

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

Bonnyseen

The magazine from Greenhill Historical Society



Issue Number 18 June 2019



Introduction

As we complete each edition of Bonnyseen we often wonder if we will have enough articles to fill the next edition. But each time, our friends and neighbours from near and far keep sending in the most amazing and interesting stories. So a huge thanks to everyone for giving us the wherewithal to continue.

This is a very busy year for the Historical Society as we progress with the work of creating the Bonnybridge Heritage Park. We are indebted to Paul Cortopassi for not only considering the possibility of the park, but for his dedication and sheer hard work to bring it to fruition. Paul has lead the funding bids, obtained the planning permission and is devising the information boards as well, with a little help from the rest of us!

The society has also been involved in the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project and, as a result, we have been nominated to have a permanent memorial to the Roman presence in Bonnybridge erected in the area of the Library and Community Centre. When we have more idea of the form this will take we will share it with the community.

P Swierczek

Front Cover:

Sunrise over High Bonnybridge
by Phil Swierczek

Back Cover:

Forth & Clyde Canal, Bonnybridge
by Paul Cortopassi

CONTENTS

Page

Sunrise over High Bonnybridge	Front Cover
Introduction	2
A Brief History of the Roman Empire and Antonine Wall	3
“Lessons fromAuschwitz” Programme	4 & 5
Trapped : Jessie Hannah’s Story	6 & 7
The UnsungHeroes	8 & 9
Bonnybridge Primary School 1945	10
Can anyone identify these workers?	11
Food for Thought	12
Recipe: Irish Milk Soup	12
Johnny F.McKeever	13
Bonnyreaders	14 & 15
Forth &Clyde Canal	Back Cover

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Greenhill Historical Society

WHERE TO FIND US



GREENHILL
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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Meetings

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

A Brief History of the Roman Empire & The Antonine Wall

Part 1

By "History Buff"

The 'Rediscovering the Antonine Wall' project inspired me to investigate further how and why the Roman Empire arrived in Scotland and why they left after approximately 20 years. When you consider the scale of the wall and its accompanying forts and fortlets, I was interested in finding out why it was occupied for such a short time by an Empire that had lasted for hundreds of years. As with any story it's better to start at the beginning.



Gaius Julius Caesar

The Roman Empire began formally on the accession of the first emperor, Augustus, around 30BC, lasting 500 years until its final overthrow by the Goths in 476AD. Eventually it grew too large to be ruled efficiently from Rome and in 285AD was divided into Western and Eastern Empires. The Eastern Empire had its own emperor in Byzantium (modern Istanbul) and it survived until its defeat by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 AD.

The Romans under Julius Caesar, then Proconsul of Gaul, and member of the Triumvirate that effectively ruled Rome at that time, first invaded Britain in 55 BC. They met stubborn opposition from the warlike native tribes, and having also suffered extensive damage to its naval vessels during its passage from mainland Europe, withdrew to Gaul. Caesar had another attempt a year later and after his fleet was again damaged by a storm, he did gain some territory but once more found his legions up against a resilient local force, skilful in chariot warfare, ably led by a tribal chieftain Cassivellaunus, who negotiated Caesar's withdrawal, offering hostages and tribute in return. In reality the Romans became more concerned with consolidating and pacifying the areas they had gained in Northern Europe and left Britain free to follow its own course, though not totally isolated and trading contacts with the Roman controlled European mainland did develop over this period.

Eventually to gain some glory for his rule, the Emperor Claudius decided to invade the British Isles again in 43AD, almost 100 years after Julius Caesar's withdrawal. Well planned, with a large force comprising several legions, this eventually proved successful against spirited British resistance led by the tribal prince Caractacus, who was subsequently captured and, with his family paraded through Rome as a 'trophy'. The Roman victory established a long supremacy over large parts of the island, excluding the extremities of Wales and Northern Scotland, which then became the Roman Province, Britannia. But things did not always go smoothly for the Roman invaders. Although much of the country was pacified and 'Romanised' their brutality was never far from the surface and this resulted in armed rebellion by the natives often referred to as 'Barbarians' by the occupying forces.

A major uprising in 61AD led by Queen Boudicca against the ruthless actions of the then Governor Suetonius and his troops in the aftermath of the conquest of Anglesey, was put down after fierce fighting and brutality from both sides. In consequence the leadership in Rome came to see that conquest and subjugation achieved little. A new Governor Agricola, appointed in 78AD, after initially dealing with the more recalcitrant local tribes, established a more benevolent rule, reconciling native leaders to Roman rule and its way of life. The population of the Central and Southern part of Britain became 'Romanized', developing a dominant, Latin speaking, land owning class, well ordered, economically successful and generally peaceful way of life for many years: the so-called 'Pax Romana'. North of Hadrian's Wall the history is less clear but evidently the local tribal structure continued, developed, and maintained a sort of accommodation with the Romanized south.

Part 2 of this episode of the Romano British history will be in the next edition of Bonnyseen.



“Lessons From Auschwitz”-Programme

By Alysha McMillan & Rachel Lapsley

“Lessons from Auschwitz” (LFA), is an educational programme in which two people from secondary schools are selected to represent their school and become ambassadors for LFA. Roughly two hundred pupils from Scotland participate in this event per annum. The representatives for August 2018-May 2019 on behalf of St. Mungo’s High School, Falkirk, are Alysha McMillan, S6, Larbert and myself Rachel Lapsley, S6, Bonnybridge. As part of the LFA programme students participate in an orientation seminar in which they hear a survivors story. This year we were honoured to hear Eva Clarke inform us of her mother’s experience with racial prejudice, insight to her family life and her birth in Mauthausen concentration camp, Austria. Then we would participate in the trip itself and a follow up seminar to discuss our next steps and personal experience.

Throughout the flight it was as if our bodies were prepared before our minds were, as a sense of emptiness overtook us, hunger was no longer an issue and any thoughts went blank. Initially upon landing in Poland we were driven to Oswiecim, a town in which the Jewish way of life was prominent. This allowed us an in-depth approach on individuals themselves and enabled us to evaluate the 2019 LFA theme of “Torn from Home” and granted us further appreciation of our homes and communities.

Upon approaching Auschwitz I we saw that it was surreal and striking in appearance. The sun was shining which deceived our minds of the horrors we were about to experience. The first sight we passed was that of a dilapidated building which in a sense seemed so humble that it seemed impossible that such atrocities were carried out there. The sheer scale of the site was breath-taking. Both Alysha and I had previously believed that we would have a rather stoic approach to the experience yet this soon dissolved as we visited the various exhibitions; the shooting wall, the singular gas chamber on the premises and rooms upon rooms of individuals personal belongings. Yet, nothing could prepare us for Block 27 which holds home videos of those long gone. The particular video which caused us real sorrow and heartache, was a video of a young girl playing on a swing without a care in the world. Further gut wrenching emotions were stirred due to the adjacent room holding a book of names in which deaths were recorded.

continued



The drive up to Auschwitz – Birkenau was astounding and caused a blanket of silence to cover the vehicle especially as there were modern buildings and homes surrounding the extermination camp. We were shocked that people could live beside it as if it was a regular structure. Secondly, we were astounded at the size of the camp, as we believed that Auschwitz I was as big a site of evil you could get. This was not the case as it felt like the camp went on for mile upon mile and we felt physically sick upon hearing that there had been plans to expand it even further during the war. Although this was the extermination camp it should be noted it was also a labour camp, as during the mid-1940s tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews, who had been deported worked here. Such an experience was difficult to process as in the back of our minds we knew that this was where millions had taken their last breath.

Alysha and I plan to raise awareness of racism and prejudice through presentations, exhibitions, charity work and community projects by highlighting individuals who experienced prejudice and expand others knowledge on discrimination of various groups e.g. LGBTQ+ community, Jehovah witnesses, the handicapped and gypsies. In 2019, we shall focus on the theme of “Torn from Home” as well as commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide which occurred in 1994, over a 100 day period, in which approximately one million individuals were murdered.

TRAPPED : Jessie Hannah's Story



Jessie Hanna married John Hannah from Anderson Street in Bonnybridge and came to live in the village in 1951 where they brought up their children George and Jane. John's father, George, worked in Smith and Wellstood's and his mother, Helen, was Walter Alexander's sister. John started in the drawing office in Alexander's aged 13 years and continued his studies at night school. He served 49 years in the company and retired as assistant General Manager. As was the custom then, married ladies were not allowed to continue to work in certain occupations so Jessie made great use of her time doing voluntary work. This included Meals on Wheels, WRVS, Bonnybridge Community Centre and she was ex-President of the Ladies Guild.

***Just a typical hard working Bonnybridge family then?
Well not quite as Jessie has an amazing story to tell!***

Jessie was 14 years old in 1938 and ready to leave school when she received an exciting offer from her aunt and uncle, David and Nora. Aunt Nora was home for a visit from Antwerp where she and David ran a Licensed Grocers and ships Chandlers. They had two little boys Adrian, 8 months old and Anthony 16 months old and Nora asked if Jessie would like to go with her to Antwerp to help look after the boys so that she could assist in the running of the businesses with David. Jessie had no hesitation in saying yes, as this was a wonderful opportunity to live in a country with a different language and culture. It was a great life, for as well as looking after the boys, Jessie was able to explore Belgium and Holland with her aunt and uncle. Sometimes Nora and Jessie cycled all over Antwerp with the boys in the cycle baskets and often at weekends they were able to tour far and wide.



Nora

In 1939 Jessie travelled home for a visit to her family and then returned to Antwerp. One month later war was declared between Britain and Germany. Life for the family changed dramatically in May 1940 as the Germans invaded Belgium and the country surrendered in the face of such a large aggressive invading force. Like many others, they had no means of escaping Belgium as the docks had been bombed, the roads out of the country were gridlocked with families trying to flee and the Luftwaffe were bombing the lines of cars in the roads. It was a terrifying time, especially for Jessie, who was now the 'enemy' in occupied Belgium. (Aunt Nora had a Dutch passport so was safe from deportation) The initial shock subsided eventually and they all got on with trying to survive from day to day in the face of constant fear, curfews and growing lack of food supplies. They even had to ensure that the young boys did not speak in English outside of their home. Jessie witnessed first-hand the persecution of the Jews in Antwerp as they were forced to wear the Star of David armbands, had their business closed down and all the windows smashed before eventually disappearing as they were transported to concentration camps and their ultimate deaths. They lost many of their friends at this time who disappeared without trace. The fear for their own safety, and especially that of Jessie, became even worse when a letter arrived telling the family that Jessie had to report to the German headquarters as she was being transported to Germany for internment. She was 16 years old. David had many contacts through his business and he contacted everyone he could think of for help. The Burgomeister of Antwerp intervened and was able to secure a reprieve for Jessie. The reprieve was short lived as another letter arrived two months later with the same contents. When she read it Nora was in the shop weeping when the man who supplied their beer came in and asked what the problem was. He took the letter as he said he might be able to help. Later that night he came back and said it was fixed as he had been working in secret for the German intelligence for 10 years! Just as well he knew nothing of Uncle David's dealings on the black market!



David

Then in 1942 a large black car drew up as Jessie was getting the boys dressed to go out. She was asked for by name and told to pack a case as they were taking her to headquarters. She was put into a room with other young women who were all equally terrified. They were held for hours in silence with no food or water or any idea what was happening. In the late afternoon the fifteen women were loaded onto a truck and driven off to an unknown destination. It was dark when the truck stopped and they were pushed into a large room with two rows of camp beds and an old table.

continued

They discovered later that they were in an old army barracks which was abandoned and filthy. They did their best to clean it up with what they had and cold water. The food ration was disgusting black bread and margarine twice a day with one meal of greasy water with cabbage and gristle in it. Strangely, after two weeks in the camp they were told that their families would be visiting on Sunday! They were all so happy when they realised that they must still be in Belgium and not Germany. The visit was allowed to last only one hour and after tearful goodbyes they were left very depressed as they had no idea when and if they would ever see them again.

The worst news they had been dreading came a few weeks later. They were to be transported to Germany. In the meantime they were told that a doctor would be visiting the camp and if they had any health issues to ask to see him. Jessie had swollen glands so asked to see the doctor. He took one look at her neck and said she could not travel and must be sent back to her family. When she asked why he declared it looked like she had TB and would infect everyone else. Was this a doctor recruited by her Uncle? She was delighted to be escaping an unknown fate but felt really bad for all the other girls who were not so lucky as to fall ill. She had been in the camp for seven terrifying weeks. One of the girls she befriended, Eva, was a Jew who had been born in England and had a British passport. Jessie was really sad at this time as she had been unable to contact her family and she knew they would be desperately worried about her. Eva promised that if she could get a letter out through the Red Cross to the family in Scotland she would do this and Jessie said she would visit Eva's mother in Antwerp. She later discovered that her mum did indeed receive word that she was safe at that point. However, when she went to visit Eva's mother on her return to Antwerp she asked her to help sort out a complex knitting pattern. As it was the Jewish Sabbath Mrs Meinicoff was unable to do this and asked her to come back on Monday and she would help. Jessie went to the house on Monday but got no answer. She asked the next door neighbour if she knew where they were and that's when she learned they had been taken away by the Germans. Jessie never heard from the family again.

As the war dragged on life became more difficult and frightening. Food was very scarce and Uncle David traded on the black market as everyone did as this was the only way to survive. Their house was raided at gun point by soldiers looking for ration cards. They didn't find any, they were well concealed! But David was taken away for questioning and held for seven days. They lived the best they could and tried to shield the children from the worst of the situation. Anthony even started at the local primary school. Their health was generally poor with them suffering from the effects of malnutrition and stress. They suffered ulcers and David nearly died from pleurisy. Then on 6th June 1944, D-Day, the Allied forces landed in France. The war still raged on but in October 1944 they heard the amazing, thrilling sound of the bagpipes as a Scottish regiment marched along their street. Everyone was delirious with happiness and danced and cheered till they were worn out and hoarse. Two weeks later Nora's brother, Uncle George, walked into the shop! He was with the Welsh fusiliers and stayed in Antwerp for two weeks and brought them the first chocolate they had eaten in many years.

But their troubles were still not over. The Germans were driven back but started to fire V2 rockets into Antwerp to try to cripple the docks and stop the allies supply route to Belgium and killing hundreds of civilians in the process. To escape from the danger Jessie and the children were sent with another family to the Dutch coast. When out walking one day Jessie noticed a British consulate office and went in to ask if it was possible for her to get out of Holland and back home. She completed all the necessary forms and waited anxiously for word of repatriation as the war was still not over. When the V2 attacks stopped they went back to Antwerp and in May she received word to proceed to the docks where she would board a ship for home. She had to bid a tearful farewell to her Antwerp family but was looking forward so much to being with her parents again. It was a long and arduous journey for Jessie but she was well looked after all the way and was relieved and immensely happy to have survived her seven year ordeal in war torn Europe.

Greenhill Historical Society is indebted to Jessie, who is now 94years old, for sharing her remarkable story with us. P





THE UNSUNG HEROES 1957-1958

By John McPherson and Danny Deans

FOUR FACTS FROM THE 1957-58 FOOTBALL SEASON IN SCOTLAND

- 1 THE SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL TEAM** : Qualified for the World Cup 1958
- 2 LEAGUE CHAMPIONS** : Hearts by a margin of 13 points, scoring 132 goals in 34 games
- 3 SCOTTISH CUP WINNERS** : Clyde beat Hibs 1 – 0 in the Final, Attendance 95000
- 4 BONNYVALE STAR** : The Club won 5 Trophies during this single season

What's the connection between the above facts?

The Unsung Heroes in the title relate to all the backroom staff at every football club irrespective of whether they were operating at international, senior, junior, or juvenile football level as they seldom received the recognition they deserved for their efforts behind the scenes.

As neither of the authors achieved footballing immortality as members of the international squad, the League Champions or the Scottish Cup winners (we were only 15 years of age going on 16 during this period), we cannot comment on the backroom staff who obviously made a significant contribution to the success of the International Team, Hearts and Clyde, but we were both proud members of Bonnyvale Star Football Club which won 5 trophies within a single season. However this article is not about the players, but is instead dedicated to the backroom staff at Bonnyvale in 1957-58, who gave of their time, knowledge, effort, commitment and, no doubt, finances to their local club. Obviously many of the individuals referred to in this article have passed on, given the events described took place 63 years ago, but our belated recognition of these individuals is none the less heartfelt, long overdue and, to the best of our knowledge not recorded elsewhere.

The driving force behind the establishment of the club was Jock Black from Banknock, who, in our minds, was Bonnyvale's equivalent of Matt Busby at Manchester United or Bill Shankly at Liverpool. Jock was ably assisted by other volunteers, George Wilson, (Seabegs), Ian ("Dusty") Millar (Seabegs), Tommy Haswell (Bonnybridge) and Davy ("Soapy") Weir, (Bonnybridge). Also, one of the most important driving forces at the club was Tam Peebles, (Bonnybridge), who was in charge of the players' training. Every Tuesday and Thursday evening during the football season Tam's voice reverberated around Anderson Park imposing his rigorous fitness regimes on the players and ensuring there were no slackers. Last, but by no means least, Jimmy Torrance and Bob Knox who were the caretakers of the changing rooms at Anderson Park and were highly respected by everyone at the club Bonnyvale Star had two teams in 1957-58 season, (1) 16-18 year olds, and (2) 18-21 year olds. The two teams competed in the Stirlingshire Juvenile Leagues, and on matchdays, Jock Black, George Weir and Tam Peebles accompanied the 18-21's team while Ian Miller, Tommy Haswell and Davy Weir accompanied the under 18's. At their respective matches Tam Peebles and Davy Weir acted as first aiders in the event of injuries to players. Their "magic sponges" sodden with cold water, were regarded as instant cures for all known injuries on the field of play. There was no diving or play acting then, especially when Tam/Davy approached at speed with the magic sponge particularly on a cold winter day.

continued

The 1957-58 season was a particularly successful one when the club's scouting system, team selections, and the redoubtable Tam Peebles training regimes, all coalesced to deliver a total of five trophies for the club, two for the 18-21's and three for the 16-18's.

BONNYVALE STAR FOOTBALL CLUB SEASON 1957-1958



Back Row-left to right

Tam Peebles (trainer), Jimmy Torrance (Caretaker), Ian Miller, Jim Sneddon, Wullie Munroe?, Andrew Peat, Billy Crossan, John McPherson, Davy Provan, Henry Hutchins, Charlie ("Junior") Reid,
Eddie Hudson, "Pash" Halliday, Jim ("Hadji") Harrower, Alec "Tub Wilson"?, Jim "Shimmie" Cowan, John Duncan, Jock Black (wearing his unique Star blazer) and Bob Knox (Caretaker).

Middle Row-left to right

Danny Deans, Kohn Honeyman, Jim Kerrigan, John Snedden, Sammy Gray.

Front Row-

Ian ("Dusty") Miller, Arthur Duncan, Jim Gibson, Bob Meechan, Jim ("Punky") Reid, Bobby McSkimming, Alex Marshall, Davy Barr and Tommy Haswell.

Unfortunately George Wilson and Davy Weir were not present when the photograph was taken. Apologies for any mis-identification of any individuals or any wrong spelling of names.

"THEIR GHOSTS CAN STILL BE HEARD AS WE PASS BY ANDERSON PARK"



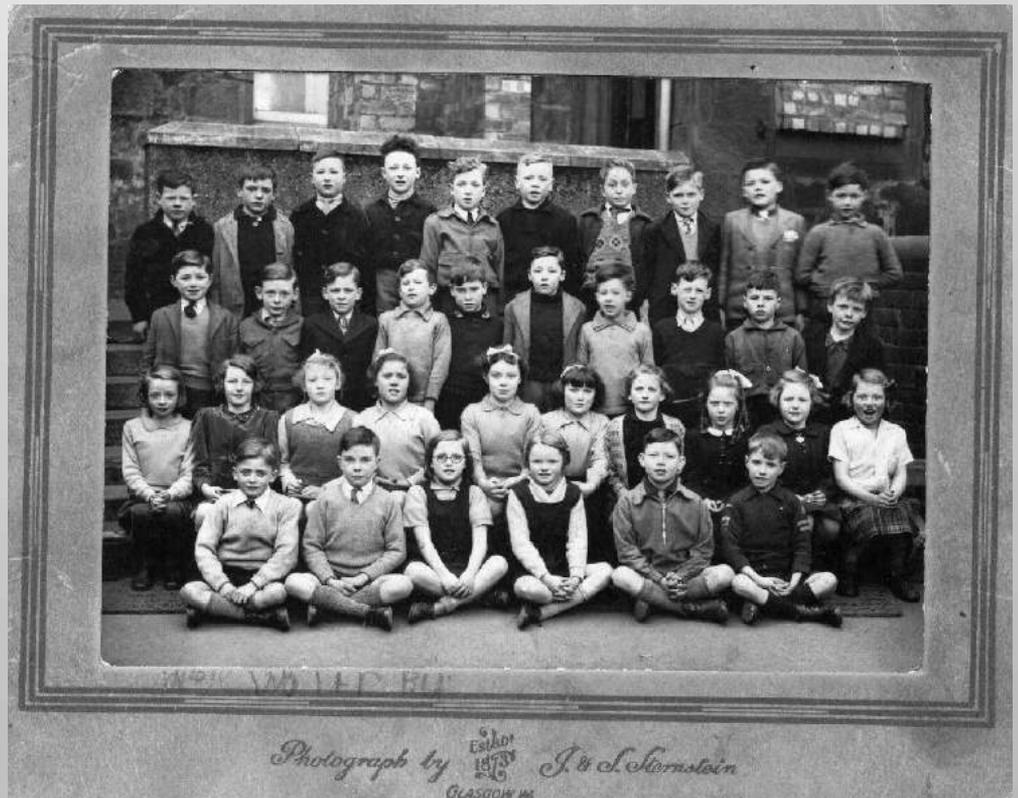
Bonnybridge Primary School 1945 Misses Ross' Class (Listed names are incorrect - real names now on photo.)



~~Back Row Left to Right
 Young, Young, Young, Young, Young,
 Peter Jeffrey, Alan Ogilvie
 William Burns, Duncan?, Robert
 Halliday, Danny Holmes, Frank
 McCormack
 2nd Row (left to Right)
 Ann?, Megan Rich, Harry
 Wallace, Agnes McPherson, ?
 Stella Watson, Bessie Holmes, ?
 McCoshie, Robert Lapsley
 3rd Row (left to Right)
 Doreen Bolton, Chrissie Linklater,
 Susan Ferguson, Betty Torrance,
 Mary Douglas, Anna Carmichael
 Chrissie Higgins, Margaret
 McKellar, Ann Moor
 Front Row (left to Right)
 Stanley Thorburn, Jim Fraser,
 Alan Reid, Ian McPhie, William
 Miller, Billy Gillies~~

Bonnybridge Primary School 1945 Miss Hyatt's Class (Correct names now listed on photo.)

~~Back Row Left to Right
 James Kennedy, Danny Holmes,
 Robert Halliday, Duncan Brown,
 William Burns, Alan Ogilvie, Peter
 Jeffrey, William Welsh, Neilson
 Young
 Second Row from top-Left to
 Right
 Robert Lapsley, Nettie Asplin,
 Bessie Holmes, Stella Watson, May
 Murray, Nan McPherson, Megan
 Rich, Anne Moor, Jim Lockhart
 Third row from top left to right
 Margaret McKellar, Chrissie
 Higgins, Ann Carmichael, Mary
 Douglas, Betty Torrance, Susan
 Ferguson, Barbara Linklater,
 Doreen Bolton
 Front Row (left to Right)
 Billy Gillies, William Miller, Ian
 McPhie, Alan Reid, Jim Fraser,
 Stanley Thorburn~~





Can anyone identify these Workers?



Anderson's Brickworks

Front row - Second right – Mary Deans
Back row-Second right-William Deans

Bonnybridge Brickworks



Dougal's Brickworks

Second row-Second right-Margaret Deans
Third row-Second left-Peter Welsh
Top row-first left-William Deans



Food for Thought

Rae Wilson

I recently noticed a newspaper headline saying “Dig for Brexit”. It reminded me of the wartime poster saying “Dig for Victory”. These posters appeared after German submarines started sinking the merchant ships which had delivered approximately 55 million tons of food each year to Britain before the outbreak of World War Two on 3 September 1939. Food rationing started on 16th of October. It was just as well that the government had prepared for this eventuality as by the end of October 1939 it was estimated that only 12 million tons of food would arrive in our ports that year.

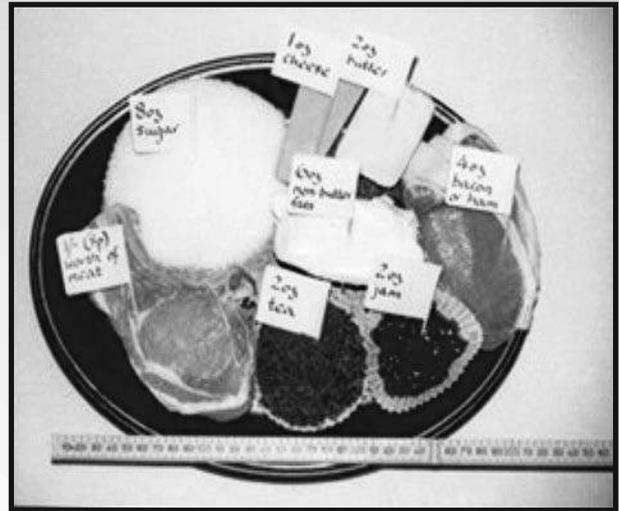
A typical ration for one adult per week was:

50g (2oz) Butter
225g (8oz) Sugar
50g (2oz) Tea
100g (4oz) Margarine
3pts (1.8 litres) Milk
100g (4oz) Bacon and Ham
1 Egg
Meat to the value of one shilling and sixpence
(*About 6p in today's money*)

It was quite a task for a busy housewife with no fridge, freezer or microwave to feed a family and local women were resourceful in stretching out the rations. Women would barter, for example swapping unused or unwanted sugar for tea or butter. Anyone who had a garden was encouraged to start growing vegetables and many kept chickens. Local golf courses including Glenbervie planted potatoes in their grounds. Everyone collected “broke” (food waste) to be given to anyone who kept pigs. In Denny, broke was collected, boiled and fed to their pigs by the Kay family. Can anyone remember who kept pigs in Bonnybridge during the war?

Even though the conflict ended in 1945, due to the parlous state of the economy post-war, rationing continued until 1954. I remember as a schoolgirl that we had sweet rations of 3oz a week and if you were lucky enough to have pocket money you could buy Rosebuds, Boilings and McCowan's Toffee from Mrs Reid's wee shop opposite Bonnybridge Public School. I particularly remember Rosebuds: they were pointy, pearlescent, pastel-coloured boiled sweets. I enjoyed their appearance more than their taste. I suspect a lot of us who didn't get sugar often never really developed a sweet tooth. However, I do remember my mother's excitement when Mrs Mochrie knocked on the door as she ran past with the cry, “Fleming's have chocolate... hurry!”

It occurs to me how spoiled for choice we are as we trundle round the supermarket loading our trolleys with food from all over the world. I think about how that generation of parents struggled to put food on the table, however, as a war baby who was 14 years old when rationing finally ended, I don't remember ever going hungry.



*Weekly Food Allowance 1941
JLP Archive Collection*

IRISH MILK SOUP

4 potatoes
1 onion
1 pint milk
1 small stick of celery
Half teaspoonful salt

Boil the vegetables in a small quantity of water.
Pass them through a sieve; return the mass to the water they were boiled in.
Add milk, bring to the boil.
Serve.





Johnny F McKeever

2/3/36 - 2/11/18



Johnny was born on 2nd March 1936 to John and Mary McKeever (nee Deans) at Laurel Bank Buildings, Bonnybridge before moving aged 1 year to 60 railway Buildings, Greenhill. Greenhill was a close knit community and some of the families there were; McAllister, McSkimming, Connor, Irvine, Struthers, Huntlow, McWilliams, Hanlon, Ogilvie, Campbell, McIntosh, Wilcox and Gourlay. Greenhill was a wonderful place to be young and living between the two railway lines never kept us awake! We were never bored with the large expanse of moor, a football pitch, swings and seesaws and lots of water running down the flat stone where you could cool off on a hot day.

Mr Wilcox ran a boxing booth at the back of Harris' Picture House where Scot Mid sits today. He trained Johnny in the art of boxing and Johnny proved to have a really strong left hook. He was also a great nature lover and this stemmed from his dad taking him to the moors for hours at a time. His dad told him he never wanted to hear of him ever harrying birds' nests like a lot of the other boys did in those days. They would watch stoats and weasels scurrying along the dry stone dykes, their only sustenance being blueberries, brambles and the odd turnip from the farmer's field. Johnny knew every bird by name and could identify birds by their chirp or song alone. It was a sad day when the missive arrived for us to move to Wheatlands Avenue but we consoled ourselves with the knowledge that we would not have to share two outside toilets with twelve other families!

Johnny worked alongside his dad in the Creosote works in his early teens and witnessed a tragedy as he was looking out over the railway one day and saw a man being killed by a train. This was a dreadful experience for anyone but especially for such a young lad. He was a skilled artist and created some beautiful pieces of art work. He also created and painted large cardboard cut outs for the floats at the Bonnybridge Gala. Johnny took up painting and decorating as a career and worked with Steins Brickworks and the local council.

He was conscripted for National Service to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders along with his pals Archie Riddle, Eddie MrDermott and Tom Lafferty. They saw action in the Greek/Cypriot War in 1956. Johnny always said it was a forgotten war even although 350 British Troops are buried in Cyprus. Johnny's boxing talents were put to good use as the Argyll's selected him for their boxing team. His other passion was music and he had an enviable collection of records including Traditional Jazz, Skiffle and Country and Western. He went to a Lonnie Donegan concert in Glasgow and was thrilled to be able to meet Lonnie back stage.

In 1978 a Jiving contest was held in the BP club in Grangemouth and videoed by Granada TV Company. Clubs from all over Scotland entered and the ones from Glasgow were expected to win as they had the reputation as being the very best Jivers. But Johnny and his sister, Margaret Winters, were the winners and they brought the cup back in triumph to Bonnybridge Social Club!

The last years of his life were the happiest with his partner, Mary Graham, and their five children. He took his children and grandchildren to Chacefield woods and taught them about nature as his father had done with him. Despite his final illness Johnny never complained and showed tremendous good humour and courage to the end and was an inspiration to all his family and friends.





The Survivors for those born in the 1940's

We were born before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, contact lenses, videos, and the pill.

We were born before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens.

Before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint was that!)

We thought Fast Food was what you ate in Lent.

A Big Mac was an oversized raincoat and crumpet was what you had with some tea.

We existed before 'house husbands' and computer dating.

Sheltered accommodation was where you waited for the bus.

We were before disposable nappies and buggies were midges

'Hardware' was nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word

In those days smoking was fashionable, 'grass' was mown 'coke' was kept in the coal house

A joint was what you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was what you cooked in.

'Rock music' was a baby's bedtime lullaby; Buckie was a place in the North of Scotland

A wireless had to be plugged in and Blue tooth was something to seriously worry about.

But we did survive!

And they wonder why there is a generation gap!

Memories

It is always amazing and much appreciated by all in Greenhill Historical Society when we get feedback from our readers. After Alex Burns' story of his cycle tour of Scotland with his friends appeared in the last edition he received this wonderful poem from Hannah Bateman. Thank you so much Hannah.

Travellers

By Hannah Bateman

When I read my Bonnyseen the years went rolling back. I remember well the likely lads Arthur, Stewart and Jack! My thoughts strayed back to Alex with his precious heartfelt tale. We were lass and lad together back then in Bonnyvale.

Burns gave the reader a 'backie' and we cycled all the ways. My old heart felt much lighter as I glimpsed our yesterdays. So Bonnyseen keep issuing Your fine and well-read pages You bring tears and laughter as you travel down the ages.

I'm Fine Thank You

There is nothing the matter with me,
I'm as healthy as can be.

I have arthritis in both my knees,
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to be on the street,
Sleep is denied me night after night,
But every morning I find I'm all right.
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I am in.

The moral of this tale I unfold –
That for you and me, who are growing old,
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin,
Than to let folks know the shape we are in.

Unknown author

SCOUT CAMP IN LONDON 1951

I was interested to read in the May, 2018 issue of "Bonnyseen" the report by Peter Gardner of the Bonnybridge boy scouts camping in London in 1951.

As one of the lucky boys I well remember the stir caused by 30 boys parading through Central London all wearing kilts.

While we were visiting the Festival of Britain, a group of us was approached by a photographer who wanted a picture of us for publication in Australian newspapers. We duly obliged and in due course prints arrived back in Bonnybridge.

I now have difficulty fitting names to the faces but I do know that I am the very wee one at the front.

Best wishes,

Bill Gracie (Cork, Ireland)



Bonnybridge Children

Frankie Higgins and Mae (Thomson) Blackwell



CAN YOU HELP WITH A PLACE NAME?

Good Evening

Ex Bonnybridge born and bred until I left in January 1968 to join the RAF, now settled with family in Newcastle-upon-Tyne – family still live in Bonnybridge and my sister sends me your magazine.

I am actively doing family research on both paternal and maternal sides, and have just come across the wedding details of my great aunt, Isabella Kerr Wells to a Stephen Wardlaw, married July 1932 at St. Helen's, High Bonnybridge. My query is to find a historical map around that period as the home address for Isabella is given as Milnquarter Place, Bonnybridge, but no elder relatives or friends can recall such a place. There was a Milnquarter House, that became the offices of Lane & Girvin, and googling now shows a newer road at Greenhill.

Also one of the witnesses to the marriage is a Joan G Wells, address given as Hall House, Bonnybridge, again no one has ever heard of that place.

Just in the passing, on my maternal side, on your edition No. 15 regarding the Ford Bridge by the memorial, my mother's birth place is given as Ford Mill, which was often pointed out to me when we journeyed between my home in Balfour Street to either the old school on the Main Street or my Grandparents in Gateside Avenue, where I was born-my Great Grandmother and Dr Reilly assisting at my birth.

On my maternal side my great grandparents, William McMurdo and Isabella Kerr Wells moved into Bonnybridge from Dumfries, he in search of better employment. However in 1928 great grandfather suffered a fatal accident at Stein's Clay Mine from a heavy fall of clay, and tragically his son, also named William McMurdo Wells suffered a similar fate 10 or 11 years later in the same mine.

Thank you in advance of any information you can shed on my query, I very much enjoy the magazine, and belated congratulations on your 10th Edition.

Best wishes,

William Wells Houston



Forth & Clyde Canal

