image is of a burnt ruin at Burnside, while image number four shows Main Street, and Muckle's Raw on the right. (Meikle's Raw) The bottom left shows cyclists at Haystackhill, while the bottom right image is of the Kirk Green Co-op.



Still on the track of old Muirkirk I also came across this article from the files of 1933, and again it threw up some interesting information, and it was as follows:—

## **OLD MUIRKIRK — IN WORD AND PICTURE**

Through the courtesy of Mr James Steele we have been favoured with the perusal of a volume presented to him by his friend, Mr Charles P. Bell. It is in the script of Mr Bell, and although ostensibly a history of the old Literary Society and the Lapraik Burns Club, in reality it is a history of Muirkirk as it deals with many phases of the Parish. What enhances its value are expressions that are characteristic of Mr Bell, for one annual meeting of the Literary Society is termed a “washout.”

It begins with the old Literary Society minutes of meetings held in the Lesser Temperance Hall in September, 1888, although it had been in existence some years before that. Then the Literary removed its quarters to the Baird Institute in November, 1895, the meetings sometimes being held in the Committee Room and sometimes in the Recreation Room. In its hey-day the Literary Dance was the social event of the season.

At the annual meeting in October, 1897, office-bearers were appointed for the last time as follows: — President, Alex. Donald, Esq.; Vice-President, Rev. Mr Nelson; Secretary, Mr James Blackwood; Treasurer, Mr James Young; Committee—Messrs W. S. Blackwood, Arch. Fairbairn, John Kerr, and Charles P. Bell. It was finally agreed to let the ordinary meetings stand for over a year, but to hold the Burns Anniversary as usual. At the annual meeting in October, 1898 the attendance was so small that it was decided to adjourn the meeting until the following Monday, but the turnout at the later meeting was even less, and it was again adjourned. Mr Bell remarks— “The old Association now seems to be staggering towards its fall.”

The final meeting was one of the Committee, when it was agreed to offer the Dramatic Club all the scenery and effects belonging to the Literary Association at present on loan to the Dramatic Club, if the latter accepted responsibility for the Literary debt, which amounted to fully £3.

There were no further entries, but the Dramatic Club did accept, and for some years thereafter flourished.

The book contains long quotations from a lecture by Mr Archibald Fairbairn, F.S.A. Scot., entitled “Notes on Excavations of Prehistoric and Later Sites at Muirkirk,” and also a lecture given by Mr Dugald Baird on “Muirkirk in Bygone Days,” being an addition to that of his namesake of Wellwood.

The volume is profusely illustrated with hand drawings, in black and white and in colour, of monuments, architecture, etc., some still existing in the district and some not. Amongst the latter is The Castle, Linkieburn; the tower of the Ironworks Institute occupies the site of the Castle gable end.

Amongst much interesting data is the following:—

The Red Raw (now a ruin) was built in 1787.

Cleekum Inn, in Linkieburn, is still inhabited, but the sign has gone.

The road to Strathaven was commenced in 1789.

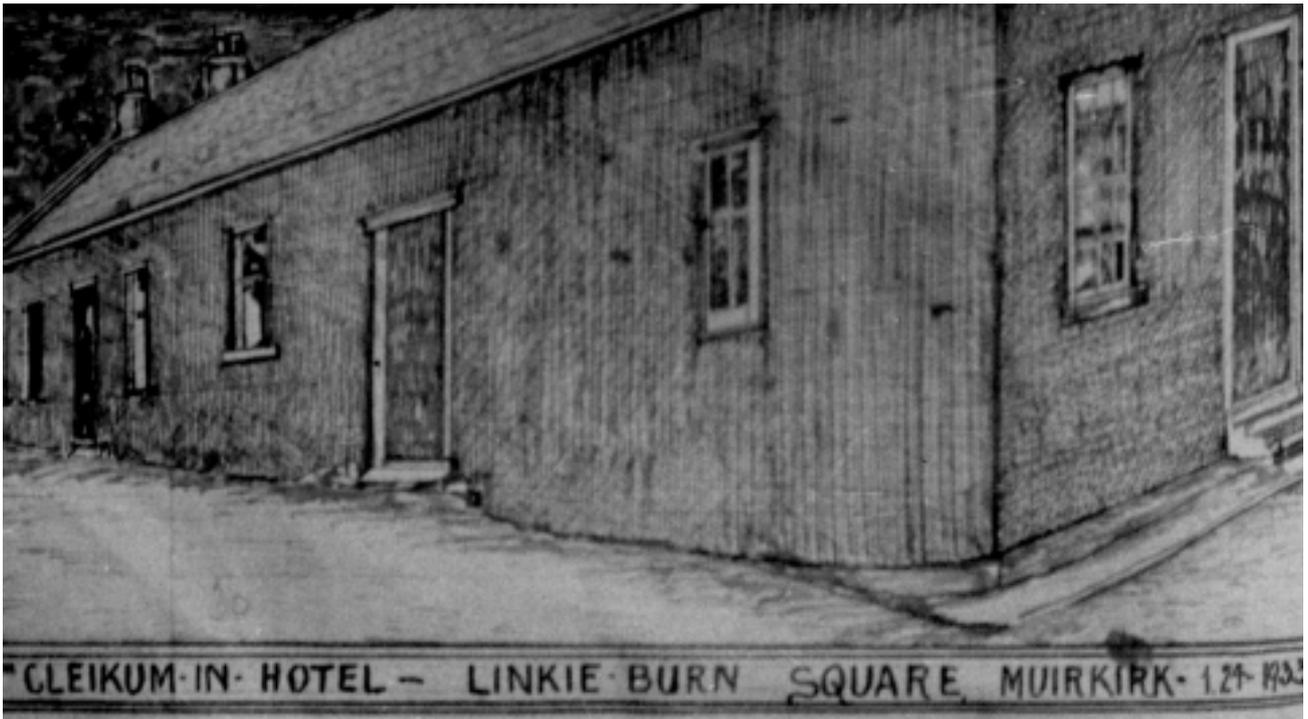
In 1788 the Lade from the Garpel was marked off, and to be made for 3d a yard. Mr Baird, in his lecture, said it now took that sum to clean it.

The Ironworks were erected in 1787, when there were four to blast.

Mr McAdam (of roads fame) declined a Knighthood in 1827, but accepted £10,000 from the Government for many services rendered. Mr Baird's remark on that item was that Mr McAdam was a sound judge.

This self-imposed task is in itself a monument to Mr Bell, and would be treasured by many a Muirkirker, but the favoured one is Mr James Steele, as the title page shows— "This volume was composed for the use of Mr James Steele, draper, Main Street and Glasgow Road, Muirkirk, by his friend, C. P. Bell, 1932."

And here are two Drawings from Mr Bell's volume:—



LINKIEBURN CASTLE

It seems only proper that in my writings I should give a little space to that other mining community in the Parish, namely Glenbuck. Almost everything concerning the sporting achievements of this remarkable little village has already been chronicled, and so my search for more information about the village outwith sport led me to what I think is quite a good vein of historical history. i.e., the Old Folk's annual Re-unions. The first get-together of the old folks of Glenbuck took place in 1924, and here is what was reported in the "Muirkirk Advertiser" on that occasion:—

## **FIRST GLENBUCK OLD FOLKS' REUNION**

After reading several apologies for absence, Mr Rodger said he could not find words to express his grateful thanks to the Committee for the high honour done him in asking him to preside on such an interesting and unique occasion. Interesting it must be, and unique because it was the first meeting of that kind that had been held in Glenbuck. Nor could he find words to express the real pleasure it gave him to meet once more so many old friends from whom he had received great kindnesses in the old days, and to renew friendships which had existed for many years. He had still very warm feelings for the old place, where he set up house, and where his bairns were born, and Glenbuck he regarded as home (applause).

He had many memories, grave and gay, which could be recalled. Memories of congenial friendships and of much enjoyment, which had left no after-taste of bitterness. These were accompanied by the consciousness of his having been engaged in the important work of training the youth of the village to fit them for their daily vocations, and to enable them to take their parts as good citizens.

This was the work he had tried to do with more or less success as time would tell. He had been privileged to share in their joys and pleasures, and he hoped that he had also been able to sympathise with them in their sorrows, which sometimes had come in sudden and tragic manner. There were many well remembered faces present, but many were also a-missing; some were unable to be present through illness, some owing to distance, while others had "crossed the bourne."

Mr Rodger said he did not know who was responsible for the re-union, but all would agree they deserved the warmest thanks. It was indeed a very happy thought to bring the old folk together, and he wondered what the feelings of the guests were like. They had probably met with mixed feelings—some of regret that the village of their youth, once so full of life, happiness, and industry, was now but a shadow of its former self through trade depression. Still, bright times may come again, and for that night they were going to banish dull care and enjoy themselves (applause).

With the permission of the guests, however, Mr Rodger said he would like to express his deep regret regarding the recent death of Major Ryrie, and the sorrow that had fallen on Glenbuck House during the past few years. To the sorrowing widows—Mrs Howatson, Mrs Nile Howatson, and Mrs Ryrie, he expressed the deepest sympathy. The speaker said he remembered the late Mr Howatson remarking at the opening of the water works in 1897, that Glenbuck had a very bright future before it, and he trusted that the day was far distant when one of the name of Howatson ceased to take a deep interest in the welfare of the village. To-day, alas, there was no one left to carry out his hopes.

Mr Rodger said he first visited Glenbuck in December, 1885, just before his commencement of duties in the opening week of 1886, when, according to the Ayrshire Geography, the population was 365. A few years later, however, a census proved the population to be 1174. Long before he knew it, Glenbuck was famous in history—in Covenanting times when men contended and suffered for civil and religious liberty. Then came the industry of iron and ore smelting, but this lasted less than twenty years. Later, a number of weavers combined their industry with that of farming. They died out, too, the last weaver passing in 1880. However, all would remember the houses in Stair Row, where the weavers used to live. After the weaving industry, coal mining began to prosper. First there was the Eglinton Iron Co., then the Cairntable Co., followed by the Auchenstilloch Coal Co. It would now be well over eighty years since the Eglinton Iron Co. started Maidenbank Pit, which was abandoned in a few years. Other pits, all well known to his hearers, were afterwards developed — Grasshill, Galawhistle, Davie, etc. Mentioning the pits recalled the names of the managers at Grasshill — Mr McCulloch, and his faithful assistant, Mr Andrew Tait; and Mr Muir and Mr Robert Crosbie of Cairntable Pits. It was impossible to mention all the names he wished, Mr Rodger said, as time was limited.

The Chairman thereafter read two most interesting letters from Mr M. T. McWhirter, Larkhall (a worthy son of the village), to Mr A. V. Hazle, the energetic secretary of the Re-union. Both epistles were brimful of reminiscences of the writer's boyhood days in the village, and mentioned many well known names, while one contained a full account of the forming of the Glenbuck Co-operative Society. Enclosed also were several photographs, which were passed round for inspection, to the evident enjoyment of the guests.

A thriving village, the Chairman said, could not be complete without a church and School. In 1882 Glenbuck was formed into a Quoad Sacra Parish, and a splendid Church and manse was erected. The Minister was Rev. Mr Wallace, a saintly man, while the elders were Messrs, Gibson, Muir, Kitch, and Howatson. The Chairman said he was particularly pleased to see Mr Wallace's successor, Mr McKenzie, and his good lady, carrying on the good work in the village.

Recollections of Glenbuck would not be complete without reference to the activities in the village — quoiting, football, curling, etc. Mr Rodger referred to the fame won by Thomas Bone in the quoiting world, and said the first football ground had been where Grasshill No. 2 Pit now was. All knew the exploits of Glenbuck in the football world, and of their cup victories three years in succession. The cup final of 1892 was a memorable one, the Glenbuck team being:—Blyth; Bone, Menzies; Devlin, Reid, Cumming (who took the place of A. Wallace); Menzies, Tait, McBride, Tait, Menzies. Mr Rodger referred to a recent meeting with Mr Allan Morton of Rangers, to whom he had told all about the Glenbuck players, and of how two of them had won the cup for Tottenham (laughter). The result was that it all appeared in a Sunday newspaper. The Chairman said he was glad that John Crosbie and the Shankly's were upholding the traditions on the world football field.

Mr Rodger also made reference to the School. The first headmaster had been Mr Baikie, to whom he paid high tribute, then Mr Allan, whom the Chairman succeeded, and now Mr Kirkwood. He also mentioned the names of the lady teachers, and spoke of the pleasure afforded him in meeting his old pupils, expressing his delight at the success of the two Murdoch's and Andrew Tait.

After reading a poem specially written for the occasion, and entitled, "The Glenbuck Over-Sixty Re-union," Mr Rodgers said he trusted all would carry away pleasant memories, and that they would be spared to meet again, concluding—

"Hail and farewell! We go our way  
Where shadows end, we trust the light;  
The star that ushers in the night  
Is herald also of the day."

## GLENBUCK PUBLIC SCHOOL



GLENBUCK PUBLIC SCHOOL – DATE UNKNOWN



## THE GLENBUCK OVER SIXTY RE-UNION

(Verses read by Mr Rodger at the Glenbuck Old Folks' Re-Union, and we understand they were the result of a dual effort)

We've ha'en oor joys an' sorrows,  
An' at times the warst o' luck,  
But we cherish hallowed memories  
O' the days in auld Glenbuck.

While Cairntable towers abune us,  
An' Ayr wimples tae the sea,  
We'll treasure up the days of yore  
Until the day we dee.

Oo'rs is nae mushroom village,  
That sprang up in a nicht;  
Its hair was grey, its face was seamed  
Ere Hitler saw the licht.

An' on oor muirs an' hillside  
Oor faithers bled an' died  
For freedom and religion,  
An' tyrant kings defied.

'Twas here we raised our bairnies,  
An' saw them through the schule,  
Where they were trained an' guided  
An' putten "through the mull."

We had oor wee bit pleasures tae,  
Oor dances an' oor quoits,  
Oor dauners on the green hillsides,  
An' noo an' then oor fights.

Oor fights were no' the noisy kind  
O' vulgar brawls an' bickers,  
But skilly sporty duels wi'  
The Glenbuck Cherrypickers.

Where Johnnie Crosbie made his name,  
Kent a' the country roon',  
An' at his heels in fitba' fame  
Came hefty Towie Broon.

An' when we think o' rod an' bait,  
An' cunnin' neuks an' hollows,  
Oor minds flee back tae Andra Tait,  
An' couthie Sandy Wallace.

They aye produced the genuine goods,  
Ne'er tried tae mak' ye guess  
That the fish that carried aff their hooks  
Were monsters frae Loch Ness.

The gentle sex noo claims a word  
(They're worth a toast in Johnny  
Dewar);  
Tae leave them oot wad be absurd  
Tae start I'll gie ye Granny Muir.

Her wee post office served us weel,  
She didna push or advertise,  
But you could get whate'er ye want,  
Frae stamps tae stairch an' Sunday ties.

An' then again ye min' the times  
We squeezed oor nebs on Leezie's  
wundy,  
An' wearied for oor week-end coin  
Tae get a whack o' Fanny's gundy.

Oor tastes ha'e changed, maybe  
improved;  
I ha'e my doots, but this I'll say—  
The rapture o' the gundy shop,  
Is ne'er achieved by us to-day.

An' some are gane that shared oor  
sprees,  
An' some are far awa;  
An' gathered as we are the nicht  
We mind them ane an' a'.

But naething's gained by dool an' dirgy,  
We'll bury deep oor grief,  
An' this nicht we'll forget we're auld,  
Half blin', an' beld, an' deef.

We'll throw aside oor aches an' pains,  
Like water aff a juck;  
Fill up yer cups, an' drink this toast—  
"Lang life tae auld Glenbuck!"



## GLENBUCK OLD FOLKS' RE-UNION

The second Re-union of Glenbuck Old Folks was held in 1925, when a Glenbuck man, born and bred, in the person of Mr M. T. McWhirter (Larkhall), was the invited Chairman for the evening, and again I quote the report from the local "Advertiser:—"

Before commencing his address, Mr McWhirter referred to the passing of several Glenbuck old folks since last re-union — Andrew Crosbie (a faithful public servant), James Short, Richard Bain, George Wallace, William Johnstone, and Robert Lindsay, who although not a native, had been resident long enough in Glenbuck to be called a native, he thought.

The Chairman, whose remarks were followed with the keenest appreciation, spoke of the vast changes which had taken place in the life-time of the guests. When they were young what did they know of the telephone, the wireless, the aeroplane, the motor car, and now television, which would soon become common-place?

It was not the progress of science which brought them together that night, however. No, they were gathered together, resting and pausing as it were to cherish and fondly recall the days of their youth.

Glenbuck in those far-off days was an industrious mining village. Maidenbank, Grasshill, The Lady, The Davy, and latterly Galawhistle and Auchenstilloch pits provided abundance of employment. While on the topic of mines, the speaker also compared old time and modern conditions in the pits. He spoke of the tragedies sometimes associated with the life of the miner, recalling several in his early days, and said that the grief in the stricken homes had always been shared by the entire population of the village. Village life was not of the individual, but of one big family, who shared alike the hopes and despairs, the joys and sorrows, the aspirations and regrets, and even the humour of the individuals.

Recalling old personalities of his boyhood days, the Chairman mentioned the name of William Bone, Dan Gibson, Sandy Vass, Grannie Blyth (clever with the needle and shears), Gavin Dalziel and his wife Jenny, John Dempster, Sandy Johnstone of Airdsgreen, Tam McKerrow of Spireslack, McKersie of Clunbuck, Cork Lowrie, Pa Brown of Newmains, and Andersons, Blyths, Weirs, Bones etc.

The speaker also mentioned the names of his own great-grandfather, Tam McWhirter, and his grandfather, Hugh. He had learned that Tam had an "ingaun e'e," and also owned a racehorse. The horse was engaged drawing the tubs at the mine, and competed at race meetings at Cumnock and elsewhere.

Mr McWhirter said that the Gavin Dalziel he had mentioned was a cousin of Gavin Dalziel of Lesmahagow, a travelling merchant, who had invented a bicycle built of wood. The road from the Douglas and Muirkirk highway leading up the glen to Glenbuck had no bridge in those days, and the burn, which is the source of the River Ayr, wended from side to side of the glen, and had to be forded at several parts. When it was "Dalziel's day" to enter the village, the people took up a vantage point on Brown's Hill to witness what was to them the wonderful sight of Dalziel taking the fords on his "wooden horse." The wooden bicycle is at present in Kelvingrove, Glasgow.

In his progress through life, Mr McWhirter said he often paused and allowed his mind to dwell on the village of his childhood, and he could in fancy hear the snorting of the winding engines at Grasshill and Lady Pits, and see the endless

rope from the Davy Pit to the burn side, and the bogie road to the loch, the elevator at the furnace wall, the hutch road from Grasshill to Maidenbank, each and all engaged in transporting the wealth of the glen to supply the general needs of the outside world.

In the summer time, when the day's work was done, men and youths engaged in all classes of sports — quoiting, football, jumping, and running. "Oh, but could the cock yard but speak," said Mr McWhirter, amidst laughter. Every ounce of energy and skill was put into their sport, and it was small wonder that the village had produced doughty champions. In quoiting, Mr McWhirter said he need not make more than reference to the high place as marksmen of the brothers Bone, and in a lesser degree, his own father. There were also others of the Bone family, and Bains, Tait, Davidsons, all skilful exponents of the game. Then in football, Glenbuck had created a record in winning the Ayrshire Cup the first three years of its existence. This record was all the greater because eight of their players belonged to three families. This team was composed of three Tait, three Menzieses, and two Bones, with Devlin, Wallace, and Blythe.

Mr McWhirter also referred in passing to the feet-washing, weddings, and creelings of the good old days.

What of the future of Glenbuck? The pits were all closed. Had the village a future in industry, or would the people migrate, leaving the houses to crumble into dust and the land to resume its former state? Or would new industries arise to renew the life of the village and improve its amenities?

The Government passed a Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act, 1934, and appointed Sir H. Arthur Ross as Commissioner for Scotland. Mr McWhirter said that Sir Arthur's attention should be diverted to the obsolete railway between Bankend, Coalburn, and Muirkirk. Reconstructed as a highway, it would connect Lanarkshire and Ayrshire by a new road route, and would prove of immense advantage for motor traffic.

Glenbuck Loch could be utilised for generating electricity, and the cheapened power would be an incentive to manufacturers to lay out plans for their manufactures.

Mr McWhirter also suggested many improvements in the village itself, and in conclusion thanked all for their attendance, and expressed the hope that all would be spared to return with the same buoyancy of spirit to the next Glenbuck reunion of old folks.

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Well, we all know now what happened to Glenbuck, and it looks like a similar situation could be developing in Muirkirk, and we can only hope and pray that our own community will fare better than our neighbours did in Glenbuck.



**DISTRICT 'BUS TIME TABLE.**

**Muirkirk, Glenbuck, Douglas, Lanark.**

	Ex. Sun.	Sun. only.	only Sat.	Ex. Sun.	Sat. only	Sat. only	Sat. only	Sat. only	Sun. Ex.				
Muirkirk lea.	5.30a.	8.40	9.40	11.40	1.40p.	3.10	3.40	5.40	7.40	9.40	11.40		
Glenbuck	5.43	8.53	9.53	11.53	1.53	3.23	3.53	5.53	7.53	9.53	11.53		
Douglas		9.14	10.14	12.14	2.14	3.14	4.14	5.14	6.14	7.14	8.14	9.14	10.14
Lanark arr.		9.50	10.50	12.50	2.50	3.50	4.50	5.50	6.50	7.50	8.50	9.50	10.50

**Lanark, Douglas, Glenbuck, Muirkirk.**

	Ex. Sun.	Sat. only.	Ex. Sat.	Sat. only	Sat. only	Sat. only	Ex. Sun.	Sat. only.			
Lanark lea.	11.0a	1.0p	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	11.0
Douglas	11.32	1.32	2.32	3.32	4.32	5.32	6.32	7.32	8.32	9.32	11.32
Glenbuck	11.52	1.52	3.25	3.52	5.52	7.52	9.52	11.55	11.57		
Muirkirk arr.	12.5	2.5	3.38	4.5	6.5	8.5	10.5	12.8	12.10		

**Muirkirk and Southside.**

	Ex. Sun.	Sat. only.	Sat. only	Sat. only	Sat. only	Sat. only		
Muirkirk lea.	9.30	11.30	1.30	3.30	5.30	7.30	9.30	11.40
Larkburn lea.	9.35	11.35	1.35	3.35	5.35	7.35	9.35	11.45
Muirkirk ar.	9.40	11.40	1.40	3.40	5.40	7.40	9.40	11.50

**Muirkirk and Strathaven.**

	Ex. Sun.	Sats. only.	Sats. only.	Sats. only.	Sats. only.		
Muirkirk lea.	8.5 a.m.	12.5 p.m.	2.5	4.5	6.5	8.5	10.5
Strathaven arrive	8.45	12.45	2.45	4.45	6.45	8.45	10.45

**Strathaven and Muirkirk.**

	Ex. Sun.	Sats. only.	Sats. only.	Sats. only.	Sats. only.		
Strathaven leave	8.50 a.	12.50 p.	2.50	4.50	6.50	8.50	11.0
Muirkirk arrive	9.30	1.30	3.30	5.30	7.30	9.30	11.40

**Muirkirk and Cumnock, connecting with Ayr, Kilmarnock, Dumfries, &c., with all except the later 'buses.**

Every Hour, beginning 8.25 a.m. Week Days, 9.25 Sundays. Last 'Bus—Sunday till Friday 10.25, and Saturday 11.25.

**Cumnock and Muirkirk.**

Every Hour, beginning 7.50 a.m. Week Days, 8.50 Sundays. Last 'Bus—Sunday till Friday 9.50, and Saturdays 10.50

Ne'er Cast a Clout till May be Oot!



A MAY FLOWER BLOOM, PHOTOGRAPHED AT MIDHOUSE ROW

## AYE, AYE

(Article with a local flavour, from the 1936 "Muirkirk Advertiser")

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"Man, isn't it awfu' cauld noo after the gran' wauther oo had a week or twa sin'," said Jock to Sandy as they set out on their usual stroll.

"Ay, I had an idea it was ower gran' tae lest, an' I thocht oo'd hae snaw yet," said Sandy; "I see some bits o' lambs about noo, an' I'm thinkin' they'll be daein' a bit o' chitterin."

Jock — "I was Ower the Watter the ither day, an' I see the craws or jackdaws are busy wi' their nests in the trees at Kaimshill. Man, its rale hairtsome tae see them an' tae hear them, although it may no' be sae nice tae hae them cryin' at yer lug a' day."

Sandy — "Weel, they shouldna bother the tennants at Kaimshill the noo onyway, for I hear there's naebuddy in't."

Jock — "I see they've taken the tap aff the stair up tae the Station noo, at least they've ta'en the lid aff."

Sandy — "Oh"? Wull they hae been converted tae the fresh air craze?"

Jock — "I'm thinkin' they've been converted tae the fresh air craze lang syne. When did ye see a fire in the waitin'-room?"

Sandy — "Deed, I dinna ken, but the truth is that I hinna been trevelling very muckle wi' the railway for a while. The last time I was on a train was doon at Ayr wi' ane o' the Woolworths excursions, an' it'll ser' me for a while yet."

Jock — "There's some folk no' easy pleased. For a bob they'd like tae hae a first-class cairriage, porters tae tip their bunnets tae them, an' gie them beer at the end."

Sandy — "It look's as if Glenbuck's gaun tae be washed oot sune."

Jock — "Hoo?"

Sandy — "Weel, they're appearingly no' gaun tae build ony mair hooses there, but are gaun tae provide 160 new hooses in Muirkirk. I'm tellin' ye, they're getting on. The hail o' Muirkirk'll sune belang tae the Coonty Coouncil. A' they need tae dae is tae condemn a' the ither properties."

Jock — "Weel, I think it's dashed hard that ony buddy that hae wrocht hard a' their lives, an' hae bocht their ain wee bit but-an'-ben wi' a struggle, are tell't tae clear oot an' leave it. An' whit about daicent auld folk that hae spent their a' on property an' leevin' on the rents? There'll be naehing left for them but the pairish."

Sandy — "When this new hoosin' idea cam' oot I thocht there was tae be a kind o' gradin' affair. Instead o' liftin' the tenants oot o' the slums wi' the dirt flairs an' plumpin' them intae the Coonty new hooses wi' het watter, an' bathrooms, an' gas stoves, I thocht it wis tae be a case o' shiftin' tenants frae wee but daicent hooses intae thae big new hooses an' gien the wee daicent hooses tae folk in the slum hooses they wad be mair able tae pey the rent o'. I suppose there's ony amount in daicent hooses lookin' for a bigger hoose. I'd like fine tae hae a luik o' the factor's rent book."

Jock — “I’m telt that some o’ the hooses that hae been condemned in some places wad never hae been condemned, but they had tae get tenants for the new hooses, but that disna seem tae be the way o’t in Muirkirk, but, like the puir, I suppose oo’ll aye hae the slums.”

Sandy — “There’s some folk slums on the brain.”

Jock — “Did ye say 160 hooses they’re gaun tae build? That’ll hoose far mair than the Glenbuck folk, but I’m tellin’ ye that it’ll tak’ dynamite tae shift some o’ the aulder folk frae Glenbuck, or a plague, or maybe poision gas, but of coorse in ony case they wad then be in Muirkirk after a’, an’ they wad hae nae complaints about their hooses.”

Sandy — “But there’s naebuddy compleenin’ the noo. It’s some folks wi’ fat salaries that maun be interferin’ an’ daein’ something tae justify their existence, an’ as lang as it disnae come oot o’ their pooches, it disna matter. But there’s a shoo’er comin’, so I’ll gang doon this way. Guid-day!”

## AN “OUTSIDER’S” VIEW

Mr John Young, Springhill, came to Muirkirk around 1908, when he was appointed cashier at the works of Messrs William Baird & Co. Mr Young became a well-known figure in the community, and took a great interest in the public life of the village. He was Chairman of the School Board, a member of the Parish Council, representative to the District Committee of the County Council and a Justice of the Peace for the County of Ayr. He was treasurer of the Parish War Relief Fund Committee, which raised many thousands of pounds during the First World War. Mr Young was regarded as the stock Chairman at local concerts and whist drives, and also acted as Treasurer to many local organisations. So it was no real surprise when he was invited to be Chairman of the annual Muirkirk Old Folk’s Re-Union in 1937. Older residents of the village will be interested to read his remarks at that gathering held in the Ironworks Institute.

### THE CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS

Fancy a “Young” man presiding at an old folks Party. But don’t blame me friends. It was “Love” brought me here (Hugh Love!). I notice it is quite customary for a Chairman at functions such as this as to wonder why they have been chosen. Maybe such a thought did pass through my mind, and I came to the conclusion it may have been that in the period—nearly a quarter of a century— I spent in your midst it was a privilege to serve you in a variety of ways—public and private. In one way I’m at a distinct disadvantage this evening. I’m not a native of Muirkirk, and cannot therefore recall my boyhood days spent in your streets and on your moors. So in thinking it over what I might say to you, it occurred to me that I might make a mention of some changes that took place during my sojourn amongst you.

### INDUSTRIES

Suppose we take industries first. When I came here in 1908 the Ironworks was a busy place. Three furnaces were in full blast, and the Forge and Mill were both working, although rather intermittently. Both the Forge and Mill were much out of date, and in 1915 a complete stoppage took place, and the machinery was sold more or less as scrap. The Furnaces wrought on till 1921, when at the beginning of the strike in that year they were blown out, and now the Furnaces

and Ammonia Works are being dismantled to our great regret. But those of the men who lost their employment when these works stopped, and who preferred to remain in Muirkirk, with commendable adaptability, have found employment as pitmen. Referring to the collieries, Lightshaw and Grasshill are now pits of the past, but Kames goes on merrily. Work has been constant for a good while now, and I see no reason to doubt that there is still a long life before Kames, and I am sure we're all delighted thereat. What Muirkirk needs is something in addition to Kames Colliery — something for the girls to do. Let us hope, now that there is a prospect of more prosperous times for all, that Muirkirk will not be forgotten, and that some enterprising concern may think it worthwhile starting a fresh industry here.

## CHURCHES

In the Churches we had first an amalgamation of the Free and U.P. congregations, in consequence of such we lost Rev. Mr Dundas — a gentleman who was never afraid to voice his own opinions, and was respected by all. Later on there was the union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free congregations. Shortly thereafter Rev. Mr Greenshields retired owing to failing health, and to the great regret of his many friends, and now Rev. W. Craig Alexander reigns in his stead. In the Parish Church Mr Montgomery was followed by Mr Henderson, who is still going strong. I recall with pride the fact that it was my voice which carried through by telephone the news to Mr Henderson that he had been elected to Muirkirk by a clear majority over other two candidates. He has been honoured by his congregation on the occasion of his semi-jubilee in the ministry, and then later on the occasion of his semi-jubilee in Muirkirk. Seems to me that every demi-semi-jubilee of his as it comes round evokes recognition. A man who can inspire such loyalty and affection is no ordinary minister.

Two old wives were having a cup of tea, and one said to the other—"Whit's a jubilee?" "Dae ye no' ken?" replied the second; "when you've been mairrat twenty-five years — that's your silver wedding; when you've been mairrat fifty — that's your golden wedding; but when your man dies—that's your jubilee!" (Laughter). I am sorry Mr Wilson of Kames is unable to be present, as I have not now the opportunity of expressing to him personally my good wishes. You can understand how greatly interested I have always been in Kames Church, and I wish Mr Wilson every success in his work. When Father Bohan was the priest at the Chapel I was on the most cordial terms with him, and we often worked together for the benefit of his school.

## SCHOOLS

When I mention the name of Mr Richard Cunningham I'm sure you'll agree with me when I say I never met a schoolmaster who was more thoroughly interested in his work. Following him we had Mr Phillips, who did good work in his short stay. About that time Mr James Clark, Crossflatt, came from a trip to America, and in telling his experiences, said that every school in America had a flag and a flagpole. I thought it a splendid idea, and I presented a flagpole and a flag to Furnace Road School, in the hope that the flag might be displayed on national and special occasions, but I'm a little disappointed that more service is not taken of it. Then you are all aware what a grand school we have now at Furnace Road, and we rejoice at the measure of success it has attained under Mr Gordon, who takes a deep interest in his work, and finds time to further the well-being of the district.

## MUSIC

I'm sure many of you will recall the Orchestra which flourished in our midst. Mr James G. Richmond and Mr John Johnstone had great credit with their performances, and we all deplore the fact that no such organisation now exists. Then is it not possible to resuscitate the Brass Band? These bands seem to be coming in to favour again. You have the instruments, and surely there is sufficient enthusiasm to get the Band on its feet again.

## BIG DRUM

The Band had been out that day, and on the homeward train journey the ticket collector appeared to collect tickets. One of the bandsmen could not produce his ticket. He searched everywhere, while the impatient collector remarked—"Surely you cannot have lost your ticket?" "Lost my ticket! Man, I've lost the big drum the day!"

## FOOTBALL

Football used to flourish mightily in this district. I notice an effort is being made to engender some fresh interest, and I wish well the effort. I'm glad to know that the Golf Club still flourishes. I am one of its original members. Now, that's a game that can be played at any age, so what about some of you old young fellows taking it up? Then after we got the Victory Park (which is one of the most splendid achievements of this period under review) we also got the tennis courts, and these afford healthy exercise for our youths, male and female. I don't know whether many of you have seen the game of badminton played. You are sitting now in the badminton court, and it used to be a great delight to me to come to the Institute and watch the members play amongst themselves on a Club night or against opponents from a club in the neighbourhood. Two honours I value very highly are the life-memberships bestowed on me by the Golf Club and Badminton Club. Long may they flourish. I am also glad to notice that another club is doing well—the Bowling Green, where I have spent many happy evenings. I was very sorry to hear of the untimely death of Mr James G. Torbett, and as a Past President of the Bowling Club, I take this opportunity of voicing my high appreciation of all he did for the Club in his capacity as secretary over so many years.

## FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

Muirkirk is well endowed with Friendly Societies, and I am glad to think they manage to exist notwithstanding the formidable but friendly rivalry of State Insurance. But in this respect I think the brightest spot in Muirkirk is at Kames Vestry with the savings Bank. I took great interest in this Bank, and am delighted from time to time to learn of its continued prosperity. Messrs Hugh Williamson and James Samson, the present officers, deserve a special mention, and I do so now with great pleasure.

## AMBULANCE

As one interested in Ambulance work, I am glad to notice that a measure of enthusiasm still exists. I recall the success which attended the Muirkirk team when they competed for the old G. & S. W. Railway trophy — the most handsome trophy I have ever had the honour of housing. But why don't more young people take advantage of the classes? I attend the annual competition at Kilmarnock, and I need not say that my team there is always Kames Colliery. I am sure Mr Hodge

and others deserve more encouragement than they get. Shortly after I came here, in speaking at an Ambulance social I pointed out the want of an ambulance wagon. It was agreed right away that an effort should be made to collect funds to purchase one. I mentioned the matter to Mr Robert Angus, and he at once said, "We will give a wagon," and since then Muirkirk has never been without one, and it has been a great boon to the place.

#### FLOWER SHOW

The time was when we had two Flower Shows in the district — one in the town and the other in this Institute. Both were very successful functions, and it is a great pity they have lapsed. It used to afford me the greatest pleasure to assist in judging the gardens on South Side. From experience I can say there is much pleasure to be had in the hobby of gardening. I would fain hope that both Societies may be restarted at an early date. He was busy in the garden when the Minister came along. "You and the Creator work well together," said the Minister. "Aye, mebbe" replied the gardener, "but ye should hae seen it when the Creator had it jist Himsel!" (Laughter).

#### WAR RELIEF COMMITTEE

My remarks would not be complete were I not to mention the War Relief Committee. I make bold to say that nowhere was so much done for the soldiers from the Parish and their dependants than was done here. Of the conveners, both Mr James Clark and Mr David Stitt have passed away, and only Rev. Mr Henderson and myself are left. Once more I should like to bear testimony to the unbounded enthusiasm of Mr Henderson, and the unstinted support given us by the people of Muirkirk. It is a matter of regret to myself that I am not able to disclose how much money we actually raised, but it certainly was a great credit to you all. Perhaps you will allow me to remind you of the Peripatetics, who collected a lot of money by selling the sticks. Might I recall their names — Neil Buchanan (plumber), Rev. John Henderson, the late Robert Jack (draper), David Martin (the factor), W. Shaw Smith (printer), and myself, with Miss Hutchison as our cashier. It was great fun when we were on, and we enjoyed it as much as you did.

#### WHIST DRIVES

It was then whist drives started in Muirkirk, and it may surprise some of you to know that at first it was quite usual to raise £40 to £50 as the result of a whist drive and dance. Of course, these drives were for War Funds, and everybody was out to make a success of them. Whist drives continue to be a favourite method of raising money for needy purposes. In passing, I remember that the Temperance Hall became a Cinema many years ago, and during the period under review there has been a great change in our manner of travelling. Muirkirk is now connected with the outer world, or vice-versa, by means of 'buses, and these have created a traffic of their own.

#### BETTER HOUSES

Another subject I would like to touch on is better housing and more sanitary conveniences. I feel sure that all who enjoy these improvements must appreciate them even although they cost a little more. Then I'm glad to know the pit baths are such a success, and while the baths are prized by the men, what a blessing they must be to the housewives! What you need next is electric light in your homes and on your streets. From our short experience in Lugar I can assure you it's worth having.

### OLD FOLKS' PARTIES

My last subject is old folks' parties, and I only require to mention the subject to reawaken your interest in what I'm saying. I think it is one of the most beautiful aspects of modern life that so much consideration should be shown to those who "have borne the burden and heat of the day." There is a great deal of work involved in arranging for a function such as this, but you may be sure of this, everything is done ungrudgingly in an effort to bring a glimpse of sunshine into what might otherwise be a rather drab existence, and as a labour of love for those who deserve a right good time now and again in a congenial atmosphere. May it be your privilege to attend many more old folks' parties in this district.

Mr Young's speech was punctuated with applause.



Mr JOHN YOUNG, J.P.

## JOHN TROTTER, SONS, &amp; CO., LTD.



## Household Goods.

Two Wonder Lines in real, genuine, all-wool Ayrshire Blankets, every pair guaranteed. Large Size Heavy Blankets, great value, for 12/6. Extra Large and Heavy Blankets for 16/-. Bath Towels, Most Wonderful Value, Travellers' Samples, Sale Price each from 6d., 10½d., 1/3, 1/8. Door Mats only 9½d each. Curtain Net from 5d per yard. Cretonne Prints, Good Shades, 3½d per yard. Wonder Line in Flannelette Sheets, White, Blue, and Pink, only 3/11 per pair. Plain and Scalloped Pillow Cases—a Line which can't be beat—6½d.

Bolsters, Plain and Scalloped, 1/1. A Great Line in Silk Cushion Covers, 11½d each. Josphe Bed Mats, 1/6½ each. Table Covers, in two Bumper Lines, 1/8 for 1/4½, 1/11 for 1/6. All Linen Dish Towels, 6½d. Plain and Twill Dish Towels, 3½d. Odd Remnants of Piece Goods at Throw-away Prices. Congolem Squares, 3 x 2½ and 3 x 3, 30/- for 12/11 and 15/-.

## SPECIAL in RUGS.

We have bought a Special Lot of Rugs—100 Assorted.

- Lot Carpet Corners, Worth 35/-, Sale 16/6 each.
- Lot Beautiful Wool Reversible Rugs, 9/11, Sale 6/6 each.
- Lot Large Jute Squares, 10/6, Sale 6/11 each.
- Lot Mottled Rugs, 7/6, Sale 4/11 each.
- Lot Jute Rugs, 11½d each.
- Lot Axminster Rugs, assorted sizes, Bargains every one.

## Ladies' Wear.

Our Whole Stock of Frocks offered at Exceptionally Low Prices.  
Lisle Hose, a great line, 6½d pair.  
Lisle and Silk Hose, Sale 10½d pair.  
Silk Knickers, 11½d pair.  
Sateen Undershirts, O.S., 1/6.  
Ladies' O.S. Night Dresses, 3/6 for 2/8.  
Ladies' Interlock Vests, 8½d and 10½d.  
Ladies' Interlock Knickers, 6½d and 10½d.  
Marvellous Line in Overalls, all styles, 1/4½d.  
Ladies' Gaiters, must be cleared at 6d pair.  
Ladies' Fur Collar and Cuff Sets, to be cleared at 1/- Set.

## Girls' Wear.

Lot Girls' Jumpers and Wool Frocks all offered at Sale 25 per cent. off Regular Prices.  
Girls' Night Dresses, 11½d.  
Two Lots Girls' Hose, 5½d and 11½d.  
Lot Girls' Wool Knickers, 6½d pair.  
Lot Tweed Coats, length 24 inches to 40 inches, must be cleared at 2/11.  
Coloured Cotton Petties, 6d.  
Coloured Cotton Knickers, 3d.

## Gent.'s and Boys' Wear.

Gent.'s Union Shirts, great value, 1/11.  
Gent.'s Semmets and Pants, great value, 11½d per garment.  
Gent.'s Tweed Coats, clearing at 17/11; never again.  
Lot Youths' Waistcoats, clearing at 4½d each.  
Lot Youths' Suits, clearing at 12/6.

Boys' Jerseys, great value, 1/8½.  
Boys' Trousers, great value, 1/4½.  
Boys' Stockings, Sale 6½d and 10½d.  
Gent.'s Sox, Sale 5½d and 10½d.  
Gent.'s Odd Trousers, great value, 2/11 per pair.  
Boys' Pullovers, Sale 10½d.

Look Out All Your Wants.

Come and See the Value of the Goods.

Keenest Sale Prices for Everything.

TERMS—CASH DURING SALE.

JOHN TROTTER, SONS, & CO., LTD., DRAPERY SPECIALISTS.

# DIARY OF A HOLIDAY

(Culled from the "Advertiser" Files)

Last September (during the Second World War), Mr and Mrs Matthew T. McWhirter, Larkhall, who has been mentioned in previous articles, spent a week's holiday in Muirkirk, and the Misses Craig in Middlefield Drive (with whom they resided) are in receipt of a diary extending to 77 pages, giving an account of their wanderings about the vicinity, and of their appreciation of the way they were received here. Mr McWhirter is a native of Glenbuck, but has been resident in Larkhall for many years, and takes a keen interest in county matters there.

Quite a number of items in the diary are most interesting, indeed they add a little to the history of the district. For instance, the sight of Wee Torhill reminded Mr Whirter of days fifty-five to sixty years ago, when as a boy he got rides in the post gig which conveyed the mail from Douglas to Muirkirk via Glenbuck. Glenbuck at that time consisted of two parts — Barr's side and Baird's side, with a space of vacant ground between, which now has disappeared by the erection of a church and a manse in the early 1880's, followed at a latter date by a schoolhouse, Auchinstilloch Rows, and a Hall. At that time Mr McWhirter's granny lived in Wee Torhill, and a charge of twopence was made for the little boy's safe delivery there. Maidenbank Pit was in full swing, and Ponesk Cottage was by the roadside. A few of the families who resided in Torhill were the Loves, Loggies, Marshalls, and Fergusons.

With regard to Glenbuck, Mr McWhirter assumes the role of prophet, as he goes on—"Regarding the future of coal mining within the district, a renewal of the industry will assuredly come, and certainly will give employment to a village population for fifty years. Transport facilities will operate from the branch line connected to the main railway at the overhead bridge on the highway near Airdsgreen Farm. The bridge was built when the railway track was constructed, and formed part of the original scheme whereby a branch line could operate in the immediate coalfield." Another entry—"To finish off the evening we visited the Pictures, but the fare was not of a high order, and from the whispered adverse criticism of Muirkirkonians seated beside me I learned that it required class to satisfy them" The usual saying—"If a concert company pleases Muirkirk folks it can go anywhere."

The old Coutburn Row, Tibby's Brig, and Tibby Pagan came up for reference with Tibby the reputed authoress of "Ca' the Yowes tae the Knowes."

It seems Mr McWhirter's father was a well-known quoter, and the sound of quoits striking each other one evening aroused memories of his boyhood, when there were such quoters of class as Walkinshaw, Letham, Haddow, Armour, Sneddon, Kirkland, Ferguson, R. Currie, C. Currie, McMurdo, McWhirter, Cochrane, Park, Richmond, Durnie, McNair, Morton Bros., etc. Many of these players had visited Muirkirk, either to test their skill in the quoting green or at the sports meetings on the Holm, now the site of the gigantic slag heap,

Various rambles in the surrounding country are aptly described by Mr McWhirter, and sometimes a little philosophy is thrown in, and a strong condemnation of the shooting of birds on the moors.

An interesting entry reads—"In the foreground, nestling at our feet, the town of Muirkirk, to-day strangely silent, because the life stream of its industrial effort had diminished and almost run dry. I knew Muirkirk in earlier years, when its capacity for industry was at its zenith—collieries studded along the valley,

belching forth black smoke, steam snorting from winding engines, and strange noises from the Ironworks, of pug engines whistling, horns blowing, and a multitude of sounds unaccountable to the wayfarer. Alas, that scene rests only in our memory."

Mr McWhirter had learned of our County Councillor's—Mr John Colthart—suggestion that the old Sanquhar Road be converted into a modern highway, and of this he says—"after the war, when the country is under reconstruction to meet the advancement of communities, the proposition will likely become a reality."

Mr McWhirter concludes with the words of George McMurdo—

"Then let wha like their love extol, Muirkirk will aye be mine,  
Sae with her fires that briskly burn may peace and plenty twine;  
And if I chance to ramble frae her lovely hills awa',  
Her image bright will fill my heart while I've a breath tae draw."

**The Regal Cinema will Re-open**  
on Friday First, 2nd June, 1939,

WITH



IRVING BERLIN'S MIGHTY MUSICAL HIT—

**ALEXANDER'S RAG-TIME BAND** (U),



Starring TYRONE POWER, ALICE FAYE, DON AMECHE, with ETHEL MERMAN, JACK HALEY, JEAN HERSHOLT, and a Tremendous Cast.

Come and Hear the Good Old Songs of Yesterday, which must revive memories. The Song Hits include—"Alexander's Rag-time Band," "Everybody's Doing It Now," "Easter Parade," "What'll I Do," "All Alone," "Remember," "Blue Skies," and Many Others.

**Showing on Friday at 6 o'clock and 8.30 p.m., and on Saturday at 2 p.m. (Matinee), and at 6.15 and 8.45 p.m.**

Charges as Usual. — No Half-price for Children on Saturday Evenings.

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NEXT WEEK —		
<p><b>Monday and Tuesday at 7.</b> Loretta Young and Joel McCrea in <b>Three Blind Mice</b> (U). Guaranteed Entertainment by a Grand Cast.</p> <p>Also Showing— <b>The Last Barricade</b> (U). See THE DERBY Both Nights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wednesday Only at 7.</b></p> <p>Jane Withers, Rochelle Hudson, and Robert Wilcox in <b>Rascals</b> (U). A Great Tale of Gipsy Life, with Jane the Great Rascal.</p> <p>Also Showing— Martin Johnson's Jungle Film— <b>Borneo</b> (U).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday at 7 p.m.</b></p> <p>The RITZ BROTHERS in the Laugh Tonic— <b>THREE MEN AND A GIRL</b> (U).</p>

Full Supporting Programmes with Movietone News. See The Derby on Monday and Tuesday.  
IF IT'S GOOD—IT'S AT THE REGAL.

## MOORCHURCH DISTRICT COUNCIL

The weekly meeting of the Adult Education Class took place on Wednesday evening in Muirkirk Higher Grade School. This took the form of a Council meeting, and comes under the heading of “public speaking.”

Councillor Steve Bradford (don't forget the “councillor”) presided and there was a representative attendance.

After the sederunt had been taken, the minutes of last meeting were read, and the Council got down to business.

### **Swimming Pool**

The first item on the agenda was “Swimming Pool.” The Councillor backing the project suggested that a pool be made at Tibbie's Brig, mixed bathing and for swimming in summer, and curling in winter, and there was a fine natural amphitheatre for spectators. In fact, it could be made into a Lido, with bands playing, ice-cream vans delivering the goods, etc.

“Would this come on the local rates?” was the question, and as this Council was to be a self-contained and self-governing entity the answer was — yes. After discussion and a vote, the Chairman announced — no swimming pool.

### **Water Ayr Bridge**

It was intimated that this bridge had been greatly improved, but a new bridge was needed, and the road straightened right from the old gas-works to the corner of the Company Store. Left over till after the War.

### **Better Road for Southside**

New roads were required, and a resident policeman. One criticism about doing anything on the matter was that the roads there really led nowhere. Left over till after the War.

### **New Library**

As the backer was absent, this was not discussed, but left on the table.

### **Better Light in Black-out**

This subject was well discussed. In spite of the magnificent gift of the Sun Ray Apparatus by the Co-operative Society, which had been handed over to the Trade Council to administer, it was felt that something better was wanted — something for the prevention of illness, to have a specialist visiting periodically, a public ambulance, etc. Left over.

### **Better Housing Accommodation**

It was held that the houses in the Southside were very bad, and that these had been built in a long row to keep them from falling down, but they were a hardy race on the Southside. Any new houses would never be built on the Southside. In Kames Row it was said that the ceilings were falling, and they were no sooner repaired than they were down again, but it was argued that in the new houses, tenants were going about apartments under umbrellas! Against that the Council were reminded that in Kames Row the houses were stone built. Everybody should have a modern house, but again the opinion was expressed that people had been so long used to a small house, with rent deducted, that they would soon be back to the room and kitchens. As building was impossible meantime, the matter was left over.

### **Collection of Waste Paper**

It was felt that the public were not fully alive to the need for saving waste paper for munitions, etc. The Government thought it was worth while, and householders were recommended to bundle it up and help the boys.

### **Refreshment House on Cairntable**

It was held that the water at the top of the mountain was very suitable for mixing with whisky, but the difficulty was to get the whisky, and transport was a snag. One Councillor suggested that it might be possible to distil "Cairntable Dew" at the top. Left over meantime.

### **Fire Engine**

It was remarked that good progress had been made in this way in Muirkirk, but reference was made to a time when water might be cut off, and it was agreed to write to the water engineer on the subject.

### **Rates**

Satisfaction was expressed as to the rates being down as a whole, but it was felt that the Education Rate was still high. However, it was explained that under the head of Education there came many side issues and extraneous services. It included the feeding and clothing of children, the supply of spectacles, keeping up the school dentists, the school medical officers, motor cars, etc., and these should be under a different head. There were popular fallacies in this connection, and these were to be seen into.

### **Any Other Competent Business**

One of the items brought up was the need of a Public Hall in Muirkirk, now that the Temperance Hall and the Dundas Hall were used as picture houses. This matter was left over till after the War.

The only other item under this head was the annual water trip of the Council, but this was postponed till summer.

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At times a few of the Councillors were a bit loquacious, and some spoke on the same subject about a dozen times, and occasionally in his fervish anxiety to keep a fellow Councillor "on the rails," one would run himself into the ditch.

This Council was supposed to be a fictitious or mock one, but realism was often introduced, and ideas which had been lurking in several breasts were brought out to the light of day, and also got the air about them.

It was a protracted meeting, lasting almost three hours instead of the regulation two, but every one seemed to have enjoyed it, even although at least one was charged with his ideas being prehistoric.

Votes of thanks concluded an interesting meeting, and entertainment tax has been paid for worse.

## THE STATION

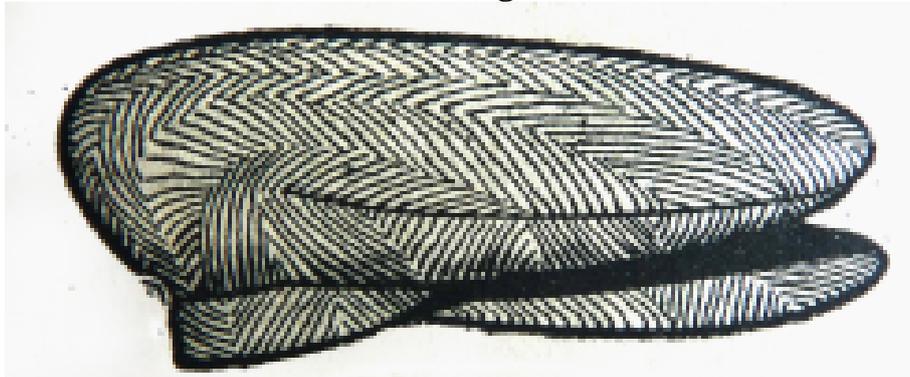
Very little of the older Muirkirk has been left, but at least one part of the industrial revolution can still be seen at the Southside. It concerns Muirkirk Railway Station, which was opened in 1876 - 1877. The old Station and the Station Master's residence were in the same building. Later when the railway line to Lanark was opened the Station was moved further eastwards to where Mitchell's Transport yard now stands. In the early days the wagons carrying coal from the Kames Colliery had to pass over the G. & S.W. line in front of the office. With the removal of the original platform at the old station another set of rails were laid down there so that the wagons could be brought to the Company's lye without any interference from the G. & S.W. Coy, and the offices were turned into a dwelling house for another employee. I can well remember this being used to house the Stationmaster. Latterly it was let privately before being transformed into a Clubhouse by the Car Club. The remains of the original platform can still be seen here.

## OLD WORKERS HONOURED

While on the subject of the railway, it was interesting to learn about a presentation made to two local employees to mark their long service with the Railway Company. They were Mr McSkimming and Mr Ferguson (Geordie, I would guess). Both had graduated through the various grades of the Motive Power Department to become drivers. Mr McSkimming had 53½ year. Mr Ferguson had joined the railway on 18th June, 1893, and held the position of driver for about 39 years, his total service being 52½ years. Both men had completed their terms of service free from accident and with a clear record, and all who knew them were proud to have been associated with both. Not only had they completed the allotted term of service, but they had extended their service during the latter part of World War II. Thus both had an exceptional record, and it was doubtful if it would be broken in the future.

## “LET THERE BE LIGHT!”

A story from Kirkconnel in 1947 caused a bit of a smile on the faces of local football supporters. In the darkness of Saturday's football match between Kello Rovers and Muirkirk Juniors the ball was lost, and another procured. Before the end of the game, the Rover's keeper saw in the corner of net what he thought was a bonnet, but it turned out to be the lost ba'. He drew the referee's attention to it, and the official gave Muirkirk a goal. Muirkirk comment — “Ach, it's a fairy tale. According to the records, Muirkirk won the game 3—2.



A MUIRKIRK SUPPORTER'S BONNET LOST THE SAME NIGHT!

## SOME HOWLERS

(Frae the “Wee Paper”)

**The first** was a Muirkirk “howler” about a child who surprised his teacher, during a religious lesson in School, by asking—“Please Miss, did Jesus smoke?”

On being asked what prompted him to ask such a question, he replied that there was a text hanging on the wall in his home which read—“Bring all your doubts to Jesus.

**The second:** — An old chap who lived opposite a public park was greeted one day by a friend who asked him how he was filling in his time, now that he was retired.

“Man,” said the old fellow, “I’m daein’ fine. I’ve got some hens, an’ I’m keepin’ bees noo tae. I keep them in the room.”

“Away’ wi’ man, I don’t believe ye,” replied his friend, “wha ever heard o’ onybody keepin bees in the room?”

“I’m tellin’ ye I keep them in the room,” said the old fellow; “I get up every morning at five o’clock an’ open the window, an’ the bees flee ower intae the park.”

“That feenishes it,” replied his friend, “I ken it’s no true noo; the park disna open till eight o’clock, man.”

## GLENBUCK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Here is a list of prize-winners at Glenbuck Public School round about 1950:—

Dux Boy — Archie Allison. Dux Girl — Joy Bone.

Primary V.— Bunty Bain.

Primary IV. — Mary Easter Brook, Mary Wilson, Willie Frew.

Primary II. — Bert Davidson, Mary Leslie.

Infant I. — John Gardener, Ruby Casey.

Infant II. — Tom Burnside, Betty Ward.

Infant III. — Sheena Murdoch, Sam Purdie, William Allison,

Mr McWhirter’s prizes were won by Sam Bertram and Jean Casey.



Margaret Marshall, Barbara Crawford, Forbes Marshall  
Tea Time at Glenbuck

In 1928, Mr David Miller, an Ayrshire poet, wrote in the "Muirkirk Advertiser," an article entitled: —

## VILLAGE PERSONALITIES

There is not a city, town, or hamlet but can boast of some more or less notable personages who have found a habitation within their borders. He or she may be the local M.P., a Minister, a Doctor, a Nurse, Grocer, Ironmonger, Barber, Butcher, or such may be the humble scavenger or hard-working charwoman eking out a precarious livelihood, performing needful tasks for her more fortunate fellow citizen. Muirkirk is in nowise behind in this respect; nevertheless it is questionable if any such notables belong to the aforementioned professions or callings. It is all a matter of opinion.

**Thomas Floyd**, retired engine-driver, L.M.S., is a man of profound learning, considering his station in life. He maintains decided views on public matters; he will not be cajoled or intimidated into thinking or acting in any direction, the conclusion of which is not in accordance with his ideas of what is just and equitable. He is widely read, and can converse with ease on almost any subject of interest. In short, he is a poet of no mean order, with a knowledge of astronomy, geology, botany, etc., and may be considered one of the leading historians of the district. Having run his rostered runs, he is now enjoying a well-earned rest amid the tranquil peace and serenity of his beloved Woodside.

**John Whyte**, another poet of considerable merit and ability, has had a long and varied experience. He has a penchant for anything and everything pertaining to the dim and distant past, will discourse with enthusiasm on prehistoric people, their habits and virtues, and point out various places in the district where in days gone by, such people moved and had their beings. He has also retired from the arena of strenuous labour, and is enjoying the evening of his days within the circle of his devoted family.

**The Rev. John Henderson** is Parish Minister. He is something more; he is deeply interested in education, is a J.P. and Parish Councillor. Rev. John is a glutton for work, and at the same time has the habit of saying just what he thinks, without considering whether his hearers are pleased or not. This however, may be a virtue rather than a fault.

**Miss Sharp**, Furnace Road, is in truth an "auld residenter." Despite the fact that she has attained to the great age of four and a quarter score years, she not withstanding continues to take a deep interest in everything associated with the village of her nativity. A wonderful lady is Miss Sharp.

**The Rev. James Greenshields**, U.F. Church, is an outstanding personality. He has laboured and cared assiduously for his flock through the long period of forty years, and during that lengthy span has gained in knowledge and human understanding. It is a great privilege and pleasure to enjoy a two-handed crack with this reverend gentleman, who has travelled extensively, and can converse entertainingly on a multifarious range of subjects.

**David Stitt, J.P.**, labour organiser, educationist, and father of the Parish Council, is everybody's buddy, willing to oblige and to give advice whenever sought to all sections of the community. "Not a bad soul, Davie!"

**J. H. Preston**, hairdresser, is a gentleman who knows his business from A to Z. An enthusiastic Freemason, who has held and still continues to hold offices

of trust in connection with the various branches of the Craft, is a leading choral singer, endowed with artistic grace and a voice of considerable range and power.

**Peter Mackie**, passenger guard, L.M.S., a hail-fellow-well-met, courteous personified, is a distinct favourite with a large circle of the travelling public.

**The Misses Blackwood**, Post Office, possess all the natural grace and tact which are necessary and desirable attributes for all who seek to serve that exacting taskmaster — The Public. Miss Poly will always be remembered in musical circles as an accomplished vocalist.

**W. S. Smith**, printer and publisher of the “Muirkirk Advertiser,” has a pawky wit which from time to time bubbles forth in the columns of the “wee paper.” “The Printer” may in truth be considered a public benefactor, in so far as he provides the medium whereby the community are kept in touch with events, more or less important, which transpire in the surrounding district.

**John Colthart, J.P.**, represents the Parish on the County Council. John is a stickler for duty, especially where the underdog is concerned; yet, while he serves the less fortunate faithfully and well, he is never forgetful of his duty towards the ratepayers as a whole.

**William Laidlaw**, engine driver, L.M.S., is a fisher in more senses than one, a favourite vocalist at all social functions, and widely known for his flashes of wit and humorous dallies. The loco sheds will be a quite place when “Laidlaw” retires.

Such are a few of the notables with whom I came in contact during my brief sojourn in the upland village. I daresay there are hundreds of others equally worthy of mention but I have not been introduced. I can only entertain the hope that a pen more worthy than mine may pay all and sundry the tributes due.

[What a pity Mr Millar, before his departure, was not introduced to Bob Gilchrist. Yes, what harm has Bob done? — Ed.]



BEGG'S SMIDDY, MAIN STREET

There are not many places in this country which are not affected in some way or another with drugs, but back in the times between the Two World Wars this problem did not affect Muirkirk, nor any other district for that matter. So it surprised me to find that a Muirkirk man was “up to his neck” in drugs, but it was not here in Muirkirk, but in a place thousands of miles from our moorland home. From the “Advertiser” files, I quote the entire story, thus :—

## **MUIRKIRK IN CHINA**

From the “Shanghai Times” of March 13, 1928, we today cull some extracts showing the conditions of life in that city. The Detective Sergeant Robert Wardrop mentioned in the text is a son of Mr and Mrs William Wardrop, of Railway Buildings, Muirkirk. Robert left home about four years ago (early 1920’s) for his present appointment. After reading these details anent life in the East, most of our readers will probably think that there are worse places than Muirkirk after all.

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“With a total of 82 kidnapers and suspects now in the custody of the Municipal Police following a series of well-arranged and effective raids conducted in a variety of places in both the International Settlement and the French Concession, the public are gradually being awakened to the tremendous power that exists in Shanghai for the control of an organisation whose sole object is the carrying out of crime on an extensive scale. The enormous amount of money behind this gang or gangs is becoming more apparent as additional arrests are made, and the manner in which many recent kidnappings have been carried out, after the most ingenious planning, reveals the resourcefulness of the men at the head of the organisation.

“When one considers the fact that within the space of little more than a week Municipal Police have been enabled to gather in over 80 of the worst characters that have infested the city for months past, and have obviously discovered one of the largest criminal organisations terrorising local Chinese residents, the work of the men responsible for these arrests calls for the highest commendation and thanks of the general public.

“It is almost staggering to conceive that in this modern city an organisation of such character could exist for any length of time; but when one considers the infinite difficulties that confront the police on all hands, and the circumstances under which crimes are committed even in the very heart of the Settlement and neighbouring Concession almost daily, it is not hard to appreciate the tremendous amount of labour, painstaking investigation and inquiry that are involved in arresting those responsible for crimes committed in such a wholesale manner, and by persons who value neither their own lives, the lives of their victims,, and much less those of the police whose duty it is to track them down.

## **MEN RUN THE EARTH**

“The investigation of the police who were responsible for the unprecedented number of arrests during the past ten days have convinced them that they have at last run to earth a powerful gang of armed kidnapers whose ramifications extend beyond Shanghai, and whose operations during several months past have been responsible for numbers of kidnappings in all parts of Shanghai, both in foreign and Chinese territory.

“But though the police are certain that almost to a man the 78 persons are connected with the extensive organisation, they are equally convinced that they have not located the “brains” of the gang, and have come to the conclusion that he is a resident, whose identity, if revealed, would undoubtedly cause a sensation in local Chinese circles.

“The whole story of the recent sensational number of arrests which commenced with the first raid conducted by foreign and Chinese detectives from Dixwell Road Police Station under Detective Sergeant Wardrop ten days ago, and the subsequent raids which resulted in the capture of 78 members of the extensive kidnapping organisation, would read like detective fiction of the most imaginative type could the inner secrets of police work be unfolded. This, for obvious reasons, must always be a secret. It is, however, in this connection that the work of the Chinese detectives is invaluable. These sleuths in their capacity of plain-clothes members of the detective force move around among their own countrymen in the theatres, tea shops, sing-song house, and boarding establishments all over the city, in fact anywhere where they are likely to pick up a hint, overhear gossip or chance upon some slight clue that may lead to an arrest.

### FROM STRANGE SOURCES

“Information at times comes from the strangest sources, and is given for numerous reasons, often incorrect and misleading, but frequently such that it leads to an arrest, no matter how unimportant. All of this information has to be sifted and investigated, and involves endless labour and inquiry.

“It was one of these minor arrests effected by the police at Dixwell Road Station which led to the surprisingly rapid arrest of so many members of the kidnapping organisation which the police are gradually breaking up. It was only as a result of the promptness with which the raiding parties followed up clue after clue in their hunt for members of the gang that brought the astonishingly successful series to the present gratifying position.

“During a period of twenty-four hours Detective Sergeant Wardrop and his flying squad combed various districts in the Settlement and the French Concession visiting one house after another where it was believed kidnappers were to be found. Many of the trails followed produced nothing, but, considering the speed with which the police worked, their efforts were crowned with more than ordinary success.

### SOME STILL AT LARGE

“The methods of the kidnappers after they had secured their victim was to keep moving from house to house in widely scattered parts of the city. Sometimes, according to the statements of their victims after release the captors only stayed in one house a matter of hours and then transferred their prisoner to another house, often empty save for a few odd pieces of furniture. This method was adopted to avoid being followed and being located by informers or police or creating suspicion in the minds of inquisitive neighbours. Touts, runners, minor servants and very often women and girls are used to keep the gang posted on the movements of the relatives of the kidnapped persons and to bring information of any impending move on the part of the latter towards the police.

“Once the police have been informed or any of the relatives of the victim are seen entering a police station, the case of the kidnapped person becomes all the more precarious, and this is why so many kidnapping cases are not reported to the police by relatives or friends. Many cases are settled by the latter without any

knowledge of the police, and some of the victims released by the minding squads recently were not even known to have been carried off.

“The kidnapers carry on a crime campaign in a manner very different to armed robbers who have little difficulty in disposing of their loot, and very often leave no trace of their movement. A kidnapping gang, after it has secured its victim, has to keep him hidden and alive if they hope to gain any benefit from their crime. This entails a tremendous amount of constant watching and periodical transfers of the prisoner from one hiding place to another. They realise that if the money is not paid their work has gone for nought and to release the victim means that he is in a position to recognise them in the street or in any other place in the city. The inevitable occurs if the ransom is not paid and the victim pays for the trouble he has given the gang with his life.

“This in many cases makes the armed kidnapers more dangerous than the ordinary thug who holds up a pedestrian or a household at the point of a gun. In most cases the kidnapper is usually cornered in a house where, unless the police are particularly alert, and quick on the trigger, a fight to a finish will be put up by a gang. This has been evidenced in more than one instance in recent months and several deaths and casualties have resulted among the police.

### CAREFULLY ARRANGED

“All the raids conducted these days are carefully arranged if time permits and all those participating are protected to a certain degree by the issue of bullet-proof vests and shields. The task of arresting these men is fraught with the gravest dangers, since it is generally understood that the kidnapers have one or more pistols among them, and will not hesitate to bring them into play at the slightest opportunity. Fortunately, the recent raids resulted in no casualties among the police, although one kidnapper was shot dead and another one wounded.

“It is a tribute to those members of police who participated in the various raids that there were so few casualties considering the extremely large number of arrests affected. The raiding parties under Detective-Sergeant Wardrop have been responsible for the arrest of 55 members of the gang.”

### IN CONCLUSION

“From a copy of the “Shanghai Times” (9th July, 1928), we learn that Detective-Sergeant Wardrop has been highly complimented on the accomplishment of rounding up a dangerous gang of armed kidnapers, seventeen of whom were sentenced to death, two sent to imprisonment for life, and four sent to terms of imprisonment ranging from two to ten years. After sentence had been passed on the convicted prisoners, Deputy Burnett paid one of the highest compliments to the police ever given from the judicial Bench in Shanghai. In referring to the work of Detective-Sergeant Wardrop, of Dixwell Road Police Station, who was mainly responsible for the arrest of the gang of kidnapers, Deputy Burnett said —

“The learned judge has already complimented the police in connection with this case. I wish to add, however, that their painstaking and courageous action—particularly as concerns Detective-Sergeant Wardrop—is a matter of the greatest pride, and compares very favourably with the work of the Metropolitan Police of London. I trust that this will be brought to the notice of the Commissioner of Police for such action as he may consider appropriate.”

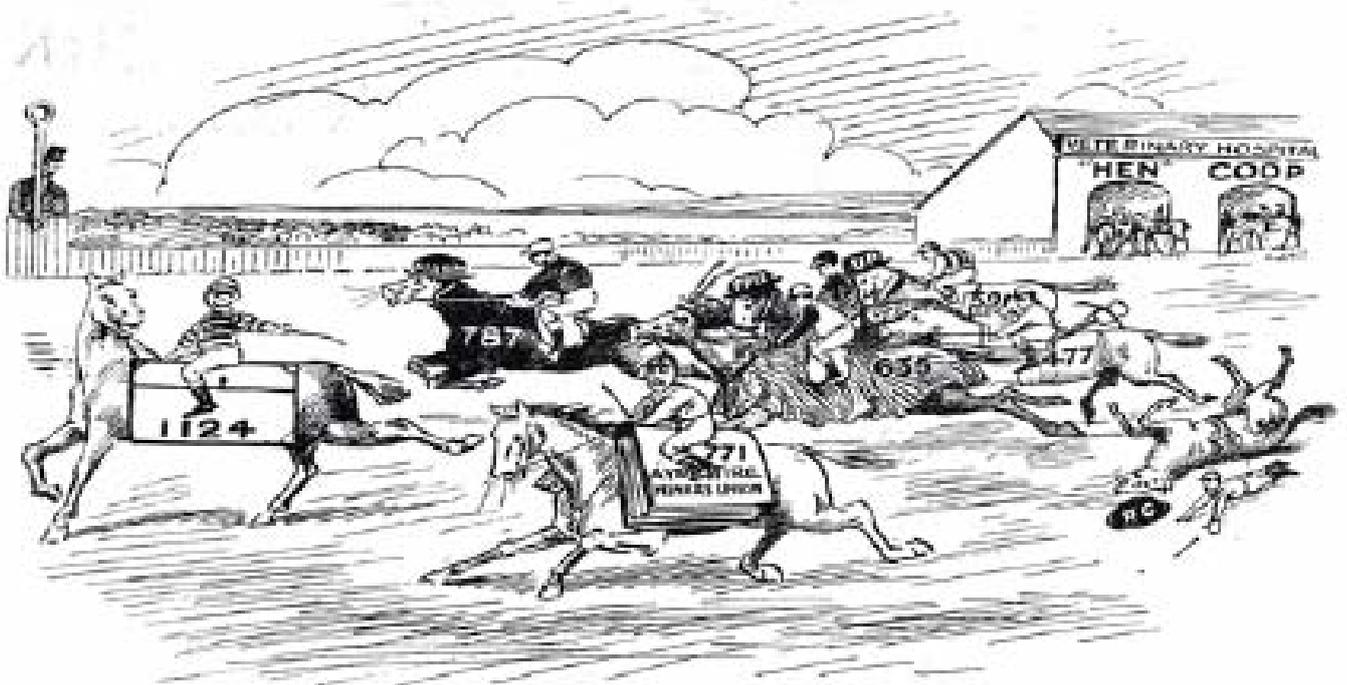
Detective-Sergeant Wardrop is a son of Mr and Mrs William Wardrop, of Railway Buildings. Some time ago we published an account ("Muirkirk in China") of the capture of the gang, together with an account of the prevailing conditions in Shanghai. To be complimented, as he was, from the Bench, is something indeed to be proud of, and his many friends, in fact, all Muirkirkers at home and abroad, will be unanimous in extending the glad hand to Robert on his meritorious achievement."

*The above article was culled from the files of  
"The Muirkirk Advertiser."*

There was a sad end to the above story, and it was revealed in the 26th December issue of the "Muirkirk Advertiser" as follows—

### MUIRKIRK MAN FOUND SHOT

It was with the deepest regret that that the news was received on Monday that Detective-Inspector Robert Wardrop, of the Shanghai Police, had been found shot dead in his bedroom in Shanghai. A son of Mr and Mrs William Wardrop, Glasgow Road, Muirkirk, Detective Inspector Wardrop had a distinguished career in the service in this notorious city, and, we understand, was anticipating a holiday in his native haunts in the spring of next year.



The School Board Election Stakes.

## THE END IN SIGHT?

Each time when I try to bring this publication to a conclusion, my eye catches the attention of some article or other, and to-day is no exception. So that is my excuse for reproducing here some more facts about life in Muirkirk far removed from the present day, with the hope that it might just add a little more to the history of our once proud little mining village. The articles are taken from the files of the “Muirkirk Advertiser” in 1938, viz.:

Another good advert for the healthy environment and fresh-air of Muirkirk took the form of the following report:

### A LONG WORKING CAREER

Mr James Smith, the oldest worker in this district, retired from active service last Tuesday. Born at Calderbank, near Airdrie in 1859, Mr Smith commenced work in a smithy at the age of fourteen, and commenced work at Joe Baird’s Quarry. He also saw service in the Sand Pit, the Wellwood Pits, as well as Maidenbank, Lightshaw, and Kames. He was pitheadsmen at Lightshaw for ten years, and acted in a similar capacity at Kames Colliery for nearly thirty years. Thus he has had a working career of nearly 70 years, while his service with Wm. Baird & Co., and latterly Bairds & Dalmellington, Ltd., totals 64½ years. He was also a special constable for 15 years.

Mr Smith, who lost his wife partner in 1921, resides with his son and daughter-in-law at 12 Wellwood Avenue. He always enjoyed good health, and is still fresh and hearty, as can be judged from the fact that he and another retired veteran worker—Mr W. Muir, had a stroll out to Segholm the other day, and is even considering a walk to Strathaven. That’s the real old spirit!

(Ed. Note—Mr Smith died the following year, aged 81 years. The Sand Pit was a coal pit situated on the old Auldhouseburn Golf Course).

### CANDLEMAS

The Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary.

—————  
Celebrated each year on 2nd February.  
—————

“If Candlemas day be dry and fair,  
The half o’ winter’s tae come an’ mair;  
If Candlemas day be wet and foul,  
The half o’winter’s gane at Yule.”

# YE ROYAL AND ANCIENT GAME

By S. M. ASHEM

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For anyone who wants to cultivate an appetite, a vocabulary, and a temper, let me recommend the royal and ancient game of golf. The man in the street who scoffs at the idea of chasing a little white sphere over fields, through hedges, and beyond, has no idea of what he is talking about (who has, anyway), and so I propose to put all and sundry wise to the “routine” of how to become a golfer.

You will, of course, need clothes. If a gentleman, get a loud suit of plus fours, with brightly-coloured stockings and cap, and a double forte (very, very loud) pullover. The more ferocious your appearance, the easier you will find it to beat your opponent. Be sure to get stout boots or shoes to protect your feet when you are kicking at your opponent or anything handy. For the ladies—play only on warm and sunny days, and choose something curvy and clingy. In this manner you will have your victim just where you want him.

It is a pity to buy clubs. After all, nobody wants to break clubs they bought themselves. So, with care and tact you should be able to pick up quite a selection from your friends. In this direction loud and constant admiration of your friends’ play will help. Pinch a ball or two here and there — nobody will prove it — and choose only the best makes, of course.

Having thus equipped yourself, stagger (beg pardon) swagger on to the tee, and place your ball on your tee (a little wooden peg, and not your last meal). Before swiping it, chop up a few daisies etc, to impress the onlookers. Now comes the important part. Take up your stance, put your feet a little apart, and grip the driver with both hands. Now, draw the club well back, keep your eye on the ball and not on the little bit of skirt just coming out of the Clubhouse, and with all the energy at your command give it a “toaffee.” Swish! What a glorious drive. What a thrill you get to see the ball (if you hit it) flashing through the air and land some 300 yards away. (You can look at the skirt now — she adores a 300-yarder). Now select an iron (no, you’re playing golf — not pressing pants) and smack it another one. When you approach the green — dear, dear, I forgot to tell you that the chief aim is to get the ball in the hole (the wee one with the flag in it—not the one you have just dug up) in as few strokes as possible. If your opponent is short-sighted or not looking this should be done easily in from two to four strokes a hole. When on the green you put it in the hole — if anyone is looking putt instead of put.

Now these are the general principles—the more clubs you have the bigger the variety of shots you can and will miss. I might also add that a bag of many clubs is much heavier to carry. I propose to deal now with a few golfers’ terms and using, of course, the orthodox ones, and not the words which are only used in the ultra-select circles on the course.

*Address*—Learn to distinguish between grounding the club and clubbing the ground.

*Ancient Golf*—Ananias was a golfer. He lay dead on the green after a bad lie.

*Bogey* — The scratch score for any hole; so called because you have only the ghost of a chance of beating it.

*Bye* — The part of the match at which you begin really to get on to your game.

*Bad Lie* — The safest way to get out of a bad lie is to wait until your opponent isn't looking.

*Caddie* — So called because he is used for the tea.

*Cleek* — An epithet applied to the Club Handicap Committee.

*Head* — So called because it is at the foot of the club.

*Putt* — Originally a shot along the ground near the hole. Some players, however, take their putt first.

*Scoring* — Two drawbacks to a good score are honesty and the ability to count.

*Slice* — A little bit "off."

*Wrong Shot* — To make the same mistake twice, with so many to choose from, shows a lack of imagination.

*An Idea* — When walking past your opponent's ball press it firmly with the foot into the earth. If he finds it, is great fun watching him trying to play it out.

*Bunker* — If you can put your opponent's ball in one do so by all means, but never your own.

*A Stymie* — A "stunner" of a shot.

*A Good Stance* — In below the Clubhouse veranda in the dark.

*19th Hole* — If you can't find the first eighteen, try the nineteenth. Nobody has failed at their first attempt.

If you have any troubles now with your golf write me and learn more.



Auldhouseburn Golf Course

## THE GLENBUCK RE-UNION OF 1938

It was interesting to read the speech of Mr James Blyth, the Chairman for the evening at the above re-union. Mr Blyth was of course a Glenbuck man, and his address brought back many memories of days gone by in the village, with the mention of many personalities at that time. I make no apology for reprinting parts of that speech, viz.:—

Mr Blyth, who was a very clever footballer in his day, expressed his great pleasure at being called upon to preside over such a large gathering of old acquaintances and friends. Since the last re-union they had to regret the passing of several old friends and relations, among them being Tom Brown, whom he could well remember as a bright, fair-haired lad, a good reliable back, and admired by everyone for his honesty and straight-forwardness; Robert Anderson (a cousin of the Chairman), conscientious, steady, and faithful, who had the secretaryship of the Co-operative Society since almost its inception till shortly before he passed away; Archie Miller, a member of the Football Club when formed in 1888-89, and in later years a fine Committee man for the Club until he left the district. They had finished their journey only a short time ahead of those left behind. The Chairman also remarked that it was a noteworthy coincidence that among the guests present were Mr John Bell (for many years at Monkshead) and his daughter.

When those of them met who had long since left the scenes of their childhood, the old folks' reunion was generally discussed, and the friends who were privileged or perhaps destined by fate to be left among the hills and dales where their forefathers and the Covenanters had fought and died could rest assured that those who had wandered never forgot the old village and all that was dear to them.

The village to-day was certainly not so busy or perhaps so cheery as it was thirty or forty years ago. Glenbuck at that period was quite a flourishing hamlet as regards work and sport. Some people said, "Oh, you had nothing else to do but play quoits and football." In a sense this was quite true. There were no pictures or theatres to draw the young lads away, but they had all played the game for the love of it. They all had grit, and the incentive to win had always been predominant. As they all knew, Glenbuck had been a force to be reckoned with in the quoining world, and Tom Bone stood out pre-eminent.

Turning to football, Mr Blyth said he thought the rugged football field in front of them ought to be called Waterloo, and he didn't think it would be an exaggeration to say that all their defeats on that ground could be counted on the fingers of one hand. It was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 48 years since the old Club had been formed, although football had been played previous to that, for he could remember about 58 years ago, a game with Douglas in which Jamie Crosbie and J. Dalziel took part. He could not remember if P. Flanagan was in the rout were not. The game was played at West Shield meadow, near Airdsgreen farm, and the score was 13 or 16 goals. During these 48 years since the Athletic was founded Glenbuck had produced an average of one player per year for senior football. What a record! Alex. Brown (Towie, as they called) scored most of the goals that enabled Tottenham to win the English Cup for the first time in their history, while Alex. Tait, left back, had given yeoman service in the Spurs' defence. The cup had been brought to Glenbuck and exhibited in Barr's store. Towie, W. Muir (Goolie), and John Crosbie had each played for Scotland against England. Then there was Bob Blyth, one of the best all-round sports to leave Glenbuck, a very fast runner, and at home either as a forward or half-back. Bob was at present a director of Portsmouth F.C. There was also Peter

McIntyre, and these were among Glenbuck's first instalment to the senior football. Mr Blyth said he could not omit to mention the Shankly family, who had given five sons to senior football, while he also mentioned the names of John Wallace (Partick Thistle) and Tom Brown. Although only a Junior as yet, Tom had three schoolboy caps and a Junior one, and they all hoped he would go on to greater success. The others who had played senior football were well known to all.

The Chairman also referred to some of the characters Glenbuck had possessed. How many remembered Johnny Haggerty? Although quite a cripple, Johnny was faithful to the trust the Cairntable Coy. put in him, and many a storm he had weathered between the Davy Pit and the Screes, oiling the pulleys and attending to the roadway. Mr Blyth said he could still in memory see old Peter Ward doing the goose step on pay night after a light refreshment, and Jamie McKillop, about whom he recalled at least one story. Then there was Sandy McAlpine, one of Glenbuck's staunchest supporters, and Alex. Gilchrist, a much respected inhabitant, but a jack-in-the-box for playing tricks. How the boys at that time enjoyed when Alex. and Bill Gibson got together. Bill's stories were elastic, and Alex. used to try and beat him at his own game.

Many other faces that were once familiar appeared at times before his eyes, Mr Blyth said, and to see them recalled many incidents. Among these were old Bob Crosbie, Bob Muir, Watty Kerr, Tom Ferguson, T. McKerrow, Dane Pate, James Callan, Old Airsgreen, Jock Dempster (Brodie), F. Thomson, and many others. Those mentioned were all ardent curlers, and kept up the sport in true fashion.

In conclusion, Mr Blyth expressed the hope that they would all be spared to meet again on many more occasions under the same roof, to talk over the happy days they spent in Glenbuck long ago (Applause).



GLENBUCK VILLAGE (POST OFFICE)

Here is a snapshot of what was going on in the village of Muirkirk in April, 1938, as seen through the eyes of the Editor:—

## ROUND AND ABOUT

Yes, we are having the weather all right. Wonderful, although there is a decent nip of frost at night.

\* \* \* \*

The farmers are getting on with their seed and women with their washing.

\* \* \* \*

We have not heard the cuckoo or the corncrake, or even the swallow (all alleged to be harberings of Spring or Summer), but the ice-cream barrow id out.

\* \* \* \*

Not very many Muirkirkers journey to London last week-end for the International, and less than half-a-dozen Glenbuckonians—saving up for the English Cup Final a few weeks hence. Of course, Willie Shankly is the nectar that is to draw the local bees, and it seems he pulled his weight last Saturday in the International. The Scots' frying-pan bands seem to have tickled the Londoners.

\* \* \* \*

A few years ago there was quite an exodus of local fans for Wembley, and at that time they gathered the cash on the club principle. Now there has taken its place a Holiday Club on the same principle, and who would be rash enough to say it is a change for the worst?

\* \* \* \*

The pitch at Ladeside is gradually taking shape, and the ground is to be enclosed with a sleeper fence. If only the "heid anes" knew their fate anent admission to some League they'd get on with the doings, and already a few players are ear-marked

\* \* \* \*

Building operations are proceeding opposite the Old Post Office and at the Garronhill. The larger scheme over at Springhill should house quite a number—when it comes off.

\* \* \* \*

The idea of placing the names of debtors in the shop windows seems to have taken a trick. Better to do less business, than to do it and not get paid. The commercials cannot get the cash if the customers do not stand and deliver.

\* \* \* \*

But it seems that this idea has been practised in Muirkirk for quite a time in a professional way.

And so the Dundas Hall is now finally disposed of to make way for another picture house. Good luck to both concerns; they'll probably need it.

\* \* \* \*

With the Drill Hall probably required for Government use, the Ironworks Institute should reap the benefit. Things will right themselves in time. As has happened here before, competition has been the death of trade in the same line, and then there is the impending union of the churches.

\* \* \* \*

What a pity the Freemasons did not erect a larger hall when they were at it, but probably they'd be looking to their own needs rather than the needs of the public. It would certainly have been a convenience now.

\* \* \* \*

The sports organisations are getting their houses in order. The formal opening of the Golf Course took place last night; the Bowling club, the Quoiting Club, and the Homing Club commence operations at an early date. Someone has just whispered a flower show and a cattle show to keep the Bird Show company.

\* \* \* \*

We have had the shows on the Carruthers Park for a week or two, and these have enlivened the place at nights—local talent, too, we hear, had its turn.

\* \* \* \*

A Tenants' Association has just been formed in Muirkirk, so we may look for landlords getting their dues—nothing less, nothing more.

\* \* \* \*

Quite a number of the County houses have electricity installed, and the tenants are loud in their praise of the new service. They will now know their position with regard to the payment of this service.

\* \* \* \*

As a rejoinder to the boys who tapped a Muirkirker on the elbow and reminded him that Glenbuck was a better place than Muirkirk by saying—"Look at the footballers we have," a Muirkirk boy tapped a Glenbuck man on the other elbow and said Muirkirk was a better place than Glenbuck, "for look at the whist players we have." Nasty, wasn't it!

## 1938 BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENT

### NOTICE OF REMOVAL.

# HUGH KEENAN, HAIRDRESSER,

Begs to announce to his many Patrons that he has Removed from 105 Main Street to

**23 MAIN STREET (Old Post Office).**

These Premises are more Spacious and Up-to-date, and we can now cater for both Ladies and Gentlemen.

We have installed

### The MacDonald Permanent Waving Machine

(Steam System), proved to be the best system of Permanent Waving, having won 65 Grand Awards in ten years—more than all other systems combined.

### LADIES!

For Beauty's Sake be Permanently Waved  
by the gentle, natural Steam Method of

● **MACDONALD WAVING.**

● **Prices 10/- and 15/-.**

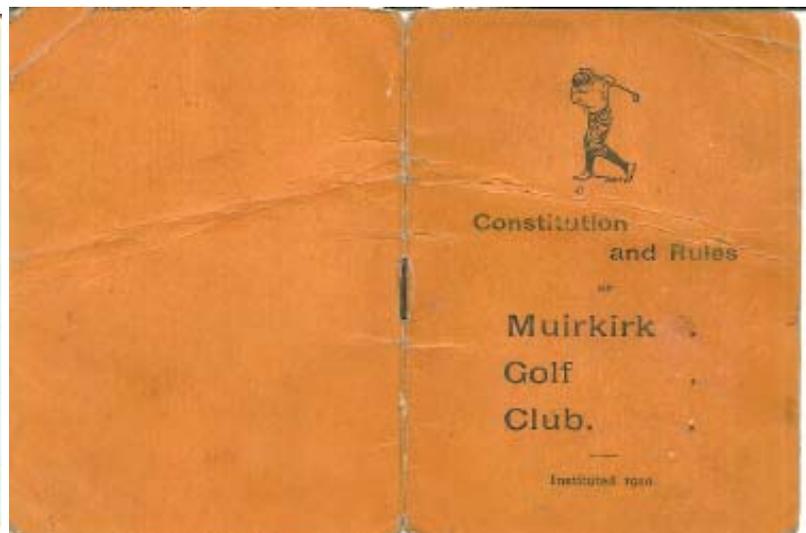
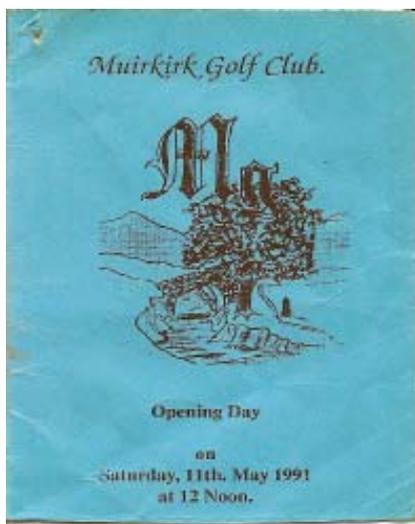
Also—Marcel Waving, Water Waving,  
Re-setting, Etc., Etc.

*A Fully-Qualified Assistant in Attendance.*



## MUIRKIRK GOLF CLUB

The Golf Course at Auldhouseburn was opened in 1910, and for a space of about just over 40 years provided a much-needed sporting facility in Muirkirk. However, because of grass-cutting restrictions imposed by the tenant farmer, the Club was forced to abandon the course in the late 1950's. The Clubhouse was donated to Muirkirk Old Folks, but Muirkirk Golf Club carried on without a course, until the members acquired land at Southside at the site of the miners' rows and constructed a new 9-hole course through the effort of a small band of dedicated enthusiasts. This course was opened in 1991, and I feel it would be appropriate to reproduce some memorabilia of the Club, which does not require to be expanded on.



# ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION OF MUIRKIRK GOLF CLUB

8

## LOCAL PLAYING RULES.

1. The Club may be grounded anywhere on the Course, provided that such grounding does not improve the lie of the ball.

2. The ball must be played where it lies, unless when stuck in a tree. Then the ball is to be shaken down. The ball must not touch the player in its fall; otherwise there is a penalty of two strokes in medal play, or loss of the hole in match play.

3. Rule XXIII with modification (a). If a ball lie out of bounds, the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the ball which is out of bounds was played. If the ball was played out of bounds from the teeing green the player may tee a ball for his next stroke, in every other case the ball shall be dropped. (a). In match and stroke play a ball may be placed as provided in previous paragraph, with the addition of a penalty stroke.

## CONSTITUTION.

### NAME.

1. The Club shall be called the "MUIRKIRK GOLF CLUB."

### RULES OF GAME.

2. The Rules of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews shall be the Rules of the game for the Club, except as provided for in the local playing Rules.

### OFFICE-BEARERS.

3. The Office-bearers shall be the Honorary President, President, Vice-President, and the Secretary and Treasurer. The General Committee shall consist of these (four) Office bearers and eight additional members, three forming a quorum for ordinary business and five for election of members. Three members of Committee to retire annually, and to be eligible for re-election.

### GENERAL MEETINGS.

4. The Club year is from 1st April to 31st March, and the Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held not later than the last Friday of April, when the Office-bearers for the ensuing year shall be elected, and a duly audited statement of the Club's affairs, and of the Income and Expenditure for the past year,

2

shall be submitted to the meeting. A Special General Meeting may be called (1) when the Committee deem it necessary, or (2) on a requisition signed by not less than ten members being presented to the Secretary stating the matter to be discussed.

### COMMITTEE'S POWERS.

5. The Committee shall meet as often as required, and shall have power to make all Regulations, and fill up any vacancies which occur among the Office-bearers or in the Committee. All Regulations or orders issued by them shall be binding on every member until set aside by a General Meeting. They shall have power to appoint Sub-Committees from their own number or with the addition of other members of the Club. The President, or in his absence the Vice-President, shall preside at all meetings. In the event of both being absent, a chairman shall be chosen by the meeting from the members of Committee present. In all cases of equality, the chairman for the time being shall have a casting as well as a deliberative vote.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS.

6. The Annual Subscriptions shall be as follows:—

For Gentlemen,	-	-	20s.
For Ladies,	-	-	15s.
For Juveniles attending School,	-	-	5s.

7

## BYE LAWS.

1. Non-members are not allowed on the Course on any consideration whatever, and visitors are only allowed as provided for in Rule 10 of the Constitution.

2. Members must enter the Course by the gate on the Auldhouseburn Road at the first teeing green.

3. No play shall be allowed on Sundays.

4. Members shall only take upon the ground such Caddies (one penny per round) as may be actually engaged to carry for them, and shall assist, as far as possible, in preventing trespassing on the Course and damage being done to fences or Club property.

5. It is to be distinctly understood that the member engaging a caddie accepts all legal responsibility as to injuries received by such caddie.

6. No dogs are allowed on the Course.

7. Members must produce their membership cards when requested by the Greenkeeper.

8. Adults shall be entitled to start before Juveniles, and Juveniles shall allow Adults to pass them on the Course when so requested.

9. On competition days competitors have the courtesy of the Course.

**MUIRKIRK MARRIAGES**

As Published in the "Muirkirk Advertiser"

Adair, Robert	Nimmo, Isabella	20th September	1932
Adams, Hugh	Gouldstone, Margaret	5th September	1953
Adamson, John	Robertson, Barbara	12th August	1944
Adamson, Robert	Ross, Jill	5th August	1967
Adamson, William	Hill, Barbara	28th September	1957
Addison, James	Kay, Edith	26th October	1937
Aitken, William	Towle, Elizabeth	13th February	1948
Aitkinson, Charles	Muncie, Mary	24th March	1945
Alexander, George	Hyslop, Helen	28th January	1954
Alexander, John	Crawford, Barbara	20th February	1971
Allison, Eric	McDougall, Margaret	17th September	1943
Allison, Garret	Arnot, Maggie	8th November	1907
Anderson, Archie	Purdom, Elizabeth	3rd September	1971
Anderson, James	Hill, Margaret	24th September	1920
Anderson, Matthew	Dornan, Ethel	30th August	1907
Anderson, Peter	Maxwell, Helen	23rd December	1920
Anderson, William	Millar, Marion	25th April	1941
Anderson, William	Nicoll, Marjorie	29th October	1948
Anderson, Wm. (Crilly)	McInally, Agnes	9th March	1949
Archibald, James	Marshall, Margaret	18th October	1947
Auld, Charles	Marshall, Margaret	12th August	1967
Baillie, Hugh	Millar, Janet	4th August	1962
Bain, Andrew	Stodart, Marion	27th October	1962
Bain, Richard	Houston, Elizabeth	3rd July	1971
Baird, Alexander	Towle, Margaret	5th June	1942
Baird, Harold	Clark, Margaret	4th February	1935
Baird, John	Brodie, Mary	10th August	1920
Ballantyne, George	Jack, Mary	23rd March	1957
Ballantyne, James	Parker, Nan	28th November	1924
Balmer, James	Hodge, Margaret	9th August	1946
Barbour, Hugh	Strickland, Elizabeth	2nd August	1958
Barclay, John	McKenzie, Euphemia	12th July	1940
Barr, Arthur	Grindle, Dorothy	1st August	1947
Barr, Thomas	Baillie, Jane	10th November	1945
Barr, William	Douglas, Mary	7th August	1940
Barr, William	Sinclair, Agnes	27th February	1948
Barrie, Andrew	Bone, Jean	3rd September	1955
Barrie, Daniel	Anderson, Jean	25th July	1964

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Barrie, Daniel	Stirling, Annie	23rd February	1952
Barrie, John	Bradford, Jean	31st January	1930
Barrie, John	McLatchie, Agnes	16th June	1944
Barrie, Thomas	Hibbs, Sylvia	21st December	1957
Beattie, David	Palmer, Jane	9th March	1968
Beck, Angus	Murdoch, Janetta	11th July	1959
Beck, Campbell	Murphy, Georgina	26th September	1970
Beck, John	Findlay, Nan	12th August	1967
Beck, John	Richards, Mary	7th July	1962
Begg, James	Boag, Mary	14th January	1961
Begg, Robert	Porter, Agnes	2ns June	1952
Beggs, William	Gordon, Marion	2nd April	1941
Bell, Charles	Shaw, Anna	17th April	1954
Bell, J.A.J.	Loggie, Helen	19th May	1924
Birrell, Robert	Hogg, Margaret	28th June	1922
Black, Fergus	Da Prato, Edith	18th September	1940
Blackwood, James	Anderson, Isabella	15th August	1952
Blackwood, John	Renton, Janet	9th September	1949
Blackwood, William	Niven, Agnes	26th September	1945
Blackwood, William	Samson, Thomasina	18th October	1952
Blaikie, David	McIntyre, Elizabeth	231st August	1929
Blaikie, John	Stitt, Christine	15th October	1960
Bloss, Cyril	Chisholm, Nicholas	26th March	1932
Blyth, David	Dalziel, Mary	22nd February	1964
Bochan, James	Ward, Anna	14th March	1964
Bone, Dugald	Forrester, Sarah	29th November	1952
Bone, Francis	McKean, Janet	25th April	1959
Bone, John	Stibbs, Dorothy	5th August	1946
Bone, Thomas	Snape, Edith	22nd December	1951
Bone, William	Conquer, Ann	11th October	1958
Bone, William	Pirrie, Margaret	11th September	1953
Borthwick, Laurence	Caldwell, Anne	4th September	1969
Bourne, Donald	Stacey, Man	27th July	1957
Bradford, David	Wharrie, Anne	29th September	1962
Bradford, George	Gilchrist, Alice	8th July	1950
Bradford, George	Robertson, Evelyn	16th March	1963
Bradford, George	Todd, Nancy	15th October	1965
Bradford, Jack	Marshall, Jean		1951
Bradford, John	Carson, Mary	29th December	1950
Bradford, John	Saunderson, Nesie	30th March	1973
Bradford, Robert	Marshall, Jean	24th March	1951
Bradford, Robert	McSkimming, Mary	28th December	1951
Bradford, Thomas	Kennedy, Agnes	10th July	1971

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Bradford, William	Johnstone, Ellen	9th October	1970
Bradford, William	Lockyer, Dorothy	29th June	1946
Bradley, Ted	Higgins, Jean	1st November	1936
Brodie, John	Hamilton, Thomasina	10th January	1942
Broom, James	Vent, Polly	14th July	1911
Brotton, John	Morrison, Mary	14th July	1951
Browell, Sydney	Jack, Isabella	20th June	1947
Brown, Alexander	Nimmo, Isabella	16th October	1965
Brown, Andrew	Park, Susan	4th May	1974
Brown, Charles	Chapman, Grace	10th April	1948
Brown, Dominick	Paterson, Elizabeth	19th February	1966
Brown, George	McCrorie, Mart	21st July	1947
Brown, Jack	Loggie, Jessie	29th October	1923
Brown, James	Bradshaw, Eunice	22nd April	1957
Brown, John	Findlay, Jean	10th August	1946
Brown, John	Meech, Esma	4th June	1934
Brown, John	Parker, Margaret	15th September	1962
Brown, Lawrence	Ramsden, Nellie	17th March	1945
Brown, Richard	Simpson, Margaret	14th June	1958
Brown, Vincent	Donaghy, Rose	24th November	1938
Brown, William	McIntyre, Ella	In New Zealand	1940
Bryce, James	Montgomery, Mary	13th July	1956
Buchanan, Neil	Leggate, Jean	25th March	1910
Bull, Ronald	Moran, Mary	9th July	1946
Bunniss, George	Steven, Jean	21st March	1925
Bunting, James	McLachlan, Mary	17th July	1965
Burns, Robert	Samson, Grace	17th March	1951
Burnside, James	Arthur, Mary	8th August	1973
Burnside, Robert	Davidson, Elizabeth	2nd March	1945
Burrell, David	Sharpe, Sheena	10th June	1972
Butler, John	Little, Elizabeth	3rd April	1954
Byrne, Thomas	Montgomery, Elizabeth	30th June	1962
Caldow, William	Gilchrist, Margaret	1st August	1947
Callan, William	Blackwood, Margaret	1st June	1951
Cameron, John	Smyllie, May	1st September	1925
Campbell, Eric	Wallace, Isa	25th July	1941
Campbell, James	Blyth, Ann	1st August	1964
Campbell, James	Palmer, Eleanor	16th June	1973
Campbell, John	Clark, Jane	10th September	1920
Campbell, Peter	Wilson, Agnes	16th June	1943
Campbell, Richard	Wallace, Mary	26th May	1918
Carmichael, Matthew	Stitt, Ann	16th July	1965
Carson, John	McMillan, Shona	11th August	1973

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Carter, Leslie	Dones, Gloria	15th April	1974
Cathcart, Alexander	Forrester, Jessie	24th March	1953
Chapman, George	Lochrie, Margaret	17th January	1942
Chapman, William	McLean, Mary	27th October	1939
Clark, Alexander	Stewart, Jean	27th August	1954
Clark, James	Polland, Margaret	27th December	1947
Clark, John	Kennedy, Elizabeth	4th September	1948
Clark, Robert	Gemmell, Marion	10th June	1915
Clegg, Robert	Crawford, Janice	11th September	1971
Clement, James	Dempster, Annie	24th June	1941
Coats, Andrew	McCall, Grace	10th January	1939
Colville, John	Crawford, Marion	18th March	1967
Conn, David	Brown, Hilda	28th March	1959
Cook, Daniel	Henderson, Mary	15th January	1955
Cook, William	Rae, Jeannie	29th March	1946
Cornett, John	Logie, Ivy	23rd April	1955
Costley, John	Robb, Marion	9th July	1933
Cowan , John	Dodds, Marion	26th September	1947
Coyle, William	Boland, Marion	3rd July	1971
Craig, John	Bradford, Fay	18th March	1961
Craig, Neil	McKay, Mary	13th April	1917
Crawford, Frederick	Wallace, Sarah	10th September	1948
Crawford, James	Dow, Christina	4th June	1948
Crosbie, Andrew	MacGregor, Jean	15th July	1955
Crosbie, David	Henderson, Janet	31st July	1934
Crosbie, Douglas	Young, Janet	12th September	1945
Crosbie, Walter	Fleming, Christina	6th November	1946
Culley, William	Brown, Janet	3rd December	1947
Cumming, John	Bone, Jane	12th December	1952
Cunningham, Robert	McCann, Margaret	24th October	1936
Currie, James	McLeod, Marjorie	2nd March	1968
Da Prato, A.	Ross, Mary	12th June	1918
Da Prato, Alfredo	Pollitt, Mildred	22nd May	1948
Da Prato, Alideo	McSporran, Isobel	17th September	1954
Dalrymple, John	Henderson, Agnes	4th December	1924
Dalrymple, John	Wallace, Mary	10th September	1948
Dalziel, John	Mathieson, Charlotte	8th September	1945
Davidson, George	Harrison, Janette	7th May	1971
Davidson, James	Bradford, Grace	20th August	1926
Davidson, James	Johnstone, Agnes	2nd January	1954
Davidson, James	Logie, Basilia	3rd March	1956
Davidson, James	Mitchell, Mary	26th March	1949
Davidson, Joe	Sullivan, Irene	27th August	1949

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Davidson, Kenneth	Gordon, Isabel	16th July	1940
Davidson, Richard	Hastie, Marion	27th April	1940
Davidson, Robert	Scott, Margaret	9th July	1960
Davidson, Scott	Dodds, Marion	9th October	1965
Davidson, Thomas	Hastings, Minnie	27th April	1929
Davidson, Thomas	Laidlaw, Agnes	10th December	1943
Davies, David	Thomson, Ivy	9th July	1955
De Mascio, Bennett	Sloan, Margaret	5th January	1943
Dempster, Alex.	Bone, Margaret	12th March	1954
Dempster, David	Purdie, Mary	7th June	1952
Dempster, George	Baldrick, Elizabeth	23rd March	1950
Dempster, James	McCrorie, Sarah	24th March	1950
Dempster, Robert	McCall, Janet	19th March	1947
Dempster, Thomas	Kirk, Helen	12th July	1957
Devine, William	McCaw, Nan	27th April	1946
Devlin, Peter	Cowan, Janet	25th March	1949
Dewar, John	Marshall, Margaret	15th September	1967
Dickson, Andrew	Sutherland, Margaret	5th December	1959
Dickson, Thomas	White, Elizabeth	10th October	1952
Diram, Robert	Thomson, Jane	14th June	1950
Dixon, Robert	Palmer, Marion	10th July	1973
Dixon, William	Guthrie, Euphemia	29th March	1952
Dodds, George	Sinclair, Mary	16th March	1945
Dodds, James	Graves, Edith	18th May	1944
Dodds, John	Rankin, Annie	11th July	1947
Dodds, Peter	Harrigan, Isobel	27th April	1945
Dodds, William	Hazle, Helen	15th October	1966
Dornan, Duncan	Wallace, Thomson	19th August	1922
Dorrans, Peter	Paterson, Isabel	14th July	1962
Doswell, George	Weir, Isobel	22nd September	1944
Dougall, Bob	Forsyth, Peggy	19th October	1942
Douglas, James	Davidson, Marion	27th September	1947
Douglas, John	McSkimming, Anne	19th March	1966
Douglas, William	Kirkwood, Helen	5th August	1949
Drife, Robert	Murray, Martha	24th March	1959
Drife, Thomas	Strickland, Helen	3rd April	1954
Dunbar, William	Young, Margaret	6th November	1914
Dunlop, Douglas	Hogg, Lily	12th July	1934
Dunlop, Hugh	Murphy, Jean	26th February	1947
Dunn, Robert	Winning, Martha	26th June	1937
Dunnachie, George	Dalziel, Margaret	28th October	1967
Duris, William	Masterton, Mary	20th September	1946
Dykes, James	Pringle, Christina	1st April	1964

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Easton, Daniel	Anderson, Jane	12th June	1918
England, Robert	McLarty, Margaret	15th October	1965
Faber, Alfred	McSkimming, Mary	19th August	1950
Falconer, George	Wyllie, Margaret	21st September	1968
Fearns, John	McCoubrie, Jean	26th July	1958
Feay, Martin	Murdoch, Christine	25th January	1969
Ferguson, Gilbert	Stoering, Mari-Louise	7th September	1951
Ferguson, James	Gold, Marion	5th June	1942
Fettes, Steven	Forrester, Janette	26th October	1939
Findlay, Archibald	Cook, Janet	15th June	1951
Findlay, Archie	Samson, Thomasina	4th April	1952
Findlay, James	McDade, Martha	5th July	1947
Findlay, John	Wardrop, Nellie	24th May	1920
Findlay, Peter	Rowe, Doreen Rowe	11th November	1967
Fleming, Andrew	Muirhead, Mary	29th December	1951
Fleming, Christopher	Hamilton, Jemima	31st December	1925
Fleming, Hamilton	Lochhead, Eleanor	21st March	1958
Floyd, Thomas	Wyper, Ina	20th July	1956
Floyd, William	Parr, Barbara	22nd January	1955
Ford, Michael	Cullen, Olive	21st July	1962
Fordyce, John	Callan, Martha	5th June	1943
Foreman, Raymond	Brown, Susannah	25th June	1966
Forge, Henry	Logie, Elizabeth	16th March	1963
Forrest, William	Brown, Agnes	21st July	1944
Forshay, Raymond	Dempster, Mary	18th April	1942
Forsyth, William	Cowper, Elizabeth	30th April	1943
Frew, James	Cruickshank, Margaret	6th February	1959
Frissie, John	McCallum, Josephine	30th April	1960
Fulton, Alexander	Armstrong Barbara	30th December	1925
Fulton, Alexander	Gaw, Emma	20th January	1962
Fulton, Thomas	Wales, Agnes	4th September	1971
Fulton, William	Rennie, Agnes	27th April	1927
Fyfe, Harvey	Harrison, Marion	26th July	1969
Fyfe, Peter	McKay, Jean	14th August	1948
Galbraith, Alexander	Millar, Margaret	24th January	1940
Galloway, Samuel	Easton, Mary	5th October	1963
Gardiner, Mathieson	Murdoch, Agnes	17th December	1949
Gardiner, Thomas	Samson, Mary	20th February	1935
Gaw, David	Masterton, Mary	4th April	1964
Gaw, David	McDowall, Nancy	3rd October	1970
Gaw, James	Wilson, Grace	2nd April	1966
Gibson, James	Dickson, Elizabeth	5th March	1955
Gibson, Robert	Johnstone, Lena	20th August	1952

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Gibson, James	Spiers, Marie	11th March	1950
Gillespie, Alexander	Dempster, Mary	19th April	1947
Gillies, James	Prentice, Agnes	27th February	1953
Gilmour, Robert	Davidson, Margaret	12th September	1952
Gilchrist, James	Rae, Margaret	9th March	1951
Gold, Andrew	Stretton, Pauline	24th July	1965
Gold, John	McPheat, Moira	5th December	1959
Goldie, John	Rowan, Esmee	17th February	1951
Gordon, Francis	Paterson, Margaret	31st December	1938
Gordon, James	MacAdam, Cissie	14th September	1932
Gordon, Robert	Cree, Elizabeth	30th October	1965
Gordon, Robert	Menzies, Georgina	27th August	1937
Gorrie, Archibald	Hutton, Mercia	6th December	1929
Gouldstone, William	Kirkwood, Annie	10th July	1925
Graham, James	Aitken, Susanna	11th July	1970
Graham, Robert	Blackwood, Agnes	2nd July	1919
Grant, Alex.	Anderson, Margaret	12th March	1948
Grant, Gordon	Smith, Florence	28th February	1970
Grant, Thomas	Bertram, Isobel	28th October	1948
Grant, Thomas	Findlay, Sarah	1st November	1946
Gray, Donald	Loggie, Nan	21st January	1939
Gray, Robert	Wallace, Mary	11th October	1946
Gray, Thomas	Ridgway, Eunice	13th July	1945
Greenshields, James	Murphy, Anne	29th January	1915
Greenwood, David	Morris, Joan	20th August	1942
Grimsey, Edward	Higgins, Mary	26th August	1952
Hadden, Gordon	Paterson, Helen	20th May	1944
Hadden, Graham	Allan, Agnes	21st June	1946
Hadden, Leslie	Dane, Elizabeth	2nd August	1952
Hadden, Sgt. W. J.	White, Margaret	28th December	1916
Hall, Thomas	McBride, Mary	26th March	1949
Hamilton, David	Allan, Moira	26th February	1957
Hamilton, James	Potts, Margaret	8th July	1945
Hamilton, John	Aldie, Mary	11th July	1911
Hamilton, John	McKinlay, Grace	2nd September	1910
Hamilton, John	Morrison, Margaret	6th June	1941
Hamilton, Robert	Montgomery, Margaret	11th November	1949
Hamilton, Robin	Morrison, Mary	14th February	1967
Hamilton, Ronald	Girdwood, Janette	7th October	1967
Hardie, Hugh	Neilson, Margaret	23rd August	1945
Harkness, Robert	Turnbull, Mavis	15th August	1936
Harrison, John	Livingstone, Elizabeth	23rd August	1947
Harrison, Norman	Henderson, Helen	21st June	1952

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Hastie, William	Tyler, Joan	15th August	1942
Hastings, Thomas	Jack, Janet	8th July	1936
Haugh, William	Blair, Elizabeth	4th June	1948
Hawkins, Charles	Weir, Elizabeth	6th February	1933
Hawkins, John	Shaw, Agnes	24th March	1962
Hay, William	Callan, Jenny	5th October	1943
Hazle, James	Dempster, Elizabeth	27th June	1970
Hazle, Robert	Welsh, Betty	18th September	1971
Hazle, Thomas	Munro, Moira	28th January	1843
Henderson, James	Ware, Vera	20th August	1938
Herriot, Alex.	Irvine, Hannah	18th March	1955
Hibberd, George	Samson, Marion	26th August	1931
Higgins, George	Stevens, Susan	31st October	1913
Higgins, James	Mackin, Elizabeth	15th June	1963
Hill, Alexander	Neilson, Annie	2nd June	1951
Hill, Hugh	McKay, Mary	3rd November	1950
Hill, James	Burns, Margaret	29th October	1955
Hill, James	James, Iris	16th August	1947
Hill, John	Wrightson, Pauline	4th September	1967
Hill, Thomas	Miller, Mary	1st September	1950
Hill, William	Samson, Isabella	8th February	1952
Hodge, Robert	Neral, Ellen	29th July	1959
Hogarth, Peter	Cringan, Mary	14th June	1912
Hogg, William	Frew, Martha	31st March	1961
Holden, Joseph	Barrie, Etta	25th October	1957
Holden, Stuart	May, Barbara	6th September	1969
Holland, George	McIntosh, Rosemary	14th December	1968
Holland, James	Crosbie, Babara	23rd May	1942
Horseman, William	Samson, Rae	18th July	1947
Houston, John	Bickerton, Christina	11th September	1965
Houston, John	McCulloch, Elizabeth	9th March	1963
Howatt, Thomas	Anderson, Barbara	2nd August	1961
Howell, Michael, Dr.	Findlay, Helen	22nd May	1965
Howie, George	Henderson, Ina	25th July	1944
Howie, Harry	Da'Prato, Patricia	22nd June	1948
Hughes, Thomas	Sweetnet, Ada	4th November	1944
Hughes, William	Aileen Ford	16th July	1966
Huhtala, Hans	Miller, Sadie	17th September	1928
Hunter, Archibald	Harrigan, Isobel	29th April	1949
Hunter, George	Gooding, Jessie	7th April	1934
Hunter, Jack	Willcocks, Anthea	23rd May	1957
Hunter, John	Dickson, Yvonne	30th April	1960
Hunter, Joseph	Dunlop, Margaret	31st December	1940

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Hurst, Leslie	Gray, Elizabeth	1st January	1935
Hyslop, James	Matthews, Margaret	22nd March	1963
Jackson, Alex.	Johnstone, Alice	10th August	1957
Jackson, Peter	Taylor, Jeannie	10th November	1916
Jackson, William	Logie, Helen	29th December	1944
Jamieson, William	Anderson, Lily	1st June	1923
Jasper, Douglas	Hamilton, Jean	23rd April	1938
Johnstone, Barry	Reeves, Georgina	11th December	1971
Johnstone, James	Bain, Jeannie	22nd June	1945
Johnstone, Neil	Clark, Jenny	31st March	1962
Johnstone, Samuel	Gilfillan, Marion	25th December	1948
Johnstone, Samuel	Sloan, Agnes	8th August	1956
Johnstone, William	McLachlan, Evelyn	4th July	1964
Joyce, Henry	Welsh, Elizabeth	26th April	1947
Kean, John	Williamson, Margaret	18th June	1920
Keddie, Robert	Conn, Iza	3rd February	1968
Kellock, Robert	Dowie, Maisie	8th August	1923
Kelly, James	McSkimming, Marion	11th June	1971
Kelly, Malcolm	Mitchell, Wilma	7th September	1968
Kennedy, John	McCrorie, Margaret	18th September	1946
Kennedy, Maureen	Young, David	24th September	1971
Kerr, John	Howie, Margaret	17th July	1946
Kerr, Thomas	Bone, Isabella	31st August	1957
Killips, John	Moran, Annie	26th January	1923
King, Christopher	McKeown, Sarah	12th December	1944
Kinnaird, William	Miller, Ellen	25th October	1935
Kirkhope, James	Bickerton, Ruth	24th March	1956
Kirkland, David	Hunter, Helen	2nd April	1960
Kirkland, David	Oliver, Vera	6th December	1952
Kirkland, Thomas	Horne, Williamina	20th December	1923
Kirkwood, David	Megahy, Jean	30th March	1956
Kirkwood, Robert	Wilson, Annie	15th March	1957
Kirkwood, Thomas	Hamilton, Joanna	31st December	1936
Kirkwood, Tom	Drummond, Joyce	19th March	1960
Kirkwood, Robert	Dalgrano, Annie	1st August	1934
Knott, Eric	Gilchrist, Mary	27th July	1927
Laffey, William	Lennox, Margaret	15th June	1957
Laidlaw, James	Bradford, Mary	11th August	1972
Laidlaw, John	Love, Agnes	14th December	1951
Laidlaw, William	Guthrie, Helen	5th November	1948
Laird, Thomas	Dickie, Jean	15th June	1966
Lang, James	McKenzie, Isa	22nd August	1959
Laidlaw, W.	Kennedy, Bessie	26th May	1918

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Law, Robert	Bain, Isabella	18th September	1953
Lawrie, James	Fulton, Elizabeth	16th March	1957
Lawson, George	Dodds, Helen	14th June	1930
Lees, James	Beck, Jean	16th March	1957
Lennox, Robert	Montgomery, Margaret	8th January	1955
Ligerwood, Alex.	Hamilton, Elsie	26th April	1929
Liggett, James	Samson, Mary	1st July	1950
Lindsay, Alex.	Urquhart, Peggy	3rd December	1925
Little, Rodger	Dalziel, Mary	3rd July	1965
Lochhead, Henry	Allan, Margaret	3rd July	1948
Lochhead, James	Smith, Margaret	25th September	1959
Lochhead, Matthew	Mathieson, Anne	22nd March	1947
Logan, Henry	Queen, Betty	13th July	1946
Loggie, George	McKie, Mary	22nd December	1962
Loggie, James	Brown, Nancy	20th August	1948
Loggie, William	Horn, Beatrice	17th April	1937
Logie, Andrew	Rae, Isabella	10th August	1934
Loh, Cha	Aitken, Helen	25th August	1973
Love, David	Thomson, Agnes	19th June	1929
Lowe, John	Millar, Josephine	6th July	1963
Lucas, Thomas	Shaw, Margaret	1st April	1967
Lucas, William	Bradford, Jessie	24th December	1926
MacDonald, James	Mackin, Elizabeth	17th July	1954
MacDougall, Ian	Guthrie, Margaret	8th February	1947
MacKay, William	Haugh, Margaret	16th September	1952
MacKerrell, W.	Gordon, Nan	17th October	1945
Mackin, James	Magorrian, Deidrie	9th October	1965
Mackin, John	Train, Catherine	22nd September	1962
MacLean, William	Millar, Hannah	23rd January	1941
MacLeod, John	Williamson, Jean	2nd July	1938
MacRae, S.	Barrie, Margaret	1st September	1941
Manson, Ian	Seymour, Patricia	26th May	1956
Marshall, Forbes	McGarva, Agnes	27th August	1948
Marshall, James	Marshall, Margaret	9th March	1969
Marshall, John	Friar, May	4th April	1950
Marshall, William	Anderson, Rhoda	15th July	1953
Martin, William	Addison, Mary	10th April	1946
Masterton, James	Malcolm, Margaret	22nd June	1968
Masterton, James	Nelson, Helen	6th September	1968
Masterton, John	Muir, Elizabeth	9th September	1967
Mathieson, William	Parker, Joan	29th March	1957
Mathieson, William	Williams, Jean	1st February	1926
Maurer, Edmund	Boland, Kathleen	19th August	1972

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Maxwell, William	McInally, Elizabeth	10th September	1964
Mayhew, Frank	Murphy, May	3rd December	1960
McAdam, Matthew	Frew, Jean	17th September	1948
McAtee, Reginald	Boland, Sarah	20th October	1948
McAvoy, John	Ford, Frances	30th July	1949
McBirnie, James	Taylor, Sheena	15th March	1958
McBride, Robert	Weightman, Marie	26th March	1954
McBride, Roger	Monaghan, Agnes	8th August	1959
McCafferty, Rhoderick	Boland, Theresa	4th September	1965
McCall, Alex.	Bone, Margaret	29th June	1957
McCall, William	Beesley, Marion	30th June	1945
McCall, William	Russell, Sadie	14th January	1949
McCann, Jack	Nugent, Margaret	2nd May	1942
McCartney, Alex.	Alston, Nancy	11th July	1953
McCartney, James	Heayn, Mildred		1949
McCcoll, John	Crosbie, Jessie	24th November	1945
McCcoll, John	Salkeld, Daisy	26th December	1928
McConnachie, James	Wallace, Jessie	1st June	1940
McCormick, Robert	Cowan, Alice	27th November	1971
McCormick, William	Lennox, Agnes	8th August	1947
McCrone, Christopher	Rorrison, Elizabeth	19th July	1956
McCrorie, Graham	Dunsmore, Christina	22nd March	1958
McCrorie, Jim	Hodgson, Nancy	6th October	1945
McCubbin, John	Parker, Jean	21st August	1965
McCulloch, James	Banks, Margaret,	2nd October	1940
McCulloch, James	Gerard, Mary	24th December	1949
McCulloch, James	Warrilow, Charlotte	18th July	1941
McCulloch, John	Burnside, Molly	9th March	1966
McCulloch, John	Gilfillan, Mary	30th March	1951
McCulloch, William	Wilson, Violet	22nd December	1961
McCulloch, Robert	Cather, Dorothy	12th August	1928
McCutcheon, Eric	Morrison, Jane	1st September	1973
McDougall, Dougald	Beck, Jean	22nd September	1962
McDougall, Duncan	Bradford, Jean	11th November	1967
McDougall, Thomas	Renton, Janet	26th September	1945
McDougall, William	Dempster, Anne	29th April	1944
McDowall, Mary	McDade, James	23rd October	1971
McEwan, John	Shaw, Jeran	8th April	1938
McFarlane, Lachlan	Pearson, Isabella	3rd June	1924
McFarlane, William	Wilson, Mary	16th July	1959
McFeddries, John	Wilson, Rosemary	31st October	1970
McFegan, Robert	Wright, Agnes	30th March	1917
McFegan, William	Gaw, Isabel	28th December	1963

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

McGarry, James	Mackin, Elizabeth	7th August	1945
McGarry, Owen	Strickland, Margaret	18th March	1961
McGarva, Donald	Brown, Margaret	7th March	1964
McGarva, Gilbert	Tait, Margaret	30th November	1945
McGarva, James	Borthwick, Joan	20th January	1950
McGill, John	Findlay, Mary	1st October	1915
McGregor, John	Livingstone, Elizabeth	21st August	1954
McHarg, Hugh	Hodge, Elizabeth	17th October	1947
McIntosh, James	Bone, Jane	12th December	1941
McIntosh, Robert	Paxton, Mary	21st January	1967
McIntyre, Alexander	Ferguson, Agnes	1st September	1924
McIvor, Alex.	Menzies, Joan	22nd October	1960
McKay, Gilbert	Kayne, Janet	8th March	1969
McKay, John	Bone, Janet	23rd March	1957
McKendrick, Thomas	Findlay, Sadie	19th March	1953
McKenzie, D.	Wallace, Sarah	12th June	1922
McKenzie, Daniel	Menzies, Isabel	3rd March	1944
McKenzie, Donald	Smillie, Ann	27th March	1967
McKenzie, Norman	Donnelly, Margaret	9th December	1960
McKenzie, Roderick	Logie, Peggy	31st July	1937
McKerrell, George	Wordie, Anne	19th July	1944
McKinlay, Robert	Kirk, Mary	7th February	1936
McLagan, Robert	Rennie, Catherine	15th June	1949
McLaughlan, Jack	Patterson, Audrey	19th July	1958
McLean, John	Laughton, Jennifer	3rd October	1964
McLean, William	Rea, Sarah	4th November	1944
McLeod, William	Young, Nan	20th June	1913
McManus, John	Boland, Mary	3rd February	1951
McManus, John	Nicholls, Irene	7th November	1945
McMath, David	Mitchell, Janet	10th August	1945
McMeekin, John	Denniston, Jean	16th February	1950
McMillan, Gibby	Bulloch, Isobel		1951
McMorran, John	Bone, Barbara	2nd August	1958
McNair, Alex.	Wallace, Mary	27th December	1946
McNair, Ian	Rush, Sadie	7th July	1973
McPate, John D.	Hunter, Nan	7th August	1941
McSkimming, Andrew	McCall, Margaret	13th February	1920
McVey, Ian	Murdoch, Betty	11th August	1960
McVey, John	Thomson, Grace	14th October	1931
McWilliam, James	Dempster, Jean	25th January	1924
Menzies, James	Hay, Eunice	29th September	1951
Menzies, James	Johnstone, Margaret	8th August	1953
Menzies, Richard	Muir, Margaret	2nd December	1972

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Menzies, Robert	Hilton, Eva	4th April	1942
Menzies, Thomas	Lorimer, Evelyn	7th April	1943
Mercer, William	Wyper, Ethel	6th June	1969
Methven, John	Gibson, Helen	11th August	1937
Milby, William	Archibald, Margaret	28th July	1956
Millar, Alexander	Robb, Jane	30th September	1949
Millar, Andrew	Melville, Jessie	22nd April	1932
Millar, Andrew	Telfer, Matilda	26th July	1930
Millar, George	Kerr, Mary	21st July	1911
Millar, James	Leslie, Janet	21st October	1961
Millar, James	Scotland, Agnes	28th August	1971
Millar, John	Rankin, Mary	8th December	1962
Millar, John	Wright, Jose	28th October	1967
Millar, Thomas	Baird, Margaret	27th October	1973
Millar, William	Wood, Mary	25th October	1935
Miller, John	Stevenson, Catherine	5th June	1971
Milligan, Andrew	Foster, Margaret	31st January	1911
Mitchell, Archie	Muir, Margaret	4th February	1927
Mitchell, Ian	Bone, Mary	2nd August	1958
Mitchell, James	Beck, Mary	24th July	1965
Mitchell, William	Muir, Agnes	10th March	1962
Mitchell, William	Whitefield, Doris	9th September	1972
Montgomery, Andrew	Dunsmore Annie	28th September	1951
Montgomery, Joseph	Da'Prato, Vittorena	28th September	1945
Montgomery, Samuel	Davidson, Jemima	21st September	1956
Moorhead, Hugh	Taylor, Andrea	9th June	1973
Moran, Alex.	Murdpch, Sheena	5th July	1957
Moran, James	O'Brien, Bridget	25th September	1954
Morrison, John	Clemie, Margaret	26th December	1930
Morrison, Tom	McNab, Helen	6th September	1958
Morton, John	Weir, Jeannie	1st October	1913
Moyes, Thomas	Weir, Margaret	25th July	1969
Muir, John	Marshall, Helen	6th February	1945
Muir, John	Strange, Joyce	21st February	1948
Muir, John	Wylie, Moira	5th July	1969
Mulhall, Arthur	McIntosh, Margaret	12th August	1967
Mumme, Ivan	Davidson, Margaret	17th January	1953
Muncie, Ian	Kirkwood, Margaret	29th June	1963
Muncie, Robert	McMillan, Jean	16th November	1951
Munro, John	Bickerton, Mary	29th December	1944
Murdoch, George	Davis, Sarah	16th July	1949
Murdoch, James	MacKay, Diana	12th May	1948
Murphy, George	Douglas, Grace	1st June	1957

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Murphy, John	Smith, Janet	21st September	1951
Murphy, Thomas	Jack, Annette	9th August	1958
Murphy, William	Bryce, Anna	11th September	1965
Murray, Harry	Eileen, Bell	14th March	1973
Murray, Hugh	Aldridge, Joyce	25th April	1942
Murray, Thomas	Blackwood, Janet	17th March	1950
Murray, Thomas	Murray, Bridget	10th March	1956
Neal, David	Dickson, Agnes	30th August	1969
Nesbet, James	Montgomery, Mary	10th November	1956
Nicol, Gorrie	Hogg, Isabel	21st September	1946
Nielson, Arthur	Davies, Jane	28th August	1965
Nimmo, Robert	Hill, Margaret	28th January	1952
Nisbet, James	Bertram, Annie	19th February	1930
Normanton, Robert	Bell, Isibel	29th December	1954
O'Donnell, Patrick	Boland, Theresa	4th July	1947
Olden, Robert	Goodlet, Audrey	14th September	1948
Ormiston, Douglas	Samson, Elizabeth	2nd November	1946
Ottaway, A.	Hansford, Dorothy	18th September	1928
Palmer, Andrew	Barbour, Margaret	29th December	1939
Palmer, John	Murdoch, Anniw	8th September	1944
Palmer, Robin	Hazle, Susan	8th September	1973
Palmer, Thomas	Baillie, Sybil	30th March	1968
Palmer, Thomas	Gray, Marion	24th June	1949
Park, George	McCrinkle, June	5th August	1961
Park, Hugh	Wilson, Priscilla	15th June	1934
Park, Robert	Hyslop, Agnes	28th November	1964
Park, William	Menzies, Annie	28th April	1944
Parker, Hugh	Goldie, Anne	7th August	1948
Parker, John	Dempster, Joan	24th July	1948
Paterson, Andrew	Hannah, Dorothy	30th September	1967
Paterson, James	Thomas, Jean	5th March	1960
Paterson, William	Aitchison, Cathrine	7th September	1939
Paterson, William	Moran, Margaret	7th February	1945
Paton, John	Shaw, Nan	13th July	1963
Pearson, John	Logie, Janet	21st November	1953
Penhaligan, Alfred	Dow, Marion	2nd March	1945
Pett, John	Adamson, Jessie	25th June	1940
Pickford, Andrew	Parker, Jessie	7th November	1947
Pinfold, Alfred	Barrie, Helen	19th March	1946
Poole, Lester	Johnstone, Annie	3rd October	1945
Preston, John	Paul, Edna	17th July	1929
Pringle, Alexander	Templeton, Janet	26th December	1942
Pringle, David	Foster, May	23rd December	1942

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Pringle, Hugh	Wilson, Elizabeth	31st July	1940
Pringle, James	Hendry, Dorothy	1st May	1943
Pringle, James	Steven, Mary	12th October	1955
Purdie, David	Dodds, Margaret	5th October	1968
Purdie, John	MacPhail, Janet	10th September	1956
Purdie, Robert	Goodyear, Elizabeth	5th October	1963
Purdie, Samuel	Haddow, Elizabeth	19th March	1959
Purdie, Thomas	Baird, Elizabeth	22nd June	1957
Purves, Robert	McCutcheon, Mary	18th August	1962
Quigley, Hugh	Sharpling, Doris	22nd January	1945
Rae, Thomas	Boland, Doreen	20th February	1960
Rae, Thomas	McClymont	30th December	1914
Ralton, William	Murphy, Robina	30th April	1949
Ramsay, Alexander	Stevenson, Sarah		1935
Ramsay, John	Wilson, Joan	16th September	1966
Ramsay, Joyce	McLean, Stewart	16th June	1873
Reed, Edward	Holland, Christina	18th July	1969
Reid, John	Stitt, Catherine	23rd February	1963
Reid, William	Boland, Agnes	5th May	1962
Rendall, Thomas	McLachlan, Janet	29th October	1949
Renton, Archibald	Condon, Anna	14th August	1948
Renton, James	Gemmell, Georgina	9th November	1946
Richer, Frederick	Steele, Margaret	23rd September	1947
Richmond, Brian	Tait, Nan	31st October	1970
Ridley, Alfred	Robson, Mary	14th September	1968
Rigg, Charles	Marshall, Margaret	23rd August	1973
Ritchie, William	McInally, Mary	10th October	1941
Robb, Richard	Nelson, Mary	22nd March	1958
Robb, Samuel	Warman, Phyllis	12th June	1943
Robb, Thomas	Crosbie, Rachel	13th September	1946
Roberts, Wilfred	Ferguson, Jean	24th April	1943
Robertson, David	McLaughlan, Mary	23rd March	1951
Robertson, James	Samson, Anna	16th March	1957
Robson, George	Bain, Maureen	13th June	1964
Robson, Herbert	McCartney, Charlotte	3rd June	1947
Rollett, William	Shannon, Arline	14th April	1956
Rorrison, Tom	Crowcroft, Gillian	5th December	1964
Ross, Andrew	Dempster, Marlene	24th October	1964
Ross, Duncan	Sloan, Isabella	16th October	1931
Ross, John	Clark, Jessie	18th March	1949
Ross, John	Duncan, Valerie	16th September	1967
Ross, John	Muir, Jane	12th December	1930
Ross, Malcolm	Rowe, Laura	7th September	1957

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Ross, Thomas	McCall, Helen	1st June	1934
Rowe, Clark	Wilson, Janet	19th January	1974
Rowe, Ezekiel	Mills, Jeannie	17th February	1910
Rowe, Ralph	Conning, Edna	30th March	1954
Rowe, Thomas	Curragh, Mary	17th December	1941
Rowley, Stanley	Young, Margaret	6th October	1943
Russell, James	Birrell, Isobelle	1st October	1949
Russell, William	Hogg, Liliias	16th June	1943
Russell, William	Rowe, Irene	15th June	1968
Rutherford, Roy	Finlay, Janet	16th March	1963
Samson, Andrew	Dalziel, Helen	10th October	1941
Samson, Andrew	Smith, Agnes	29th January	1966
Samson, David	Guthrie, Jean	7th June	1958
Samson, Hugh	Cluckie, Johan	20th August	1949
Samson, Hugh	Gilfillan, Crawford	24th June	1914
Samson, Hugh	Weir, Mary	28th June	1952
Samson, James	Purdie, jean	6th July	1968
Samson, John	Clark, Margaret	26th October	1956
Samson, John	Delday, Elizabeth	20th July	1950
Samson, John (Printer)	Kirkpatrick, Janet	22nd August	1959
Samson, Robert	Bruton, Gladys	8th March	1943
Samson, William	McCulloch, Janice	21st April	1973
Sanderson, Thomas	Wilson,, Janet	26th November	1925
Scorey, Thomas	Weir, Isabel	28th February	1941
Scotland, George	Barrie, Susan	20th December	1968
Scott, Craig	Wyper, Grace	26th June	1971
Scott, Thomas	Little, Margaret	11th June	1953
Sey, Harhold	Muncie, Janet	7th April	1945
Seymour, James	Rennie, Jean	28th February	1913
Shackleton, Stanley	Murphy, Jenny	18th March	1944
Shaw, Alexander	Wallace, Rae	8th March	1937
Shaw, James	Ballantyne, Jenny	11th February	1944
Shaw, Robert	Breckney, Ena	5th September	1970
Shaw, Robert	Jack, Elizabeth	26th October	1957
Shaw, William	Collins, Christine	27th August	1969
Shearer, David	Irvine, Agnes	5th April	1961
Shearlaw, William	Laidlaw, Jean	20th July	1923
Shed, William	Brown, Marie	11th June	1924
Shipp, David	Blyth, Isabel	23rd Match	1963
Short, Hugh	Holmes, Selena	22nd April	1944
Simpson, Matthew	Semple, Margaret	25th February	1954
Skillen, David	Ward, Margaret	15th March	1969
Sloan, John	Samson, Helen	22nd June	1963

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Small, William	Waters, Elizabeth	25th February	1956
Smith, Adam	Wood, Jean	29th November	1958
Smith, Beveridge, John	Penman, Margaret	10th February	1962
Smith, George Shaw	Fearnside, Alexandria	23rd March	1967
Smith, Dr. George Shaw	Willens, Margaret	25th January	1935
Smith, James	Crosbie, Agnes	6th February	1946
Smith, John	Lawson, Helen	2nd July	1952
Smith, John	Rowe, Mary	7th December	1932
Smith, Robert	Hardy, Dorothy	9th October	1938
Smith, Robert	Murray, Elizabeth	7th March	1952
Smith, Ronald	Auld, Ann	6th September	1969
Smith, Thomas	Hill, Sarah	22nd March	1952
Smith, Thomas	Woods, Jean	28th June	1951
Smith, William	Gardiner, Ethel	4th November	1949
Smith, William	Paterson, Elizabeth	21st December	1951
Smith, William	Wilson, Agnes	31st August	1962
Snape, Sydney	Bone, Helen	20th March	1954
Sneddon, Daniel	Hamilton, Ray	6th June	1970
Sneddon, James	Dalziel, Margaret	24th June	1966
Southgate, Edward	Brown, Jean	18th June	1945
Spawforth, Arthur	Paterson, Mary	7th June	1947
Spence, John	Robertson, Margaret	26th June	1948
Steele, Andrew	McMillan, Helen	30th June	1942
Steele, David	McCrinkle, Jessie	5th August	1940
Steele, Ian	Landers, Pauline	9th June	1972
Steele, James	Newsum, Thelma	26th March	1949
Stein, James	Vallance, Mary	21st January	1918
Steven, George	Burns, Shiela	3rd November	1951
Steven, Robert	Mathieson, Jean	27th January	1927
Stewart, Allan	Hodge, Ann	6th October	1970
Stewart, Malcolm	Bradford, Elizabeth	22nd January	1966
Stewart, R.	Gibson, Maggie	26th June	1917
Stirling, John	Davidson, Elizabeth	1st February	1947
Stratfird, H.	Bradford, Barbara	30th June	1951
Strickland, David	Brown, Jeanie	28th March	1953
Strickland, John	Jackson, Susan	12th July	1957
Strickland, Peter	Blackwood, Wilhelmena	14th September	1957
Strickland, Robert	Duncan, Flora	12th March	1954
Strickland, Robert	Frew, Elizabeth	16th March	1945
Strickland, Thomas	Ballantyne, Margaret	11th July	1957
Summers, Ludovic	Murray, Agnes	8th March	1963
Sutherland, Jack	Millar, Janet	March (?)	1949
Sutherland, Kenneth	Little, Anne	23rd February	1962

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Symington, James	Stevens, Margaret	31st December	1914
Symington, Tom	Forsyth, Margaret	19th March	1943
Tait, Peter	Cosgrove, Margaret	7th March	1959
Tait, Thomas	Hodge, Barbara	13th July	1945
Taylor, David	Train, Jessie	8th March	1941
Taylor, George	Dunsmore, Elizabeth	14th October	1949
Taylor, James (Printer	Crawford, Elizabeth	28th February	1958
Taylor, John	Logie, Marjorie	26th March	1949
Taylor, Robert	Aird, Elizabeth	15th July	1941
Taylor, Robert	MacLellan, Effie	10th April	1952
Taylor, Thomson	Vallance, Margaret	17th September	1913
Templeton, Robert	Vallance, Lizzie	2nd June	1911
Templeton, William	McMorran, Anne	5th October	1968
Thomas, Andrew	Lennox, Anne	19th October	1963
Thomas, Derrick	North, Kathleen	25th June	1949
Thomas, William	Pottinger, Margaret	7th March	1953
Thomson, Alexander	Shields, Kate	24th July	1929
Thomson, Allan	Hannah, Elizabeth	24th October	1969
Thomson, George	Lauchlan, Elizabeth	15th February	1944
Thomson, James	Findlay, Eadie	9th October	1942
Thomson, James	Rowe, Isabella	17th December	1940
Thomson, James	Wilson, Jennie	1st August	1928
Thomson, John	D'Arcy, Kathleen	30th March	1949
Thomson, John	Hamilton, Marion	18th October	1958
Thomson, John	Taylor, Ellen	2nd September	1919
Thomson, Kenneth	Rowan, Catherine	3rd October	1970
Thomson, Ronald	Hunter, Jean	18th August	1951
Tolstone, John	Marshall, Angela	17th September	1965
Towle, David	Menzies, Jean	5th June	1953
Townsend, George	Crawford, Jenny	29th June	1945
Turnbull, John	Thom, Isobel	27th September	1963
Turner, Robert	Mitchell, Elizabeth	17th October	1964
Udy, Warrant Officer	Miller, Mary	27th February	1960
Urquhart, Sydney	McLean, Christina	10th October	1930
Valentine, William	Mackin, Sheila	23rd November	1968
Vallance, George	Anderson, Annie	16th July	1941
Vallance, William	MacLellan, Margaret	6th October	1972
Veitch, Adam	Steven, Annie	16th February	1957
Veitch, William	Hazle, Sophia	17th February	1962
Walker, Andrew	Murdoch, Christina	4th March	1961
Walker, Angus	Steele, Jessie	20th July	1966
Walker, Robert	Holden, Margaret	30th March	1956
Walker, William	Bell, Janet	12th March	1948

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Wallace, Andrew	Smith, Gladys	2nd June	1934
Wallace, Colin	Thomson, Nancy	10th July	1942
Wallace, George	Russell, Margaret	14th March	1964
Wallace, Hugh	Archibald, Agnes	2nd August	1920
Wallace, James	Douglas, Euphemia	23rd March	1949
Wallace, John	Hadden, Dorothy	31st March	1951
Wallace, John	McKee, Elizabeth	20th March	1940
Wallace, John	Meikle, Helen	24th March	1934
Wallace, John	Morrison, Mary	18th June	1937
Wallace, Peter	Allan, Ruby	13th December	1947
Wallin, Lars	Rowe, Jean	29th October	1955
Ward, James	Brodie, Sheena	12th November	1966
Ward, Robert	Stewart, Mary	12th October	1963
Warden, Thomas	Crosbie, Rhoda	22nd June	1945
Wardrop, Henry	Muir, Margaret	31st January	1931
Wardrop, James	Laidlaw, Maisie	12th August	1940
Wardrop, James	Mitchell, Agnes	5th March	1949
Warnock, Daniel	Davidson, Mary	24th March	1962
Watt, Peter	Holden, Elizabeth	12th September	1923
Weir, Archibald	Wilson, Helen	30th October	1931
Weir, Archie	Campbell, Jean	1st June	1957
Weir, David	Gibb, May	5th October	1963
Weir, George	Dunsmore, Marion	2nd August	1958
Weir, John	Carson, Sylvia	22nd March	1957
Weir, John	Sipman, Frances	20th April	1933
Weir, Robert	Murphy, Margaret	10th July	1956
Weir, Thomas	Dempster, Isobella	7yh July	1950
Weir, Walter	Blackwood, Mary	29th December	1943
Weir, Walter	Forrest, Helen	21st July	1943
Welsh, Hugh	Queen, Jenny	14th December	1945
Wharrie, Thomas	Loggie, Margaret	3rd September	1938
White, Alexander	Hill, Margaret	21st December	1956
Whitehead, Stanley	Clark, Frances	August	1928
Williams, Peter	Ramage, Margaret	28th October	1966
Williams, William	Anderson, Mary	7th June	1947
Wilson, David	Gardiner, Ellen	2nd February	1951
Wilson, Charles	Williams, Gwyneth	26th July	1952
Wilson, Hubert	Seymour, Catherine	24th June	1939
Wilson, James	Clark, Iris	23rd March	1951
Wilson, James	Gibb, Nan	4th October	1958
Wilson, John	Caldow, Jean	26th June	1942
Wilson, John	Findlay, Helen	28th June	1952
Wilson, John	Johnstone, Marion	4th June	1949

CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

Wilson, John	Livingstone, Jean	23rd September	1967
Wilson, John	Ross, Agnes	28th September	1957
Wilson, Richard	Parker, Howietta	24th December	1949
Wilson, Robert	Logie, Elizabeth	3rd April	1948
Wilson, Thomas	Livingstone, Agnes	29th March	1958
Wilson, William	Craven, Lily	26th April	1939
Wilson, William	Saunders, Margaret	27th October	1956
Wood, William	Shields, Eleanor	9th August	1969
Woodburn, Craig	Paton, Violet	28th July	1966
Woodfine, Thomas	McGarva, Joan	4th September	1971
Wylie, James	Strickland, Isabel	29th January	1954
Wylie, Thomas	Park, Catherine	19th September	1964
Wyllie, George	Murphy, Kathleen	15th July	1950
Wyllie, George	Watson, Linda	13th March	1971
Wyllie, Kenneth	Meachin, Margaret	27th March	1971
Wyper, Hugh	Dunlop, Margaret	23rd July	1971
Yarwood, James	Caldow, Janet	5th June	1948
Young, Brian	Morrison, Joan	9th October	1970
Young, James	Spencer, Irene	8th November	1927
Young, James	Taylor, Helen	23rd July	1919
Young, Thomas	Jackson, Margaret	9th August	1946



Cauld Watter Spoot

## SOME WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITIES



JIMMY BROWN



MICK MORAN



BOBBY BARRIE



WILLIE STRICKLAND



BROWN AND DEMPSTER



R. J. BRADFORD



H. MURRAY, J. MASTERTON



JOSEPH MURDOCH, M.A.



MICHAEL PARKER



CHARLES P. BELL



REV. JOHN HENDERSON



JOHN COLTHART, J.P.



JOHN KILPATRICK



MR MARTIN



REV. CHRIS JACK



DAVE MCKAY



REV FATHER CONWAY



DR CAMPBELL WILSON

## THE HEID INNS

This was the name given to the popular hostelry situated at the top of the town, but was correctly named as the Masons' Arms Hotel, and was a popular rendezvous for inhabitants and visitors alike. The Heid Inns had a history all to itself, but unfortunately over the years some of it has been lost in time. As 2010 closes, Scotland is in the midst of one of the heaviest snowfalls in living memory, more so because it all started in the month of November, but thankfully Muirkirk has managed to escape the worst of the snowfalls (which really is unusual). In the north of Scotland, one of the hardest hit villages was Auchterarder. Where is all this leading to, you may ask? Well, it was from this location that I received a phone call one evening, followed next day by an E-Mail, which really pulled at the strings of my memory, and here I reproduce it full, trusting that it might do the same to readers of this book.:—

So nice to talk to you this evening! I am so pleased to have recently obtained a copy of "Cairntable Echoes" (from the granddaughter of Grigor Smith, jnr.) and am enjoying the insight into the life of a small but important Scottish village and its tough and generous inhabitants. It's a great work you have produced!

As I mentioned, my grandmother was Bella Weir (nee Smith), sister to Grigor. I grew up with my granny—we lived in the same house in Edinburgh where she and her husband, William Weir, retired when they left the Masons Arms in Muirkirk; so I heard many anecdotes about Muirkirk, which over time I have been gradually able to draw together.

Originally, it was Grigor Smith, snr., who bought both hotels (Masons Arms and Black Bull) in about 1900. He died in 1906, aged only 46 years. Mrs Isabella Smith, his wife, continued the business. Grigor, jnr., at some stage took over the Black Bull. Isabella lived on to the ripe old age of 96. I never heard a bad word said about her. Bella married William Weir in 1913, and in the early 1920's, Bella and William came back to Muirkirk to help Isabella, Bella's mother, run the Masons Arms. I will send you what pictures I have over the next two weeks.

Kind regards, Otilia Saxl.



LEFT TO RIGHT— WILLIE WEIR SENR (MASON'S ARMS HOTEL AND MUIRKIRK PICTURE HOUSE)  
WILLIAM WEIR JR, UNKNOWN GIRL AND SHEILA WEIR.

## THE HEID INNS (continued)

Further to my previous article, I was delighted to receive some interesting photographs from Ottilia Saxl regarding her connections to the old Masons Arms Hotel, which over the years had played a big part in the history of the village. One photograph I would like to reproduce here shows John, Grigor and Isabella Smith in a brand new Argyll motor car (which is a bit of history itself). The snap was taken from the Hotel about 1900, and behind the car can be seen the joiners' yard of the local joiner, John Wood. This is where the Bungalow, "Inglewood" was built, and later was the home of the Rowe Family. It is now occupied by Mrs Anna Rowe. The gate to the left would be the entrance to the path leading down to where Rowe's ice-cream factory was built.

This also leads on to another story concerning John Woods. It was his firm who did the joinery work at the building of St. Thomas R.C. Church in 1906. In 1959 dry rot caused considerable damage to the Church interior, and during the repair work when damaged woodwork was being removed, a board with the names of the joiners who were employed at the building of the Church was discovered. The names were Andrew Miller, Thomas Blyth, Alexander Shaw, ——— ?——— McDonald. The men were all employees of John Wood the Muirkirk joiner, whose workshop was situated where now stands Rowe's Garage!





### THIRTY-THREE SIGNS OF RAIN

The hollow winds begin to blow,  
 The clouds look black, the glass is low,  
 The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,  
 The spiders from their cobwebs creep;  
 Last night the sun went pale to bed,  
 The moon in hallows hid her head,  
 The boding shepherd heaves a sight,  
 For, see, a rainbow spans the sky.  
 The walls are damp, the ditches smell,  
 Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.  
 Hark, how the chairs and tables crack!  
 Old Betty's joints are on the rack.  
 Loud quack the ducks, the peacock cry,  
 The distant hills are looking nigh;  
 How restless are the snorting swine,  
 The busy flies disturb the kine.  
 Low o'er the grass the swallow wings,  
 The cricket, too, how loud it sings.  
 Puss on the earth, with velvet paws,  
 Sits smoothing o'er her whiskered jaws.  
 Through the clear stream the fishes rise  
 And nimble catch the incautious flies.

The sheep are seen at early light  
 Cropping the meads with wagger bite.  
 Through June, the air is cold and chill,  
 The blackbird's mellow voice is still;  
 The glow worms, numerous and bright,  
 Illumed the dewy dell last night.  
 At dusk the squalid toad is seen  
 Hopping and crawling o'er the green.  
 The frog has lost its yellow vest,  
 And in a dingy suit is dressed.  
 The leech, disturbed, is newly risen,  
 Quite to the summit of his prison.  
 The whirling winds the dust obeys,  
 And in the rapid eddy plays.  
 My dog, so altered in his taste,  
 Quits mutton bones on grass to feast.  
 And, see you rooks how odd their flight  
 They imitate the gliding kite,  
 And seem precipitate to fall,  
 As if they felt the piercing ball,  
 'Twill surely rain—I see with sorrow,  
 Our jaunt must be put off to-morrow.

## OLD MUIRKIRK RECALLED

On 1st January, 2011, I received an E-Mail from Dorothy Riegal in Bonfield, I.L., U.S.A., looking for information concerning her great grandparents (Annie Johnstone and William Wood, who emigrated to the States in 1908. Dorothy is a second cousin one time removed of Mrs Jean Cannon (nee Davidson). Her great great grandparents were William and Anne (Johnstone) Mathieson who lived in the cottage above the Temperance Hall in Main Street. William was nicknamed "The Laird." Ann's brother, William Johnstone, who had emigrated to America in 1853, came back to Muirkirk to visit his sister in 1895, and the following poem was written to mark the occasion by Margaret park (Glespin) :—

### LINES ON WILLIAM JOHNSTONE'S VISIT TO MUIRKIRK IN 1895 After an absence of 42 Years

He went through the American Civil war, was twice wounded, then honourably discharged, now a citizen of the United States

A native of Muirkirk came back,  
With loving heart, fond hopes, and fears.

When he saw the Furnace Brig,  
With each familiar nook and place,  
He thought he must rest a night  
Before he saw his sister's face.

Industrious, widowed, sore-tried Ann,  
She little knew he was so near;  
Yet all that night she could not sleep  
Thinking she would see someone dear.

He entered quietly within her door,  
"I am your brother from afar."  
"Which of my brothers? O tell me!"  
When on his breast she saw a star.

"My long lost William, thanks to God  
That I have seen you once again—  
Wounded in battle, yet how strong,"  
And then her tears fell down like rain.

Long she had wished to see this sight;  
A brother dear both good and kind;  
Now what a day of pleasure bright—  
A sunbeam to her troubled mind.

For brothers, sisters, and mother dear  
Had crossed the seas and left her here;  
Fondly she trusted Jacob's God,

While patiently she bore her load.  
Hundreds of miles they come to meet,  
But aye they have to part too soon.

None in Muirkirk feels so content,  
He to the New-Year's Breakfast went;  
A second Lincoln met his eye,  
With beauteous lady standing by.

The aged on him their looks do blend;  
The poor all know their truest friend;  
God bless him I for whate'er befall,  
He will perform his part to all.

When William's far beyond the main,  
He'll mind Glenbuck and Howatson's name  
And dear Montgomery of the manse—  
Sweet Minister, so genial, kind;  
While William draws the breath of life  
That New Year's Breakfast fast he will mind.

Immortal Burns came to Muirkirk,  
And spent some nights with kind Laprail;  
He sang the Gala Water songs,  
All night, until the day did break.

God bless Muirkirk, and all her sons,  
And daughters, too, where'er they be;  
Farewell, William, fond kind hearts,  
Are waiting for you across the sea.

Margaret Park

Glespin

## WINTER MEMORIES

The wintry weather just passed of 2010 -11 (January) certainly stirred up the memories of weather conditions in the village in days gone by. Although the present one has been very cold, Muirkirk did not suffer the snow experienced in other parts of the country. A letter from John Ferguson, who as a boy spent his earlier years at The Hall on the Greenock Water, reminded me of the first severe winter I had experienced. This was in 1940 (see Page 191), and it was reportedly the worst winter of the century then. Here is John Ferguson's experience: —

“It seems to have been the coldest one for many years. I can remember the Rock Pool being almost frozen over, probably 1940-41. That same winter John McKerrow from Burnfoot Farm had been visiting Armstrong's at the Forkings one night. A snowstorm had started before he left Armstrong's, but he insisted he could find his way home to Burnfoot. Nobody knows where he lost his way that night, apparently he wasn't missed until 8 a.m. next day. About this time (it was a Saturday), Tom (my brother) and I had set off to track rabbits in the drifted snow in a field directly opposite the hay shed, on the other side of the Greenock. We had caught one rabbit and had decided to move to the hill above the Rock Pool. Soon we spotted what we thought was a sheep “couped” in a deep drift. Imagine our surprise to discover it was a man, and that was John McKerrow. He was in a bad way and could not walk. I decided to hurry back home, and alerted our father. Tom had stayed with John. As I had told my father that the “patient” could not walk he sensibly took our big wheel-barrow to do the transporting. On arrival at our place, our mother filled a tin bath with lukewarm water and worked on his legs until he could stand up. A strong toddy had helped the recovery along. I was despatched to Burnfoot to let them know where he was, just as they were organising search parties. No one can work out how he crossed the Greenock Water without being aware. His younger brother, Frank McKerrow, came to collect him and they walked home together.” Quite an experience for two young boys.



THE HALL FARMS RUINS

**MUIRKIRK BIRTHS**

As published in "Cairntable Echoes,"

<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Address/Place of Birth</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Year</i>
ADAMS, H.	Marg. Goldstone	Dumbarton	4th August	Daughter	1961
ALEXANDER, George	Wife	Johnstone	13th December	Son	1954
ALISON, James C.	Wife	Main Street	10th April	Son	1917
ANDERSON, William	Marion Millar	Glasgow	17th April	Son	1946
ANDERSON, William	Wife	Irvine	29th April	Daughter	1951
ANDERSON, Willie	Sadie		14th April	Son	1966
+ANDERSON, Willie	Sadie		4th March	Daughter	1972
ANGUS, William	Mary Rowan	28 Middlefield Drive		Daughter	1945
BAILEY, Hugh	Janette Millar		5th March	Daughter	1973
BAIN, Andrew	Marion Stoddart		13th January	Daughter	1964
BAIN, James	Isabella Lawson	Irvine	20th June	Son	1949
BAIN, John	Wife	School Row, Glenbuck	18th September	Son	1907
BALLANTYNE, George	Mary Jack		24th August	Son	1973
BARR, Alex.	Agnes McLaren	Irvine	28th March	Son	1954
BARR, Sydney	Nan Sinclair	Ayr	25th January	Daughter	1950
BARR, Sydney	Wife	Thornycroft	14th May	Son	1952
BARRIE, Dan	Jean Anderson		20th December	Daughter	1971
BARRIE, Jackie	Agnes McLatchie	Mansefield	3rd April	Daughter	1945
BARRIE, James	Wife		26th April	Son	1962
BARRIE, John	Wife	Kames Row	29th April	Son	1950
BARRIE, Thomas	Janie Baillie	Kilmarnock	12th May	Son	1953
BARRIE, Tom	Margaret Leslie		30th April	Son	1974
BARRIE, William	Kathleen Betany	Stockport	16th September	Son	1947
BARRIE, William	Wife	New Zealand	22nd September	Son	1951
BECK, Angus	Janette Murdoch			Daughter	1962
BECK, John	Nan Findlay		20th June	Daughter	1968
BELL, Charles	Wife	Schoolhouse, Main St.	21st June	Daughter	1908
BELL, Charles	Wife	Irvine	5th February	Son	1956
BELL, Charles	Wife	Dewsbury	6th December	Son	1957
BELL, Charles	Wife	Drewsbury	22nd April	Twins	1959
BELL, J.A.	Wife	U.S.A.	9th May	Daughter	1925
BIRRELL, Robert	Maggie Hogg	U.S.A.	6th July	Daughter	1925
BIRRELL, Robert	Wife	U.S.A.	18th June	Daughter	1928
BIRRELL, Robert	Wife	U.S.A.	14th January	Son	1930
BLACK, Ted	Wife		13th April	Son	1968
BLAIKIE, D.	Wife	Oban	27th February	Daughter	1931
BLAIKIE, David	Wife	Oban	27th January	Son	1933
BLAIR, Daniel	Margaret Wharrie		26th August	Daughter	1968
BOLAND, Dick	Caroline Graham		13th October	Daughter	1967
BOLAND, Richard	Caroline Graham			Daughter	1965
BONE, Frank	Jenny McKean		17th March	Son	1962
BONE, Hugh	Wife	Grasshill Row, Glenbuck	31st August	Daughter	1907
BONE, John	Wife	Smallburn	17th June	Daughter	1915
BONE, John	Wife	Beaconhill	29th March	Son	1928
BONE, William	Wife		7th January	Daughter	1970
BONE, William	Irene Scott		19th March	Daughter	1973
BORTHWICK, Laurence	Anne Calswell		5th July	Son	1970
BORTHWICK, Walter	Wife	Irvine	9th July	Daughter	1950
BOURNE, Donald	Nan Stacey		1st September	Daughter	1961
BOYES, Thomas	Wife	Blackridge	29th September	Daughter	1931

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

BRADFORD, Bill	Ellen Johnstone		19th January	Daughter	1973
BRADFORD, David	Anne Wharrie		24th April	Son	1965
BRADFORD, David	Anne Wharrie		17th August	Daughter	1968
BRADFORD, George	Nancy Todd		12th August	Daughter	1967
BRADFORD, George	Nancy Todd		13th August	Son	1971
BRADFORD, Robert	Mary McSkimming	Bridge of Allan	12th July	Son	1954
BRADFORD, Robert	Wife	Stenhouseuir	18th June	Son	1955
BRADFORD, Tom	Nancy Kennedy		11th August	Daughter	1973
BRADY, Michael	Wife	Manse Row, Glenbuck	14th August	Son	1907
BROWN, Alan	Marion Harvey	Kilwinning	7th July	Daughter	1959
BROWN, J. A.	Jean Findlay	Northampton	12th July	Son	1955
BROWN, Jack	Wife		23rd October	Son	1924
BROWN, John	Margaret Parker		25th December	Son	1964
BROWN, Richard	Margaret Simpson	Kilmarnock	22nd May	Son	1959
BROWN, Richard	Margaret Simpson			Son	1964
BROWN, Wallace	Wife		20th September	Daughter	1960
BUCHANAN, Neil	Wife	Bridge Street	28th May	Son	1911
BUCHANAN, Neil	Wife	Wellwood Street	24th May	Son	1920
BUCHANAN, Robert	Wife	Harkness Buildings	17th November	Daughter	1930
BUCHANAN, Robert	Wife	127 Main Street	16th April	Daughter	1932
BULL, Ronald	Mary Moran	New Zealand	4th September	Daughter	1947
BUTLER, John	Betty Little	Kilmarnock	19th June	Daughter	1959
BUTLER, John	Betty Little	Glenrothes	2nd July	Son	1962
CALDOW, W.	Margaret Gilchrist	Irvine	23rd May	Daughter	1949
CALLAN, Jimmy	Kath. Smetherhem			Twins	1973
CAMERON, R.	Wife	U.S.A.	21st May	Son	1933
CAMPBELL, John	Wife	14th October	14th October	Daughter	1907
CAMPBELL, Peter	Wife		5th July	Daughter	1944
CASAGRANDA, Don	Wife		13th December	Daughter	1971
CAVEN, Francis	Margaret Mitchell		27th November	Daughter	1973
CHAPMAN, William	Wife	Dunaskin	30th September	Son	1942
CLARK, John	Wife	Crossflatt	27th July	Daughter	1932
CLARK, John	Betty Kennedy	Douglas	26th November	Daughter	1949
CLOSE, R.	Wife		30th November	Son	1929
CONN, David	Hilda Brown		3rd August	Son	1964
CONNELL, Robert	Wife	2 Kames Row	5th March	Son	1938
CONNIS, E. J.	Wife	Main Street	18th October	Son	1909
CONNOR, John	Ann Fleming		5th August	Son	1964
COOK, Daniel	Wife	Kilmarnock	14th September	Daughter	1957
COWAN, Alex.	Margaret Murdoch	Kilmarnock	14th August	Son	1962
COWAN, Ian	Wife		3rd November	Son	1969
COYLE, Bill	Marie Boland		3rd July	Daughter	1972
CRAIG, Andrew	Margaret Brown		2nd September	Son	1972
CRAWFORD, Norman	Isabel Angus	Irvine	10th July	Daughter	1946
CRONIN, M.	Wife	Irvine	30th July	Daughter	1961
CROSBIE, James	Sylvia Ellis	Co. Durham	10th October	Twin Sons	1957
CROSBIE, Jlm	Sylvia	Gateshead	22nd March	Son	1961
CULLEY, William	Jenny Brown	Kilwinning	14th November	Son	1949
CUMMING, John	Jane Bone	Carluke	3rd April	Daughter	1954
CURRIE, David	Wife	Station Cotts., Glenbuck	21st November	Son	1907
CURRIE, James	Marjorie Duncan		15th February	Daughter	1969
CURRIE, James	Marjorie Duncan		14th October	Son	1971
DALZIEL, John	Lottie Mathieson	Douglas	26th July	Daughter	1948
DAVIDSON	Wife	Schoolhouse, Muirkirk	6th July	Son	1941
DAVIDSON, George	Annie Hanlon		17th July	Son	1973
DAVIDSON, J. W.	Basilla Logie		23rd February	Daughter	1964
DAVIDSON, James	Basilla Loggie			Daughter	1958
DAVIDSON, Joe	Wife	Manchester	6th January	Son	1958
DAVIDSON, R.	Maisie Hastings	Glasgow	18th April	Daughter	1947

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

DAVIDSON, Thomas	Wife	Australia	2nd December	Daughter	1930
DE MASCIO, Con De	Wife	Main Street	6th September	Daughter	1909
DEENEY, Michael	Wife	2 Kames Row	20th April	Daughter	1941
DEMPSTER, Alex.	Jean Muir		20th October	Son	1971
DEMPSTER, J.	Wife	Irvine	18th March	Son	1951
DEMPSTER, Thomas	Wife	Ladybank Row, Glenbuck	15th September	Son	1907
DEMPSTER, Tom	Wife		11th June	Daughter	1973
DEMPSTER, William	Wife	Bridge Street	4th October	Daughter	1907
DEVINE, William	Nan McGaw	Kilmarnock	30th November	Daughter	1948
DEWAR, John	Marjorie Marshall		19th October	Son	1970
DEWAR, John	Marjorie Marshall		15th March	Son	1973
DICKSON, Thomas	Betty White	Irvine	23rd October	Daughter	1954
DIRAM, Robert	Wife	Dumfries	7th October	Daughter	1952
DODDS, James	Edith Glaves	Scarborough	3rd April	Daughter	1945
DODDS, William	Eleanor Hazle		27th October	Son	1971
DONES, Mr	Wife	Station Cottage	18th May	Daughter	1944
DOSWELL, G.	Isabel Weir	Norman's Bay	4th September	Daughter	1946
DOUGLAS, William	Helen Kirkwood	Kilmarnock	17th May	Son	1950
DRIFE, Robert	Mattie Murray		9th June	Son	1960
DRIFE, Robert	Wife		27th September	Daughter	1964
DUNLOP, D.	Wife	Pollokshaws	25th August	Daughter	1935
EASTON, Ronnie	Agnes Orr		1st October	Daughter	1967
EATON, D.	Margaret Barrie	Kirkgreen	8th February	Daughter	1945
EATON, Douglas	Peggy Barrie	Canada	19th December	Son	1947
ELSE, Stephen	May Stark		4th July	Son	1972
ELSE, Steve	May Stark		14th April	Daughter	1969
FABER, A. J.	Wife	Thornyflat	5th April	Daughter	1952
FERGUSON, Ivy	Wife	Jubilee Row, Glenbuck	21st September	Daughter	1907
FINDLAY, Peter	Wife		16th May	Son	1968
FINDLAY, Peter	Doreen Rowe		25th March	Daughter	1969
FINDLAY, Thomas	Wife	Kilwinning	15th February	Son	1944
FINLAY, W.	Margaret Paterson	Edinburgh	7th February	Son	1945
FLEMING, Andrew	Mary Muirhead	Irvine	22nd September	Daughter	1956
FLEMING, H. B.	Eleanor Lochhead	Irvine	29th December	Son	1961
FLEMING, Milton	Eleanor Lochhead	Irvine	29th December	Son	1962
FORGIE, H.	Elizabeth logie			Daughter	1965
FREW, J.	Wife		7th March	Son	1964
FREW, James	Marion Cruickshank		20th August	Daughter	1961
FREW, William	Marion	Irvine	22nd August	Daughter	1953
FULTON, William	Rena	Irvine	12th January	Son	1959
FYFE, Hugh	Margaret Muncie		4th August	Daughter	1970
FYFE, Hugh	Wife		25th September	Daughter	1972
GALLOWAY, Sam	Mary Easton		3rd April	Daughter	1966
GAVIN, J.	Mary Marshall	54 Springhill Terrace	24th November	Son	1947
GAVIN, James	Wife	Ayr	13th January	Daughter	1944
GAW, David	Mary Masterton		4th December	Daughter	1966
GIBSON, Gilbert	Crawford Davidson		29th January	Daughter	1974
GIBSON, Robert	Helen Johnstone		24th August	Son	1964
GIRVAN, Allan	Annie Mitchell		9th December	Daughter	1963
GIRVAN, Robert	Wife		16th October	Daughter	1969
GIRVAN, Robert	Wife		25th December	Son	1972
GLASHAN, A. J.	Wife	Schoolhouse	4th July	Twins	1960
GOLDIE, John	Wife	Ipswich	28th June	Daughter	1952
GOURLAY, Thomas	Wife	Girvan, Ayrshire	17th July	Daughter	1916
GRAHAM, Jim	Anne Aitken		20th March	Son	1973
GRANT, T.	Sarah Findlay	Ayr	23rd August	Son	1947
GRANT, T.	Sarah Findlay	South Africa	4th July	Son	1949
GRANT, T.	Wife	South Africa	15th March	Son	1951
GRAY, Thomas	Eunice Ridgway	Irvine	18th April	Son	1946

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

HALL, T.	Mary McBride	Glashow	9th October	Son	1955
HAMILTON, Aircraftsman	Wife	Fleming Cottage		Son	1941
HAMILTON, Robin	Wife		15th October	Daughter	1967
HAMILTON, Ronald	Janette Girdwood		16th December	Daughter	1970
HAMILTON, Ronald	Janette Girdwood		9th August	Daughter	1973
HANSON, J.	Rita Wilson	Birmingham	31st August	Son	1950
HARKNESS, Daniel	Wife	New Zealand		Daughter	1930
HASTIE, William	Wife	Gainsburgh	10th June	Daughter	1943
HASTINGS, William	Wife	Douglas	14th August	Son	1943
HAUGH, W.	Wife	Stirling	12th September	Son	1951
HAZEL, A.	Mary Harrison	Irvine	5th June	Daughter	1949
HAZLE, Alex.	Wife	High Street, Glenbuck	30th October	Son	1927
HAZLE, James	Mima Robb	Douglas	20th August	Son	1948
HAZLE, James	Margaret Cook		21st April	Daughter	1970
HENDERSON, Fit.-Lieut.	Vera Ware	Ayr	17th November	Daughter	1944
HENDERSON, Fit.-Sgt.	Vera Ware	Sunderland	24th October	Daughter	1939
HENDERSON, Fit.-Lieut.	Vera Ware	South Africa	6th September	Son	1943
HENDERSON, Rev. John	Wife	The Manse	30th September	Daughter	1915
HIBBERD, Charlie	Wife	Burnside	4th November	Son	1907
HIBBERD, G.	May Adamson	Glasgow	23rd February	Son	1945
HIGGINS, James	Elizabeth Mackin			Daughter	1964
HIGGINS, James	Elizabeth Mackin		23rd June	Daughter	1966
HILL, Tom	Molly Miller	Bulawayo, Rhodesia		Daughter	1958
HILL, William	Isabel Samson	Irvine	15th June	Son	1953
HILLDITCH, John	Sal Samson	Irvine	4th July	Daughter	1959
HINDSHAW, A.	Wife	Masons Arms Hotel	22nd July	Daughter	1947
HODGE, Robert	Ellen Neal		21st August	Daughter	1963
HOLLAND, George	Wife		30th November	Son	1971
HOUSTON, John	Betty McCulloch		14th August	Son	1964
HOWELL, M.	Helen Findlay			Son	1968
HOWIE, George	Ina Henderson	Glasgow	19th June	Daughter	1945
HUGHES, Wiliam	Aileen Ford		21st June	Daughter	1967
HUHTALA, Hans	Wife	U.S.A.	8th July	Son	1941
HUHTALA, Hans	Wife	U.S.A.		Daughter	1943
HUNTER, George	Wife	South Africa	3rd September	Daughter	1936
HUNTER, George S.	Wife	South Africa	20th March	Son	1935
JAMIESON, A.	Nancy Middleton	Irvine	6th September	Son	1953
JAMIESON, William	Wife	Bankend	1st February	Daughter	1949
JAMIESON, William	Wife	Bankend Farm	6th November	Son	1950
JOHNSTONE, Hugh	Betty Park		7th December	Daughter	1967
JOHNSTONE, James	Jeannie Bain	45 Glasgow Road	8th May	Son	1947
JOHNSTONE, Sam	Maisie Gilfillan	Irvine	31st July	Son	1954
KAY, Harold	Margaret Lawson	Lightshaw Farm	16th June	Daughter	1948
KAY, Harold	Wife	Chapelton	14th May	Son	1952
KEAN, John	Wife	Glasgow	7th August	Son	1951
KILPATRICK, John	Wife	Garronhill	25th September	Daughter	1907
KING, Christopher	Wife	Glasgow	27th October	Son	1946
KIRKLAND, J.	Wife	Birminham	22nd April	Daughter	1946
KIRKLAND, John	Wife	Birmingham	25th January	Son	1942
KIRKLAND, Robert	Wife		10th March	Daughter	1971
KIRKWOOD, Charles	Wife		12th November	Daughter	1964
KIRKWOOD, Tom	Wife	Kilmarnock	15th April	Son	1963
KNOTT, Eric	Wife	Edinburgh	9th June	Son	1920
LANG, James	Isa McKenzie	Rhodesia	20th April	Son	1962
LAW, James Munro	Wife	Main Street	8th September	Daughter	1907
LAW, Robert	Isabelle Bain	Kilamarnock	2nd October	Daughter	1954
LAWRIE, James	Bess Fulton	Irvine	12th November	Son	1958
LAWSON, Jim	Margaret Bickerton			Son	1968
LEES, James	Jean Beck	Kilmarnock	5th January	Son	1958

LENNOX, Jim	Mima Breckney		14th March	Son	1972
LITTLE, Roger	Mary Guthrie		28th October	Son	1966
LITTLE, Roger	Mary Guthrie		14th September	Daughter	1972
LOCHHEAD, James	Wife		24th July	Daughter	1960
LOCHHEAD, James	Margaret Smith	Kilmarnock	3rd January	Daughter	1962
LOGGIE, Allan	Wife	Rose Cottage	18th November	Daughter	1910
LOGGIE, James	Wife	Thornyflat	16th March	Daughter	1951
LOGGIE, R. F.	Wife		25th March	Son	1937
LOGIE, A.	Jessie Smith	Buckreddan	27th July	Son	1961
LONSDALE, T.	Wife	Glasgow	11th September	Son	1934
LYLE, James	Wife	Kilmarnock	18th November	Daughter	1924
MACDOUGALL, Mr	Wife		15th November	Son	1934
MACKAY, William	Margaret Haugh	Irvine	16th June	Daughter	1955
MARSHALL, John	Wife	Irvine	20th December	Son	1944
MARTIN, Ross	Wife	Glasgow	17th February	Son	1958
MARTIN, William	Mary Addison		12th December	Daughter	1947
MATTHEWS, Samuel	Wife	1 Wellwood Avenue	14th February	Daughter	1933
MAURER, Eddie	Kathleen Boland		27th April	Son	1974
McARTHUR, Duncan	Wife	105 Smallburn	29th May	Daughter	1943
McATTEE, Reginald	Sarah Boland	Auchinleck	31st July	Son	1949
McBRIDE, Rodger	Nancy Monaghan		27th November	Son	1960
McCALL, Alex	Margaret Bone	Sudbury, Canada	8th January	Daughter	1967
McCALL, Alex.	Margaret Bone	Sudbury, Canada	18th September	Daughter	1959
McCALL, Alex.	Margaret Bone	Sudbury, Canada	9th May	Daughter	1963
McCALL, Alex.	Margaret Bone		17th June	Daughter	1973
McCALL, John	Wife	Renfrew	14th March	Daughter	1951
McCARTNEY, Alex.	Nancy Alston	Irvine	24th January	Daughter	1958
McCARTNEY, J. C.	Wife		3rd April	Daughter	1949
McCARTNEY, James	Mildred Hayen	Canada	27th September	Son	1950
McCARTNEY, William	Wife	Ardrossan	21st October	Daughter	1925
McCARTNEY, William	Wife	Ardrossan	7th August	Daughter	1928
McCOLL, J	Wife	Edinburgh	25th March	Daughter	1951
McCOLL, John	Jessie Crosbie	Edinburgh	30th March	Daughter	1947
McCULLOCH, Robert	Wife	Ayr	7th September	Son	1939
McDONALD, James	Wife	Scott's Buildings	23rd May, 1908	Daughter	1908
McDOUGALL, Duncan	Jean Bradford		18th November	Son	1971
McDOUGALL, William	Anne Dempster	Hedgegrove	29th December	Son	1944
McGAREY, Patrick	Wife	Main Street	29th September	Son	1907
McGARRY, Neil	Irene McCulloch		30th December		1967
McGARVA, Don	Margaret Brown		3rd May	Son	1965
McGARVA, Don	Margaret Brown		9th January	Daughter	1969
McGARVA, Don	Margaret Brown		2nd September	Son	1972
McGARVA, Gilbert	Margaret Tait	Douglas	18th October	Daughter	1946
McGARVA, James	Joan Borthwick	Irvine	12th December	Son	1950
McINTYRE, Alex.	Wife	U.S.A.	29th November	Son	1930
McKENZIE, John	Wife	22 Kames Row	4th November	Son	1907
McKINLAY, William	Wife	Albert Place, Main Street	29th August	Son	1907
McLEOD, John	Jean Williamson	Glasgow	5th July	Son	1949
McMANUS, Alex.	Wife	Gaswork Cottage	17th August	Son	1944
McMEEKAN, James	Jean Caslow	Dalbeattie	31st August	Son	1925
McMEEKIN, James	Wife	Dalbeattie		Daughter	1928
McMORRAN, John	Barbara Bone	Kilwinning	3rd January	Daughter	1959
McMORRAN, John	Wife		25th October	Daughter	1963
McMURTRIE, John	Jenny McGillivray	Irvine	7th April	Son	1950
McNINCH, Andrew	Wife	Douglas	24th February	Daughter	1944
McPHAIL, Hugh	Margaret Brown	Glasgow	29th October	Daughter	1948
MERCER, William	Ethel Wyper		20th October	Daughter	1970
MILLAR, Andrew	Wife	U.S.A.	1st February	Daughter	1932
MILLAR, Hugh	Wife	Buckreddan	16th September	Daughter	1961

MITCHELL, Archie	Wife	Ayr	27th October	Daughter	1943
MITCHELL, Billy	Doris Whitefield		22nd July	Daughter	1973
MITCHELL, Blythe	Nora Baillie		4th October	Son	1966
MITCHELL, Ian	Molly Bone	Buckreddan	24th January	Daughter	1959
MITCHELL, Jim	Wife		7th August	Daughter	1972
MOCHRIE, William	Wife	Hedge Grove	31st March	Son	1944
MOCHRIE, William	Annie Johnstone	150 Main Street	9th October	Son	1947
MOLYNEAUX, William	Grace Loggie	Long Island, U.S.A.	30th May	Son	1953
MONTGOMERY, J.	Ena Da Prato	Prestwick	6th May	Daughter	1949
MORELAND, Hugh	Wife	Garronhill	25th September	Son	1907
MORLEY, Edwin	Nee Wallace		17th March	Son	1962
MORRISON, George	Wife	Eglinton Arms Hotel	10th October	Son	1907
MORRISON, Robert	Davina Park		24th January	Son	1974
MORRISON, William	Wife		14th January	Son	1967
MORRISON, James	Wife	Burnbrae Cottage	10th November	Daughter	1907
MUIR, David	Wife	Gibson's Pl., Glenbuck	8th March	Son	1942
MUIR, John	Wife		9th March	Daughter	1971
MURDOCH, Ronald	Jessie Smith	16 Lapraik Avenue	2nd June	Son	1953
MURRAY, William	Catherine Rennie		18th May	Son	1955
NEIL, Archie	Rena Loy		12th April	Son	1970
NEIL, David	Wife		22nd May	Son	1967
NEIL, David	Wife		12th July	Son	1969
NEILL, Stephen	Josephine Boland		19th September	Son	1960
NEILL, Stephen	Josephine Boland		5th May	Daughter	1962
NEILSON, A.	Elaine Davis		27th March	Son	1969
NICOL, Alexander	Wife	Kilmarnock	18th March	Daughter	1940
NICOL, Mr	Wife	Picture House, Muirkirk	5th April	Son	1941
NICOLL, G.	Isobel Hogg	Broughty Ferry	17th January	Daughter	1948
NICOLL, G.	Wife	Broughty Ferry	2nd October	Daughter	1951
NICOLL, Gorrie	Isobel Robertson	Broughty Ferry	10th July	Daughter	1955
NICOLSON, Alec	Janette Rowe		28th July	Son	1966
NICOLSON, Campbell	Jeanette Rowe		3rd March		1962
NIMMO, George	Margaret Barr	Hamilton		Son	1954
NIMMO, Robert	Wife	Irvine	23rd October	Son	1952
NISBET, James	Wife	Council Blds, Glenbuck	17th February	Son	1932
NORMINTON, Robert	Isobel Bell	Ontario	23rd May	Son	1956
NORMINTON, Robert	Isobel Bell		24th October	Daughter	1960
O'DONNELL, Patrick	Theresa Boland	21 Midhouse Row	15th October	Twin Son	1949
O'NEIL, Johnny	Theresa Rattray	Nuneaton	27th November	Daughter	1954
ORMISTON, Douglas	Betty Samson	Edinburgh	7th December	Son	1947
ORMISTON, Douglas	Betty Samson	New York	18th May	Daughter	1949
OTTOWAY, A.	Wife		15th October	Daughter	1929
PALMER, John	Annie Murdoch	Blyths Blgs, Glenbuck	12th April	Son	1945
PALMER, T.	Wife	117 Henderson Drive	19th August	Daughter	1956
PALMER, Thomas	Marion Gray	Irvine	3rd November	Daughter	1950
PARK, Andrew	Irene Kean		24th July	Daughter	1968
PARK, David	Nancy Hughes	Motherwell	11th February	Daughter	1945
PARKER, Hugh	Ann Goldie	Irvine	12th October	Daughter	1953
PATERSON, Andrew	Dorothy Hannah		13th December	Son	1970
PETT, Richard	Wife	Surrey	23rd September	Son	1941
PETT, Richard	Wife	London	14th December	Daughter	1943
PHILIPS, James	Wife	Auldhouseburn	23rd January	Daughter	1914
POLLOCK, John	Wife	Glaisnock St., Cumnock	9th March	Son	1913
POOLE, L.	Annie Johnstone	Canada	25th June	Son	1947
PRINGLE, James	Wife	Paisley	14th April	Daughter	1944
PURDIE, David	Wife		4th March	Son	1971
PURDIE, Jim	Wife		28th January	Son	1968
PURDIE, Robert	Wife	Bridge Street	8th October	Daughter	1907
RAE, J.	Jessie Torbet	Dumfries	14th April	Son	1948

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

REED, Edward	Christine Holland			Daughter	1971
REID, C.	Wife	Irvine	25th July	Daughter	1947
REID, H.	Wife	41 New Terrace	27th November	Daughter	1944
RICHMOND, C.	Agnes Lindsay	Greenockmains	25th December	Son	1945
ROBERTS, Eilfred	Wife	Hamilton	5th July	Daughter	1944
ROBERTS, Wilfred	Wife	Hamilton	11th June	Son	1951
ROBSON, George	Maureen Bain		1st July	Daughter	1972
ROSS, A.	Wife	Irvine	7th May	Son	1951
ROSS, George	May Jamieson	Edinburgh	4th July	Son	1962
ROSS, James	Wife	Cumnock	1st March	Son	1931
ROSS, John	Wife	12 Wellwood Street	12th June	Daughter	1932
ROSS, John	Jessie Mansfield	Glasgow	28th March	Daughter	1950
ROSS, R.	Wife	Springburn	26th May	Son	1942
ROSS, William	Wife		17th January	Daughter	1973
ROWE, Edward	Wife	Dumbarton	4th October	Daughter	1940
ROWE, Edward	Wife	Dumbarton	16th March	Son	1944
ROWE, Ralph	Edna	Glasgow	24th December	Son	1956
ROWE, Thomas	Wife	Madeleine Place	31st October	Daughter	1907
RUSSELL, James	Isobel Birrell	Irvine	16th July	Son	1950
RUSSELL, Nelson	Mima Donald	Irvine	17th June	Son	1951
RUSSELL, Tom	Helen McMurdo		11th February	Daughter	1973
RUSSELL, William	Wife	Smallburn	14th October	Son	1907
RUSSELL, William	Wife	Muirkirk	7th March	Son	1944
SALMON, J.	Wife	Irvine	14th April	Son	1944
SAMSON, Andrew	Agnes Smith	Irvine	5th June	Daughter	1966
SAMSON, David	Jean Guthrie	Irvine	7th June	Daughter	1959
SAMSON, David	Jean Guthrie		5th December	Daughter	1961
SAMSON, Hugh	Bunty Cluckie	Vancouver	29th May	Son	1958
SANDERSON, T.	Wife	Toronto, Canada	22nd April	Daughter	1929
SAXE, Mr	Sheila Weir	Edinburgh	12th April	Daughter	1948
SELKIRK	Wife	7 Midhouse Terrace	21st March	Son	1909
SEY, H.	Nettie Muncie	London	24th September	Daughter	1947
SEYMOUR, Lieut.	Wife	Inglewood	25th January	Son	1915
SHACKLETON, S.	Wife	South Africa		Son	1951
SHANKLY, John	Wife	Manse Place, Glenbuck	21st October	Daughter	1907
SHANKLY, Robert	Wife		27th June	Son	1937
SHARPE, Cecil	Wife	Kilmarnock	8th March	Daughter	1951
SHAW, James	Wife	40 Middlefield Drive	24th September	Daughter	1944
SHIELDS, Hugh	Margaret Peat	Kilmarnock	3rd August	Daughter	1946
SHORT, Hugh	Selina Holmes	Newcastle	31st May	Son	1946
SLOAN, Andrew	Wife	Ayr	30th June	Daughter	1928
SMITH, A.	Wife	Crawford	22nd May	Son	1933
SMITH, Billy	Wife			Daughter	1964
SMITH, J.	Helen Lawson	Forfar	15th May	Daughter	1953
SMITH, James	Wife	Irvine	4th January	Son	1949
SMITH, James	Wife	Irvine	6th July	Son	1950
SMITH, Ronald	Annie Auld		8th October	Daughter	1972
SPENCE, John	Wife	Douglas	25th September	Son	1952
STEELE, A.	Wife	Bonnyrigg	11th July	Son	1943
STEELE, J.	Wife	Gainsborough	26th March	Daughter	1951
STEELE, Peter	Wife	Springhill Terrace	19th September	Son	1907
STEIN, James	Wife	Ivy Cottage, Smallburn	11th June	Daughter	1919
STEVENSON, William	Jean Smith		3rd January	Daughter	1974
STEWART, Malcolm	Elizabeth Bradford		5th February	Daughter	1967
STEWART, Malcolm	Elizabeth Bradford		31st August	Son	1973
STEWART, Thomas	Wife	20 Victoria Buildings	29th February	Daughter	1948
STIRLING, John	Betty Davidson	Douglas Place	13th June	Son	1948
STRICKLAND, Peter	Wife	Douglas	17th August	Son	1958
STRICKLAND, Tom	Wife		26th June	Daughter	1969

## CAIRNTABLE RECOLLECTIONS

TAIT, Andrew	Wife	Midlands	19th September	Son	1944
TAIT, Robert	Mary Cosgrove	Manchester	17th December	Daughter	1962
TAIT, Robert C.	Wife	Cowdenbeath	7th August	Twins	1920
TAYLOR, George	Betty Dunsmore	Irvine	22nd April	Son	1951
TAYLOR, James	Margt. Thomson	Albert Place	18th February	Son	1933
TAYLOR, John	Madge Logie	Irvine	15th February	Daughter	1951
TAYLOR, John	Madge Logie	Irvine	2nd May	Son	1954
TAYLOR, M. A.	Wife	19 Old Terrace	7th January	Son	1924
TAYLOR, Robert	Wife	Kilmarnock	9th October	Daughter	1953
TAYLOR, Roger	Sandra Kirkland		1st January	Son	1973
TELFORD, Fred	Wife	Australia	22nd December	Son	1933
THOMSON, Alex.	Wife	New Cumnock	24th August	Daughter	1930
THOMSON, Allan	Elizabeth		17th December	Son	1972
THOMSON, James	Wife	Irvine	18th March	Son	1944
THOMSON, John	Wife	Aikron, Canada	14th July	Daughter	1922
THOMSON, John	Kathleen D'arcy	Irvine	18th February	Son	1951
TILSTONE, W.	Angela Marshall		2nd September	Daughter	19770
TILSTONE, W. J.	Angela Marshall		1st November	Daughter	1972
TOWNSHEAD, George	Jenny Crawford	Kilmarnock	30th September	Son	1953
TROTTER,	Violet Wilson	Irvine	4th May	Daughter	1947
TWYMAN, J. B.	Agnes Dempster	Ramsgate	13th February	Son	1945
VALENTINE, Billy	Sheila Mackin		23rd May	Son	1972
VALLANCE, George	Wife	Stableyard	20th February	Son	1943
VALLANCE, George	Wife	Stableyard	28th February	Son	1947
VALLANCE, Matthew	Gloria Welch		26th June	Daughter	1969
VALLANCE, Robert	Wife	Ivy Cottage, Smallburn	22nd October	Son	1919
VAN DER REE, Peter	Laura Rowe		20th May	Son	1960
WALKER, R	Margaret Holden	Irvine	12th March	Son	1957
WALLACE, Alex.	Wife	Dalziel's Bgs., Glenbuck	19th October	Daughter	1907
WALLACE, John	Ina Johnstone	Ayr	21st May	Daughter	1946
WALLACE, William	Wife	7 Victoria Buildings	4th August	Daughter	1908
WARDEN, Robert	Wife		26th March	Son	1973
WARDEN, Thomas	Rhoda Crosbie	Irvine	19th May	Son	1946
WARNOCK, Danny	Mary Davidson		6th January	Daughter	1964
WEIR, J. S.	Wife	Ceylon	20th August	Son	1935
WEIR, R.	Wife	Dingwall		Daughter	1959
WEIR, Walter	Helen Forrest	Pitlochry	25th December	Daughter	1947
WILSON, C.	Belle Morton	Kilmarnock	18th April	Daughter	1946
WILSON, J.	Wife	Barleith	12th October	Daughter	1948
WILSON, James	Wife	Glasgow	27th May	Son	1953
WILSON, John P.	Ena Findlay		12th December	Daughter	1960
WILSON, Logie	Wife	Irvine	18th March	Son	1945
WILSON, R.	Etta Parker	Irvine	6th May	Daughter	1954
WILSON, Robert	Bett Loggie	Irvine	16th March	Son	1952
WILSON, T.	Agnes Livingstone	Irvine	14th January	Daughter	1959
WILSON, Thomas	Wife		14th February	Daughter	1937
WYLIE, George	Linda Watson		24th January	Daughter	1974
WYLIE, Lorimer	Eleanor Hazle		7th December	Daughter	1968
WYPER, Chris.	Wife	Irvine	20th December	Son	1951
WYPER, Peter	Ray Logie	Irvine	18th March	Daughter	1945
YOUNG, Brian	Wife		20th January	Daughter	1973
YOUNG, John	Wife	Springhill House	4th September	Daughter	1909
YOUNG, John	Wife	Canada	17th January	Son	1921
YOUNG, Robert	Wife	Parsonstown House	16th April	Son	1914



## THE MOTIVE POWER OF INDUSTRY

A lot has been written over the years about Glenbuck Dam, and it always held a soft spot in the hearts of the local inhabitants, mainly because it was viewed as a local beauty spot in its own right. But, of course, it should always be remembered that this picturesque location was created my man to harness the power of water for industrial use, and below I reprint an article from the "Muirkirk Advertiser" which throws some light on its history:—

### GLENBUCK DAM

The River Ayr rises in the hills to the north of Glenbuck Loch, a picturesque sheet of water situated near Muirkirk. The loch was created in 1802 by James Finlay and Company to provide a reservoir for their Catrine mills, and another artificial reservoir, 21 acres in extent, was constructed a short distance downstream in 1808 to give more storage capacity.

(1) The second reservoir is now disused, but Glenbuck Loch still stores water for the Catrine generating system. The first works to use water power below the reservoirs was Muirkirk Ironworks, founded in 1787 by a group of Scottish wrought iron users.

(2) The site of the works was determined by the availability of a suitable fall of water, and the alternatives of an earth dam 150 yards wide and 30 feet high providing storage and a short lade to the wheel, and a long water cut on the south bank, were both considered.

(3) The latter course was adopted, and although a steam blowing-engine was erected, when a second furnace was contemplated in 1788, the building of a water-powered blowing-engine was again discussed.

(4) Eventually a water forge was built to process the crude wrought iron from the puddling furnaces.

(5) An earlier wheel, constructed to drain the coal near the furnace bank, was fed from the Garpel Water, a tributary of the Ayr.

(6) A third wheel to drain 'the first Air pit on Catchy Burn level' was authorised on 22 December 1789, and tenders sought. The pit was to be 25 fathoms deep, the 'working barrel' of the pump nine inches and the 'common pipes' ten inches in diameter.

(7) The long lade from Ashaw Burn to the furnace bank was wide enough and deep enough for it to be used as a canal connecting various ironstone and coal pits with the furnaces, and it continued to be used at least until the late nineteenth century. Though drained, its course and the basin at the furnace bank can still be traced.

Downstream from the ironworks, the first corn mill on the river was Aird's Mill, tenanted by William Aird in 1851. The site has now been cleared, though a small square shed may incorporate part of the mill buildings. Parts of the lade can still be seen. The mill was an L-shaped structure on the north bank of the river. Mr. James S. Wilson, writer of an unsigned series of articles on the corn mills of the River Ayr which appeared in the *Ayrshire Post* in 1944-5, confused Aird's Mill with a waulk mill which was powered by the Ashaw Burn, a tributary of the Ayr.

Two and a half miles to the west of Aird's Mill, near Nether Wellwood farm, stood Muirmill, on the north side of the river. The buildings here have disappeared, but a long lade can still be traced in places. The mill had one pair of stones driven by a breast paddle wheel. Before the collapse of the Ayr Bank, the mill and the farm of Dalfram were let by the Earl of Loudoun, to John Lapraik. Lapraik retained the mill after his financial crash until 1796. He was a friend of Robert Burns.

(8) On the south bank of the river, and a further one and a half miles downstream, a forge was built near Townhead of Greenock by Lord Cathcart about 1732. Although shown on Armstrong's map (1775), it was disused by the end of the eighteenth century. The lade system can still be distinguished: it branches into two, which would imply two wheels, the normal number in a forge, where one was required for the bellows and the other for operating a tilt' or helve hammer for forging. The statement that local ore was shipped to Bonawe for smelting may have been true after 1753, but before that time a bloomery, or primitive blast furnace, might have been used. This site, known as Terreoch, would repay careful excavation.



## THE ENGLISH F.A. CUP

Following up on the football articles, it was interesting to find these comments from the relevant issues of the "Advertiser" as follows:—

### ***23rd March, 1944***

Mention in this issue of the death in New Zealand of Sandy Brown, one of Glenbuck's famous football sons, recalls the fact that when he assisted Tottenham Hotspur to win the English Cup, the silverware was actually brought to Glenbuck and exhibited in a window there. Perhaps this would be the only time the English Cup came to Scotland.

### ***27th April, 1944***

Apropos my recent par about the death of Sandy Brown and my remark that when he brought the English Cup to Glenbuck it would be perhaps the only time the cup came to Scotland, one of our football experts tells me that in 1927 it was on view at Celtic Park. Cardiff City, the English Cup holders of that year, and Celtic, the Scottish Cup winners, met in a match and the two trophies were paraded round the track at half-time.

### ***4th May, 1944***

Our friend also recalls that Scottish interest in the English Cup that year was provided by the late Hugh Ferguson, one-time Motherwell centre-forward, who scored the all-important goal which beat Arsenal in the Cup final. In the match between the two cup winning teams the late John Thomson made one of his earliest appearances for Celtic, and his outstanding ability was clearly evident at that early stage of his short but brilliant career.

And a football fan asks if the friend who gave us this interesting data last week about the English Cup being on view at Celtic Park in 1927 could state if this was the original English Cup which was brought to Glenbuck in the days of sandy Brown.

### ***11th May, 1944***

And now to football. The query last week about the English Cup was right up our expert's alley. The question was asked if the cup on view at Celtic Park in 1937 was the original cup which was brought to Glenbuck in Sandy Brown's time, and according to our friend, neither was the original. The first cup was stolen from a shop window in Birmingham in 1895 when Aston Villa were the holders. Tottenham won the cup in 1901, when they beat Sheffield United 3-1 after a draw of two goals each. In the first game, before a 110,000 crowd at Crystal Palace on 20th April, 1901, "Towie" Brown of Glenbuck had both goals for Spurs. The replay, at Bolton the following Saturday, was the famous "Pork Pie" final. The shopkeepers, anticipating another huge crowd, had laid in great stocks of pies for the occasion, but there was only a small attendance, and we suspect the Bolton folks would be "seek lookin' at pies" for several days. However, "Towie," had the third goal in this game, and it was the first time a Southern League Club had won the cup. When in 1911, Bradford City beat Newcastle in the replayed final tie at Old Trafford, it was the first time the present trophy was played for. Its predecessor had been presented to Lord Kinnaird, the President of the Football Association at that time. After that, we think our football enthusiast would be justified in saying—"Any more questions?"

## SCOTLAND'S SINGING COLLIER

For quite some time I have been trying to glean some information of a Muirkirk singer by the name of John Weir. My quest bore fruit when I came across a cutting from the "Glasgow Eastern Standard" about 1942, which I reprint as follows:—

"Mr Weir, who is married and lives at 94 Stevenson Street, Calton, was a professional entertainer well known in Glasgow music halls. He abandoned the stage as a career about ten years ago and is now employed with the Glasgow Corporation, but still accepts occasional engagements for stage work. A native of Muirkirk, he learned to sing in church choirs, and afterwards turned to lighter entertainment and won many prizes in the Ayrshire district for his ability as a comedian. He made a name for himself on the stage as an amateur, and eventually the Management of the Queen's Theatre offered him an engagement. Before adopting a stage career, Mr Weir worked in the pits. He recommended men for decoration who had proved themselves heroes in pit disasters, and on one occasion not only assisted in having a man decorated by the King, but also saw that he got an advanced education free."

"Mr Weir sent copies of his efforts to Sir William Beveridge, Mr Tom Johnstone (Secretary of State for Scotland), and Mr James Maxton, M.P., and has received messages of congratulation from all three."

Further perusal of the "Advertiser" files unearthed the following paragraph: Mr Weir's professional title is "Jock Weir, Scotland's Singing Collier," but many of our readers must remember him better as a lad, when he was "Johnny Weir," and selling fruit from a barrow, and many Muirkirk housewives had to get a sample of his singing abilities. Johnny eventually landed in the pit (we think it was Lighthouse), and was married before he left Muirkirk. He visited Muirkirk last summer (1942). Here is the effort concerned, which has already been referred to in the three Glasgow evening newspapers:

British Statesmen, will you listen?  
Can't you hear the public say  
It's a shame the way your treating  
Darby and Joan to-day.

Wilt thou be their cruel oppressors?  
See them in their sad affliction  
Struggling on from day to day  
Unaided by thy firm restriction.

Although we're in the midst of warfare  
With our foes across the seas,  
Think of our old aged starving  
And their hunger now appease.

Men of brains and education,  
Do not hesitate to say

We at least must mind the old folk  
Tottering doon the hill to-day.

In politics you each may differ,  
But now abandon party strife;  
Let there be no opposition  
To the old folks' needs of life.

If you have been born in riches,  
And been blessed with best of health,  
Think of old men in their young days  
When they made their country's wealth.

Don't put off until to-morrow  
What you now can do to-day,  
Fill the old folks hearts with gladness;  
Raise their pensions; don't delay.

How appropriate is that to-day?



**LAUNDROCHAT:** Third Lanark boss Bob Shankly, right, checks how the strips are drying at Cathkin watched by brother Bill in 1958

## A boss of Hi Hi quality

**Q:** People always talk about Bill Shankly as a great manager but I was a big fan of his brother, Bob. How many clubs did he manage and was Third Lanark one? *T Baird.*

**A:** Shankly began his managerial career at Falkirk, one of the teams he had played for, and

was in charge of the club between 1950 and 1957. Third Lanark came next and he was in the Hi Hi's hot seat until 1959. Then came his most successful stewardship at Dundee. He managed the team between 1959 and 1965 and in that time made them league champions, beating

Rangers to the title by three points, and took them to the semi-finals of the European Cup where they lost to AC Milan. He then had four years at Hibs, taking over from good friend Jock Stein, before bossing Stirling Albion in the early 1970s.

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## THE CONCLUSION

My mentor at the “Advertiser” Office, Mr William Shaw Smith, often told me that there should be three parts to a story — the beginning, the middle and the end. Regarding this publication, the first two requisites having been fulfilled, I now approach the most difficult one — the end! Difficult, because it would appear that there is not enough space left to print all that I would like to, which is rather strange, bearing in mind that the foregoing recollections consist of 750,143 type characters, which makes up 158,9592 words, and I suppose that in itself is quite an accomplishment.

Nevertheless, concluding the book seemed to present problems that I had not encountered during my research work. Compiling the contents I found to be very rewarding and not too difficult a job delving into the history of the village to uncover little bits of information here and there to form pieces of the jig-saw that is the history of an old mining village like Muirkirk. But who in their right mind would endeavour to compare a Muirkirk of the mid 20th century to the one we now find ourselves in at the early years of the 21st century. There can be no doubt that the village of Muirkirk has dramatically changed over the years, and it would indeed be a wise (or should I say, brave) man who would dare to predict what future lies ahead for the village of my birth.

I have seen many changes in my lifetime, and been privileged to have witnessed the demise of the horse and cart era through to the age of steam and vehicular travel, which grew stronger each year. In the times when the community was not over-loaded with material things, Muirkirk had a lot to offer, and whether our isolation from other communities had anything to do with this, we might never know. To those of us who remember the times I speak of, and to those who cannot remember because of age, but might nevertheless be interested in the history of the village, here are some interesting facts, which might just be an indication of how much our village has changed over the years.

I used to think that our little community would somehow manage to survive. but when one walks around the old part of the village and the Smallburn Scheme, what appears before our eyes is not very encouraging:—For Sale signs up all over the place (and very few being sold in the last couple of years); empty shops and derelict buildings; and even when walking out with the confines of the village we meet very little persons doing the same; local organisations struggling to keep going; and this all adds up to a very bleak prospect. We used to believe that what happened to our neighbouring village at Glenbuck would never be the fate of Muirkirk, but I just wonder if the seeds of doubt have been planted in the minds of local residents.

Was our own local historian and poet, Thomas Floyd, more than just a poet, or did he have the gift to look into the future and see the end of Muirkirk coming with his poem, “My Auld Toon,” which I reproduce on the following page. There is much to think about here, and I believe that the verses from the pen of a very talented Muirkirk personality would be a more fitting way to end this publication.

JAMES TAYLOR, MUIRKIRK,

2011

**MY AULD TOON**

My auld toon, my auld toon,  
 Though naether big nor braw—  
 Wi' only ae lang stragglin' street,  
 An' here an' there a raw;  
 What though a stranger views ye wi'  
 Disfavour in his e'e?  
 My auld toon, my auld toon,  
 Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld hills, my auld hills,  
 Cairntable an' Wardlaw,  
 What though yer taps are bleak an'  
 bare  
 An' often clad wi' snaw?  
 The love I bear my native lan'  
 Is lavished a' on thee;  
 My auld hills, my auld hills,  
 Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld streams, my auld streams,  
 That 'mang gray boulders rowe,  
 An' murmur brawlin' doon the glens  
 Where heath an' breckins growe;  
 Nae words o' mine can hauf express  
 The love I hae for thee;  
 My auld streams, my auld streams,  
 Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld kirk, my auld kirk,  
 Wi' time-worn architaves,  
 Ye stan' a gray an' rugged pile  
 Amid the hallowed graves  
 O' generations deid an' gane  
 Wha worshipped God in thee;  
 My auld kirk, my auld kirk,  
 Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld skuil, my auld skuil,  
 That stan's ayont the street,  
 Aye when I view yer aged wa's  
 My een wi' tears turn weet;  
 An' me'mries o' my boyhood days  
 Come driftin' back tae me;  
 My auld skuil, my auld skuil,  
 Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

The auld pits, the auld pits,  
 Oor faithers wrocht lang syne—  
 The Stottencleugh an' Maidenbank,  
 Airdsgreen an' Leeshaw mine;  
 Muirkirk was then a thrivin' place,  
 Wi' routh o' wark for a',  
 But, noo, alas, my auld toon,  
 Tae days are a' awa'.

The auld warks, the auld warks,  
 Are sairly crippled noo,  
 The rollin' mill an' puddlin' forge  
 Hae vanished frae the view;  
 An' rumour says the furnaces  
 May cease ere lang tae blaw;  
 My auld toon, my auld toon,  
 Ye're totterin' tae a fa'.

It's comin' then, it's comin' then,  
 An' some that's born may see't—  
 The very grass an' nettles will  
 Be growin' on the street;  
 An' future tourists passin' by  
 Will halt an' view the scene  
 An' then remark—"This place is where  
 A village ance has been."

**THE END**

