a little cottage some distance from the main road and about a mile and a half from Muirkirk. Close by the roadside he built himself a little shelter like a sentry box, and there, on cold, rainy days, Willie would sit as he waited for the bus to take him to his work. The shelter is still there to-day. It was in the cottage at Ashieburn that Willie Wallace died eleven years ago - died at the early age of fifty-eight, a victim of the miners' scourge, silicosis. It was of the toll of the sea that Kipling was thinking when he wrote:

"If this be the price o' Admiralty, Lord God, we hae paid in full."

And it's true of the mines, too.

Not long ago I sat by the fireside in the little cottage and talked with those who knew and loved Willie Wallace, this man so worthy to be remembered. On the hearthrug sat a sturdy eight year old laddie, going over his collection of photographs of famous footballers with an accuracy of detail that was remarkable. Need I say that his name is Willie Wallace! Later, as we left the cottage and walked across the stretch of grass towards the river, I heard a familiar sound, the plonk of a football. I turned. Yes, it was wee Willie Wallace speeding towards an imaginary corner flag. Glenbuck may languish in the changing circumstances of to-day; but her fine old tradition seems safe enough for a while yet.

M. H. FAULDS

### **FORFWORD**

It is now over forty years since "The Cherrypickers" was written and published and printed here in Muirkirk when the present firm then came under the "Muirkirk Advertiser and Douglasdale Gazette." It has been out of print now for many years, yet still we are asked to supply copies. We now feel that the time is right that other generations should have the opportunity to learn of the heritage that was once Glenbuck. We reproduce this booklet in its entirity, without any alterations or additions in the hope that it will do to-day what it did in 1951—bring to the attention of later generations of the prowess and achievements of the sportsmen of Glenbuck

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33 Furnace Road, Muirkirk, Ayrshire KA18 3QQ
Tel. 01290 661239
1997

#### WILLIE WALLACE

A little while ago I became interested in the story of the Glenbuck footballers and set to work to learn all I could about them. It was an enjoyable job. It led me into many friendly homes where I met men - and women, too - with whom it was a pleasure to talk. I listened to reminiscences of bygone days and I heard stories of the giants of years long past. From time to time I heard of Willie Wallace, but my attention was not caught until one day a friend remarked to me - "When a dispute arose, even the opposing side would say 'Ask Willie Wallace and we'll take what he says'." There can be fewer finer tributes to a man's character and sportsmanship than a remark like that. I take it to refer to practice games in which no referee was available. Football is a game that rouses animosities and sets tempers aglow. What a mark of respect and affection the words are! "Ask Willie Wallace and we'll take what he says."

Willie Wallace was born in Glenbuck sixty-eight years ago. At an early age he went to work in the pits and continued there throughout his life. He was a born footballer and at the age of fifteen became a regular member of the well-known Glenbuck Cherrypickers. His position on the field was centre-half. He was a little bandy legged and had a tendency to loom over the ball, and this made him a difficult man to get past. No more popular player ever wore the Glenbuck colours. How often did Burnside Park ring with his name, as the crowd applauded his prowess or urge him on to greater efforts! His popularity rested securely on the reputation he had won for hard, clean play.

When his football days were over Willie found a new interest in life in the country-side around him. With keenness and enthusiasm of his younger days he studied the natural history and the geology of his native county. Nothing delighted him more that to spend a day rambling through the country-side - out in the open, close to nature, appreciating her beauty, studying her secrets, acquiring knowledge of her ways. And he was always ready to share his interest with others. A bunch of wild flowers came to mean more to him than a leather football.

For many years Willie Wallace lived in



WILLIEWALLACE

### **WHISPERS**

O, could the Glenbuck Burn but speak, An' tales of yore unfauld-But hark! dae I hear whispers Frae its waters clear an' cauld?

Listen - just listen tae its chatter As it gurgles ower the stanes; It's tellin' noo o' fitba' lads, O' Knoxes, Taits, an' Bains.

O' lads frae Vass's Building, Grasshill and Monkey Raw, O' some o' the best auld players That ever kicked a ba'.

It whispers names o' bygone days, Wha played upon its banks, Wha syne won fame an' glory An' reached the highest ranks.

An' as it murmurs softly on, It naither fights nor bickers, It kens them a', an' tells the tale O' the Glenbuck Cherrypickers.

O' could we but its story print, Glenbuck could hae nae fears That the memory o' the "Cherries" Wad fade wi' passin' years.

Wi' our brief efforts we ha'e tried Tae keep their names alive, An' trust that in life's pathways Their glories will survive.

WM. TWEEDIE.

## THE CHERRYPICKERS



GLENBUCK
NURSERY OF FOOTBALLERS

Rev. M. H. FAULDS and WM. TWEEDIE, Jnr.



MUIRKIRK
Printed by "The Muirkirk Advertiser and Douglasdale Gazette."
1951

A postscript remains to be added. About the time the Cherrypickers came to an end a small boy was kicking a ball around the playground of the school in Glenbuck. His name was Tommy Brown. Since those days Tommy has played football for several well-known Clubs—Heart of Midlothian, Millwall, Leyton Orient, and Charlton Athletic. He was not a Cherrypicker - he was too young for that. His father, John Brown, however, was a Cherrypicker, and the tradition lives on in the son. In addition to being capped three times Schoolboy International, Tommy Brown was capped twice for Scotland—in 1940 against England. Another Glenbuck lad, John Wallace, passed into Senior football at about the same time. Son of George Wallace and nephew of Willie Wallace and Towey Brown - Cherrypickers all - he has played for Ayr United and Partick Thistle.

This then is the story of Glenbuck Cherrypickers. In rather less than half a century fifty of them passed on to the senior ranks. Many of them played for famous clubs and won renown for themselves in the world of football. Seven of them gained international honours. This is a record unequalled by any other place of similar size in all Scotland - a record of which Glenbuck is justifiably proud.

Our thanks are due to the various people who helped with information and the loan of photos.



**TOMMY BONE** 

as a team, indeed, a family team. Their tactics were carefully worked out and prearranged, and there was a perfect understanding amongst the brothers. Their opponents played as a collection of individuals, and found the tactics of the Knoxes altogether surprising and baffling. When we remarked to Hughie Knox that the fivea-side game seemed to be a very strenuous affair, involving a lot of running about, he shook his head. "No," he said, "the art of the game is to make the ball do the running about." So often did these men win the prizes - usually clocks or barometers—offered in the competitions that, after a while, they didn't even trouble to carry them home, but would hand them as a gift to any acquaintance standing on the touchline. Another team which was mentioned as being hard to beat was composed of John Hastie, Bob Tait, Jimmy Tait, William Wallace and John Ferguson. This teams dates from the later, Cherrypicker period.



GLENBUCK CHERRYPICKERS

### The Cherrypickers

### GLENBUCK NURSERY OF FOOTBALLERS

Glenbuck is a small mining village in the south of Ayrshire where it borders with Lanarkshire. It is like any of the many other mining villages to be found in Scotland. Three miles from Muirkirk, it nestles by the roadside in a tract of undulating countryside which is both pleasant and picturesque. Glenbuck would rank nowhere in a competition for the prettiest village in Scotland. It is drab and monotonous, and plainly utilitarian.

Glenbuck came into being when mining operations began in that corner of Ayrshire away back in the early seventies of last century (19th). For more than half a century it flourished and was the centre of a vigorous, closely-kit community, with all the sturdiness and independence of a typical Scottish mining village. For some years previous to this, lead mining was carried on. and also some iron smelting. The remains of one of the earliest iron foundries in Scotland are still to be seen in Glenbuck. In addition to the earlier mines that were worked, two pits were later sunk in the neighbourhood and brought a measure of prosperity to the village. At no time, however, did its population much exceed twelve hundred. When the mines ceased to be operated just before the First World War and the pits closed down in the twenties, the decline of Glenbuck definitely set in. In recent years the population has steadily dwindled. Many of the village folk have moved away and many of the houses have fallen into decay. There are not more than two hundred people living in Glenbuck will only be a name and a memory.

But Glenbuck deserves to be remembered, for it holds a worthy place in history—at any rate, in the history of football. For many years it maintained a Junior team which established a great reputation for itself. But the unique distinction of Glenbuck is, that it became a famous nursery of footballers. Year after year a succession of Glenbuck lads passed into Senior Football, winning renown for themselves and bringing credit to their native village. The list of Glenbuck lads who made good in the world of football is a long one and contains many notable names. It can be safely claimed that no village of similar size in all Scotland has a record to equal that of Glenbuck. Altogether, the Glenbuck story is a remarkable page in football history.

There is no doubt that football began in Glenbuck as soon as the village itself began. There were neither motor bikes nor motor 'buses' in those early days, and village life was much more self-contained than now. The cinema and wireless still lay hidden in the future. But the young folk of those far-off times did not find life dull. They made their own amusement and devised their own entertainments. These things come to us too easily to-day and life has lost something of real value. The Glenbuck lads early learnt to kick a ball about, and they did so to such good purpose that the local team became prominent in Junior football in Scotland. When work was over a Glenbuck lad would spend all his leisure time on the football pitch, and matches between teams from the different mines provided competition and fostered rivalry.

The Club had its beginnings in the late 1870's and was founded by Edward Bone, William Bone and others. It was originally called Glenbuck Athletic. The Club colours were white jersey and black pants. The affairs of the Club were managed and the teams chosen by an elected committee. For many years Mr John Shankly, father of the Shankly brothers, and Mr James Gibson were closely connected with the Club. At that time there was no local football league, but the Club was frequently engaged in competitions for the numerous local cups. Open dates were filled by means of advertisements in local papers. The players provided their own gear and paid their own expenses. In addition, they contributed a shilling a week towards the upkeep of

the ground. For away matches they travelled usually in a three-horse brake. On the cold dark nights of winter, the homeward journey was far from comfortable, and the players would often walk a good deal of the distance to ease their cramped limbs. Rivalry was very keen and feelings ran high. It was not unusual for visiting teams to be pelted with stones. Even the presence of the Law, in the person of the village policeman sitting on the box beside the driver, was not enough to divert the rain of missiles. But perhaps it was the referee after all who had the roughest time, especially if a pond was conveniently near

The first ground on which the team played was lost to them when one of the pit shafts was sunk. The second was almost



WILLIE

It is interesting to note that, under Ayrshire Rules, the goalkeeper was not permitted to handle the ball. It was not unfrequent for the five-a-side competitions to continue through the whole day, many of the teams playing literally for hours on end. On one occasion at Lanark they went on throughout Saturday and were completed on Monday morning. It was a marathon struggle - there were, indeed, giants in those days.

In the Glenbuck Athletic days two teams established a big reputation over a wide area. One consisted of Hugh, Knox, Alec Knox, Tom Knox, Bobby Crosbie and William Mitchell; the other included James Blyth, Archie McBride, Wattie Ferguson, William Knox and Peter Knox. The five Knox brothers subsequently played together as a family team and proved almost invincible. So far did they carry all before them that they actually won 40 of the 41 competitions in which they played in one season. This is an achievement which leaves little scope for future record breakers. The reason for their success is clear enough. They played together



**GLENBUCK JUVENILES** 

**SHANKLY** 

6

only a shilling to enter and they did not ask if we had done any racing. The champion of County Down was the scratch man and they gave as all a two minutes' start from him, as they thought he would win easily. It was a big start to give anyone, but he did not gain a yard on me and I won easily. They all backed him and they were going to mob me. But when I got my prize they put me out the back of the hotel and told me to get away. Now I had eleven years as a professional footballer. I was chosen to play left-back for Scotland against England and two days later I signed for Everton; and after that I played for the Arsenal and Grimbsy Town, where I finished football. I then took up golf and did fairly well. I won three gold medals. Then I started bowling and did not too badly at that. I played for Yorkshire in the County matches one year!"

No account of football in Glenbuck would be complete without some reference to the five-a-side game. Like the corresponding seven-a-side in rugby, this game has always been more popular in Scotland than in England. It was played in the summer months and served to bridge the gap between the end of one season and the beginning of the next. In this way football became practically an all-the-year affair. Five-a-side football competitions were a feature of most annual shows, sports, and similar events. Here, too, the Glenbuck men were well in the forefront.



THE KNOX BROTHERS

literally on the hillside. The third and last, almost the only level patch in the village large enough for the purpose, lay alongside the main road and many of the spectators stood there to view the matches. From the burn which flowed on the further side, the ground was called Burnside Park—and it was there that football history was made.

Two things are noteworthy in Glenbuck football from its beginnings. It was

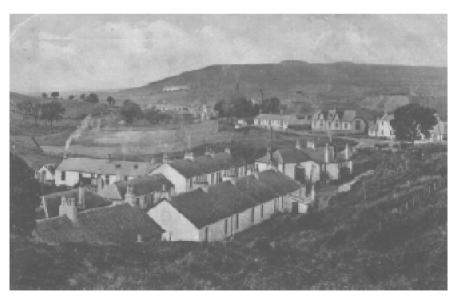
largely a family affair. This is to be accounted for by the fact that many of the families in the village were related to one another. We find the same name occurring again and again - Tait, Bone, Knox, Menzies, Wallace and many others. Sons succeeded their fathers, nephews their uncles, cousins and brothers played in the same team. And again, the team continued to be a purely local team almost to the end. It is refreshing to remember this to-day when most teams are local only in name, and recruit their members "frae a' the airts" except their own immediate neighbourhood. The Glenbuck team, with few exceptions, remained a team of Glenbuck lads, upholding the Glenbuck tradition.



It was at the turn of the century that the team changed its name to that of Glenbuck Cherrypickers. There is little doubt that at first this was only a nickname, but after a while it was adopted as the official name, and so continued to the end. The story about the change of name is interesting. Tom Menzies and his brother, we were told, would strut about the street as young lads. wearing their caps after the manner of the Hussars and proclaiming that they were Cherrypickers. In the army the 11th Hussars are known as the Cherrypickers. The name dates from the Peninsular War in Spain, in which the Hussars served. Arriving one day at a Spanish village hot and weary, they proceeded to strip a nearby cherry orchard. Incidentally, the 11th Hussars wore cherry-coloured breeches. The story about Milliken's store is probably a later invention. The lads of the village used to gather there in the evening and their talk would be mainly of football. One summer evening there was a large basket of cherries in the yard outside, but when the lads went home in the gloaming the basket was empty. The question remains, what turned the attention of Tom Menzies and his brother to the 11th Hussars? Although exact information on this point is lacking, it is almost certain that the men from Glenbuck or Muirkirk served with the Hussars in the Boer War in 1900.

The War of 1914-18 brought a pretty complete break in football activities in Glenbuck and elsewhere. The young men of those days had other things to attend to. But the Cherrypickers got together again soon after the war ended and built up a team that again became prominent in Junior circles. It continued until the early thirties and, although the decline had definitely set in, it went down fighting to the last.

It has been difficult to compile a list of the honours won by the Cherrypickers and we fear this list is incomplete. For three years in succession they won the Ayrshire Junior Challenge Cup—in 1889, 1890, and 1891. In 1906 they won three cups - Ayrshire Charity Cup, Cumnock Cup, and the Mauchline Cup. The Ayrshire Charity Cup was won again in 1910 and the Cumnock Cup in 1901, 1903, 1904, 1905, and 1921. In their closing years they won the Ayrshire Junior Cup in 1931. It will be of interest to put on record the names of the players who won the Ayrshire Junior Challenge Cup for Glenbuck Athletic in 1889—the year in which the Ayrshire Challenge Cup was instituted. The team consisted of Thomas Bone, goalkeeper; James Bone (Capt.) and Alex Tait, backs; Joseph Menzies, Alex. Wallace, and Peter Devlin, half-backs; Robert Blyth, James Tait, John Menzies, James Menzies and Richard Tait, forwards. After beating Ailsa Swifts (13-0), Hurlford Rovers (3-2), and Crosshouse (3-2) in preceding rounds, this team beat Tarbolton in the final by 9-2.



GLENBUCK VILLAGE, 1901

Alec Brown was capped twice for Scotland. He was a member of the Scottish team on the famous occasion of the Ibrox disaster in 1902. It is often said that Bobby 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 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.

George Halley ended his football career with Burnley, for whom he played 12 seasons. During that time Burnley won the English Cup (1914) and the English League Championship (1921).

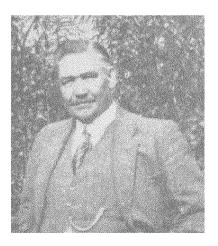
Archie McBride did not go into Senior football; but many who knew him held him to be the finest player who ever wore the Glenbuck colours.

For Peter McIntyre it is claimed that, in his day, he was one of the greatest centre halves in the game.

William Wallace, too, was a redoubtable centre-half. A little bandy legged and inclined to crouch, he was a difficult man to get past. He was one of the most popular men ever to play at Burnside Park, and had a great reputation for clean play.

Alec McConnell, at the age of 78, was good enough to send us some notes of his notable athletic career in a most interesting letter. We cannot do better that reproduce it here:—

"I could talk to you better than writing. Well, I was doing a fair lot of cycling as well as footballing. I belonged to Muirkirk Club and I did fairly well at it. I won the hour's record of 23 miles 1531 yards on the bike. They tell me it was the record for Scotland at that time. The bikes were not so light then and I had always to thank my old friend, David Greenwood, for helping me. He was a grand man and had the cycle shop at that time. After that, three lads of us went for a holiday to a place in Ireland called Bangor and we took our bikes with us. It was ten miles from Belfast; there were sports on the Saturday. There was a five mile cycle race and we entered for it. It was



ALEC BROWN

A few notes about some of the players may be of interest. They serve to illustrate another striking fact about these Glenbuck men. They were not only adept at the game of football, but, with few exceptions, they were fine all-round athletes who could more than hold their own at other forms of sport and on the racing tracks.

Quoits was a very popular game towards the end of the last century, and many of the Glenbuck men became very skilled at it. Thomas Bone was reputed to be the World Champion and could encircles a watch with exact precision at 21 yards. In addition to his skills at quoits, Thomas Bone could cover 10 feet in a standing broad jump. He gained impetus swinging two of his 30-lbs quoits pendulum fashion, and discarding them at the moment of take-off. His brother James won many local quoiting championships and held the Scottish Championship for some years. In addition he was a notable athlete. On one occasion at a sports meeting he won the 100 yards, the quarter mile, the half-mile, and the long jump.

One of the speediest men who ever played in the Cherrypicker's team is said to have been Robert Blyth. It is claimed for him that he could do the 100 yards in 11 seconds in his football boots.

One of the first men to go into Senior football was Alec Tait. He was a member of the Tottenham Hotspur team at a time when it was one of the leading clubs in the country. He was the holder of an English Cup Final Medal, being in the Hotspur team which won the Cup in 1901. He had as team mate Alec Brown, also of Glenbuck. This, by the way, was the first time for many years that the Cup was won by a South

of England team. Tottemham 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 had 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 one of the shop windows there. This 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.



ALEX. BROWN

But the real place of Glenbuck in the history of football is as a nursery of footballers. The list of names of those who passed into Senior football is a long one. It is too much to hope that inaccuracies have been altogether avoided, Most of the players had a nickname and an attempt has been made to include them as far as possible. For example, at one time the half-back line consisted of Bush Menzies, Push Menzies, and Biscuit Blyth.

Here then, is a list of the Glenbuck men who went into Senior football:—

JOHN ANDERSON, Kilmarnock.

WILLIAM BAIN, Solway Star.

WILLIAM BANKS, Kilmarnock, Manchester City.

JOHN BARR, Belfast Distillery.

WILLIAM BARR, Ayr United.

JOHN BISHOP, Ayr United.

ROBERT BLYTH (Reindeer), Cowlairs, Glasgow Rangers, Preston North End. Portsmouth. He was later Chairman of the Portsmouth Club.

WILLIAM BLYTH, Portsmouth, Preston North End.

JOCK BONE, Aston Villa.

JOHNNIE BONE, Everton.

ALEC BROWN (Towey), Preston North End, Tottenham Hotspur.

TOMMY BROWN (Bogey), Leicester Fosse, Dundee, Chesterfield, Portsmouth.

TOMMY BROWN, Blackburn Rovers.

ROBERT CRAWFORD (Laddie), Preston North End, Blackburn Rovers, Blackpool.

JOHN DAVIDSON, Solway Star, Coventry.

JOHN CROSBIE, Ayr United, Birmingham City, Blackpool.

JOHN FERGUSON, Hamilton Accies, Cowdenbeath.

WALTER FERGUSON (Wattie), Sheffield Wednesday.

GEORGE HALLEY, Kilmarnock, Bradford Park Avenue, Burnley.

JOHN HASTIE, Glasgow Celtic, Raith Rovers.

ARCHIE GARRETT, Hamilton Accies, Millwall.

DAVID HENDERSON, Motherwell.

HUGH KNOX, Sunderland, Greenock Morton.

THOMAS KNOX, Hamilton Accies.

WILLIAM KNOX, Maxwellton, Everton, Liverpool.

ALEX. McCONNELL, Everton, Woolwich, Arsenal, Grimbsy Town.

JOHN McCONNELL, Kilmarnock, Brentford, Grimbsy Town, Queens Park Rangers.

PETER McINTYRE, St. Bernard's, Preston North End, Sheffield Wednesday, Hamilton Accies.

JOCK McKENZIE, Heart of Midlothian, Newcastle United, Norwich City, Walsall.

JOHN MENZIES, Lanemark (Cumnock).

WILLIAM MUIR (Gooley), Everton, Dundee, Heart of Midlothian, Kilmarnock.

JAMES MUNCIE, Middlesborough.

JOHN MURDOCH (Deedie), Clyde.

JAMES NISBET, Ayr United.

ALEC PARK, Fall River, U.S.A.

ALEC SHANKLY, Ayr United, Clyde.

JAMES SHANKLY, Portsmouth, Sheffield United, Carlisle.

JOHN SHANKLY, Portsmouth, Blackpool, Alloa.

ROBERT SHANKLY, Alloa, Turnbridge Wells, Falkirk. He is at present Manager of the Falkirk Club.

WILLIE SHANKLY, Preston North End, Carlisle. He is at present Manager of Grimbsy Town.

HUGH SMITH, Solway Star.

ALEC TAIT, Royal Albert (Larkhall), Preston North End, Tottenham Hotspur, Sheffield United.

ROBERT TAIT, Nithsdale Wanderers, Motherwell, Cowdenbeath, Carlisle, Tottenham Hotspur.

JOHN TAYLOR (Hardy), Bathgate.

ALEC WALLACE, Airdrie.

BERT WALLACE, Hamilton Accies, Plymouth Argyle.

JOE WALLACE, Newcastle United.

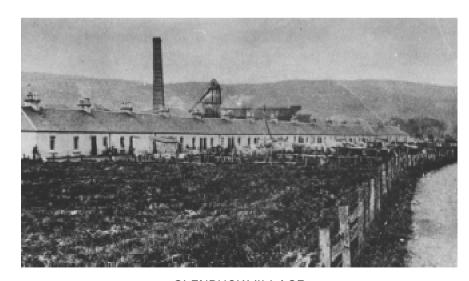
JOHN WALLACE, Partick Thistle.

JAMES WEIR, Cowdenbeath, Southend United.

JOHN WEIR (Chavers), St. Bernard's.

Amongst many others who played for the Cherrypickers at various times were Thomas Barr, Thomas Bell, David Blyth, James Blyth (Crow), Edward Bone, James Bone (Wig), Thomas Bone (Chuck), William Bone, John Brown, W. Clark, James Crawford (Caley), Thomas Crawford, Bobbie Crosbie, George Davidson, Peter Devlin, Peter Devlin, jr., William Docherty, Guy Grant, Alec Grant, David Hastie, Alec Knox, Peter Knox, Archie McBride (Silver Toes), Bob Hans, and Jim McConnell, James Menzies (Peery), Joseph Menzies (Doodles), Robert Menzies (Pimp), William Mitchell, Matthew Park (Lots), John Sim, Jamie Tait, Richard Tait, William Telfer, William Wallace, and Bobby Wallace.

The list of players who entered Senior football from the Cherrypickers includes no less than seven who were chosen to play for Scotland. Those who won International honours were William Muir against Ireland in 1907; Alec Brown against England in 1902 and 1904; George Halley against England in 1910; John Crosbie against Wales in 1920 and against England in 1922; Bob Shankly against Ireland in 1938. But the man who won most International honours was Willie Shankly. He was capped thirteen times between 1938 and 1943 (five full and eight wartime Internationals). Alec McConnell was chosen to play against England, but signed for Everton two days later, and so, as an anglo Scot, became ineligible. John Taylor was capped in the Junior International against England. It is highly probably that other Glenbuck men were chosen to play in Junior Internationals in subsequent years, but, unfortunately, information on this point is lacking.



**GLENBUCK VILLAGE** 

# THE CHERRYPICKERS



GLENBUCK

NURSERY OF FOOTBALLERS