

Exploring the effects of the Past on the Present and Future of our Community

Bonnyseen

The free magazine from Greenhill Historical Society

Issue 4 : APRIL 2012



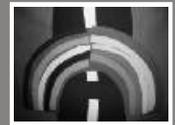
Inside this Issue :

Scottish Women's Rural Institute
A special collection of
Smith & Wellstood memories
Bonnybridge Recollections:
Harris's Picture House, Annie Strand
Diary and Letters of Piper McNeilage in WW1



Cover image by Ken White,
Smith & Wellstood Mural Artist
www.kenwhitemurals.co.uk
With grateful thanks

This Edition is kindly sponsored by
**Central Demolition, Bonnybridge
and The Antonine Medical Practice**



Welcome to the fourth edition of Bonnyseen! We're now into our second year of production and are delighted to receive joint sponsorship from Central Demolition and the Antonine Medical Practice (Drs Peter and Bridget McCalister, John Weir and Louise Marshall). With such generous sponsorship we are able to print more copies, increase our page numbers and continue our work. You can read about the sponsors' organisations in the next few pages. Also, as you can see, this issue has a different design; we have enlisted the brilliant help of Brian Maddison of Maddison Print Services. This edition is a mix of articles from current and ex-residents, living in Bonnybridge and as far away as Australia. On the back page you can read about our latest plaque dedication, this time to commemorate the achievements of Agnes Henderson. We are always pleased to receive articles, ideas for articles, and requests for information which we will happily print.

Gillian Cowell

FIND US AT

www.greenhillhistoricalsociety.org.uk or greenhillhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
Meetings held at Bonnybridge Community Education Centre, Fridays 2pm



Bonnybridge Doctors from the 1930s to the Present Day by Margaret Murray

SPONSORS

This article is based on an interview Rae Wilson and I undertook with Dr Rankine earlier this year. Dr Rankine is a particularly fondly-remembered doctor in the area, who wanted to tell us straight away that from his first day in Bonnybridge until he retired, he would always be grateful to the people of Bonnybridge. When he came here as a young doctor with his wife and young family they were made very welcome. At that time they did not have a house of their own and they lodged with Mrs McLaren, where they stayed until they bought their house in Dennyloanhead. We are grateful to Dr Rankine for giving his time to us, and we hope you will enjoy this short summary of the history of the doctors in the area.

The first surgery was founded in the early 1930s and situated at Bonnybridge Toll. The surgery and chemist were joined by an internal door which allowed the doctors to quickly access items needed. Dr Pearson was one of the first doctors in the practice and he sometimes visited his patients in a pony and trap. Dr Pearson retired whilst the practice was still at the Toll and so Doctors Young and Rankine took over. Sadly, Dr Young died and Dr Millar joined the practice which by this point was growing rapidly. Dr Weir later joined the practice with Dr Millar and Dr Rankine, and Dr Allan joined Dr Reilly. Dr Reilly's practice was originally situated at the side of his house.

Dr Reilly was another very much loved gentleman - not only as a doctor but as a friend to his patients. Regardless of the practice they were registered in he worked very hard for everyone, particularly the aging residents of the village.

The increasing need for doctors in the Bonnybridge area was connected to the rise of the industry in the area, as more people moved into the village in order to work in the huge number of industries here. The doctors were all kept very busy; as well as looking after patients who attended the surgery and house calls, Dr Reilly and his partners were also on call for all emergencies in the foundries, brickworks and mines in the Bonnybridge area stretching from Allandale and the edge of Dennyloanhead to the three bridges at Camelon. As well as this, the doctors worked a rota system at weekends, so that a doctor could always be reached or called upon to assist if necessary.

The current clinic on Larbert Road was built and officially opened in 1990. We now have two practices at the health centre, one of which is the newly named The Antonine Medical Practice. And still Bonnybridge is growing!

We are delighted to receive a very generous donation from the Antonine Medical Practice towards the production of this magazine, and thanks in particular to Dr Peter McCalister for his continued support and interest in our work.



Colin Peat worked with his father when he left school, reclaiming slates and timber. After the death of his father when Colin was only 17 years old, he took over the business and later formed it into CAP (Colin Alistair Peat) demolition. Colin's then girlfriend, now wife, Marie left school aged 16 to help with the administration of the fledgling business. In 1993 he formed a partnership with Ross Craig and the business was renamed Central Demolition Ltd.

The original site of the yard was behind the house Colin and his family occupied which was originally Broomhill Farm. The site the company now occupies was originally Chatton Foundry, then Stirling Fibres. Central Demolition is the biggest employer in Bonnybridge with around 180 employees.

The Company carries out contracts throughout Scotland and as far south as Scarborough and Birmingham. Most of their work in recent years has been clearing land in preparation for house building as the main contractors. Diversification has been essential for the health of the company and they are

recycling large amounts of materials including slates, scrap metals, stone and timber. They have a strong Environmental policy and recycle 92% of the materials they handle. They have built a washing plant and produce large quantities of aggregate for road building and repairs and for drainage systems.

Colin also owns Antonine Development and this company has planning permission to build houses, nursing homes, leisure and hotel facilities on various lands in Bonnybridge, North Lanarkshire, Avonbridge, Loch Long, Arrochar and Inverkeithing

Woodchips livery yard is another of the Peat family's enterprises and this is built on the former Creosote works at Greenhill. (There are still two creosote tanks on the site and the advice was to leave them untouched, as the pollution resulting from moving them could be very problematic.) The livery business is managed by Colin's wife Marie and daughter Nicole. Colin and Marie's younger daughter, Chloe, manages the newly built Cattery on the woodchips site.

We wish them every success for the future.

The company was formed by a Bonnybridge man, extended by friends, colleagues and family, is firmly based in Bonnybridge and there are no plans to move anywhere else in the future. The members of Greenhill Historical Society would like to express their gratitude to Central demolition for their generous support of the Bonnyseen magazine.



Henry Harris

by Mae Blackwell

HENRY HARRIS

(1883 – 1948)

It is 100 years since Henry Harris opened his Picture House which gave the people of Bonnybridge great pleasure for many years.

Henry came from a family of travelling people, the second youngest of two sons and five daughters. He arrived in Bonnybridge a young man with his young wife. He had spent his childhood and youth going from one showground to another, but he was anxious to settle down, not wishing to spend his life as his ancestors had. With the help of his wife, a married sister and her husband, the Harris Picture House was founded. He was one of the pioneers of the motion picture industry and up to this point his business was a travelling show with variety acts and films but he now wanted to concentrate only on films.

He first set up his caravans on, what was at that time, open ground and is now the site of the War Memorial and Garden. His Picture House, or Picture Palace as it was sometimes called, was officially opened on 23rd December 1912. On the first anniversary, Mr Harris gave free entertainment for the children and the elderly of the area. By 1914 he had stopped the variety acts and moved completely to films.

As time went on he was able to rent a piece of land which included the area where Scotmid is currently situated. The caravans and tent were set up and it would be on this site that the picture house would remain. It must have been difficult in the first years as film hiring was at this time in its infancy and very expensive. However, Henry worked hard and gradually he was able to make some improvement to his venture by having a wooden building erected in place of the tent.

By this time his family was growing and they were attending the local school and getting on well with the other children. Henry was grateful to the people of the village for accepting him and always tried to help the community in any way he could. Concerts were sometimes held in the picture house run by various organisations and Henry never charged for the use of his premises. He was a very generous person and supported many charities.

Eventually, as the business prospered, he was able to purchase the land which was occupied by the caravans and the cinema. Then around 1930 he had his picture house built in brick and extended it to seat around 650 people. Wanting to keep up with the times he now introduced "talkie" films to the people of Bonnybridge and installed two of the latest talkie projectors. He then built a house on the site and said goodbye to his caravan.

His family by this time was four sons and three daughters but sadly the youngest son,





Annie Strand

by Rae Wilson



Charlie, was disabled and died while still a pupil at school. His wife, who had not been well for some time, passed away not long before Charlie. This must have been a very difficult time for him. Eventually Henry re-married and had another two sons and one daughter.

1935 brought another tragedy to his life and to the village also. Henry's sister died and the funeral was arranged. Two days before the funeral Henry's niece wanted to go to Falkirk to buy an outfit for the funeral, and Tommy (Henry's son) offered to take her by car. At the last minute Tommy's younger sister decided to go with them. Halfway between Bonnybridge and Falkirk the car was involved in an accident with a bus and all three were killed. The sympathy of the whole area went out to him at this terrible tragedy.

The outbreak of war brought many changes. Two of his family were now married, and soldiers were billeted in the village. Henry's war effort was to open his picture house free of charge to all servicemen in uniform every night of the week. With three or four changes of programme every week the soldiers could not believe their luck.

About 1946 Henry was involved in a car accident and was seriously injured. After several weeks in hospital he appeared to have made a good recovery and did manage to get back to his usual place at the cinema. Sadly, he passed away quietly and unexpectedly after a short illness on 3rd August 1948 aged 65.

He will be always be remembered as one of the pioneers of the motion picture industry in Scotland, a hardworking and generous man, who without the advantage of an education, gave his family the start in life that he did not have.



Annie celebrated her 100th birthday on the 2nd March and we would like to take this opportunity to send her our congratulations and best wishes. Annie is the niece of Henry Harris who owned the Picture House in the village.

Annie's parents were married in Bellshill in 1910. Her father served in the First World War and died in Perth Military Hospital in 1916. When Annie was born in Bonnybridge, the family lived initially in a caravan on the ground, which is now the Memorial Park and subsequently in grounds behind the picture house. She was educated at Bonnybridge Public School and remembers one day taking her three year-old brother Henry with her, causing great alarm when her mother couldn't find him.

Annie has always enjoyed life in the community: being a member of the Parish Church, an outdoor bowler and founder member of the indoor bowling club. She has fond memories of two visits to family in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s with her brother Henry. They enjoyed the stopover in Singapore and visited the famous Raffles Hotel where she enjoyed the equally famous Gin Sling.

She still takes a keen interest in life in the community and we would like to thank her for allowing this interview and her continuing interest in our magazine.



Did You know....

Can you remember....

by William Parker

Did you know.....

- At one time, Bonnybridge District had:4 railway stations, 6 schools, 6 foundries, 12 brickworks, over 20 mines, pits and quarries, 8 churches and 8 post offices!
- Cock fighting took place in Bonnybridge in the late 19th century.
- Christianity came to the area in the 5th century.
- There is still one unsolved murder in the District.
- Two men were killed at Nobels Explosive Factory/store at Clayknowes near Greenhill in 1911.

Can you remember.....

- Mr Arthur Thomson launching his converted fishing boat into the canal at Freddie Forrest's yard – and it sank straight to the bottom of the canal!
- Putting potato skins and peelings into your swill bin or onto your coal fire.
- Sargeant Turpie in the little police Morris Minor.
- Beetle crushers, D.A. Haircuts, Brylcreem, Bouffons, Big Perms and Gingham dresses.
- The Boomerang and Beezer comics, cinnamon and black licquorice sticks, gobstoppers and parma violets.
- Gas street and house lighting, mangles, washboards and steamies – Lux and OMO washing powder, carbolic soap.
- Doctors – Millar, Rankin, Reilly and Young Garden Fetes at St. Helen's Church, Gala Days and Bonnybridge Highland Games. Cricket matches at Smith & Wellstood.

Can you remember these places?

- Greenhill water tower
- Prefabs in many areas of Bonnybridge
- Wooden houses in Paterson Place
- Taylors wooden shop in High Bonnybridge
- Wiggie' Urquharts shops
- The tiny shop in Glenyards
- Fritter shop in Dennyloanhead
- Hutchisons Taxi office
- The sweet shop in Bonnybridge where Dickson Middleton is now at Bonnybridge Toll

Requests for information, photographs, slides, videos, etc.:

School songs, poems, stories, etc. about the Bonnybridge area

Photographs of Broomhill, St Joseph's and Dennyloanhead primary schools

Singers, groups or bands, choirs, etc. in the local area

Sporting photographs and memorabilia
Old mining lamps, tokens, Army, Navy, Air Force items, etc.

Any information about Greenhill Co-op and wooden houses in Paterson Place

NB: Thank you to Mr Joe Ferguson of Paterson Place for information already received.



Smith & Wellstood "Hello Girl"

by Irene (Fyfe) Anderson

As a former employee of Smith & Wellstood (Telephonist) in the early fifties, I was pleased to read your magazine with the interesting stories of Bonnybridge and especially the past history of the company and its founders.

My husband to be, Alex, was then one of the Order Department staff when I commenced work there. We can well recall the many folks we came into contact with during our days there.

My lasting memories are of a happy time; being a Telephonist means you quickly get to know the staff, from top management to mail boys. It was a busy switchboard with calls to and from around the country, and the company branches in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Dublin and South Africa.

Two telephone boxes were situated at the top of the General Office and were frequently used by the works employees and apprentices to make outside calls, which they paid me for on completion. Two regulars I remember, wearing their small white aprons around their waist, were David Holmes (of Rangers and Falkirk football fame) and Billy Gillies, whose likeable dad was the Company Cashier. Both aforementioned became well known to me, and, as a result I received dances

at the weekly dance night at the Wellstood Huts from both. Ladies had to wait to be invited to dance with the gentlemen! As I have already mentioned many folks come to mind, and a few do stand out:

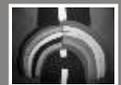
- Miss Humphries who interviewed me and gave me my job;
- Mr White – Office Manager
- Andrew Stirling – Purchase Department
- Bob Torrance – Private Car Garage
- Hannah Roy – Ledger Department
- Dave Malcolm – Invoice Department
- John Weir – Stationery
- Alex McTaggart – Export Department
- Joe Curran – Commissionaire
- James Teeling Smith

I could fill pages! I also remember their extension numbers!

I left the company to marry Alex in 1954 and went to live in London, where he was employed in the Smith & Wellstood office in Conduit Street, London. Later we returned to Scotland and Alex worked at W. Alexander & Sons, Brown Street, Camelon, until his retirement. During those years we lived for some time in Bonnybridge, where Alex was born and grew up. We have continued our friendships and interest in the district till this day.



FEEDBACK



Many thanks to everyone who sends us messages and information. We are trying to get through them all and this is taking some time as we are only a small group, so thank you for your patience.

We have received amazing photographs and information from Elinor McCartney (nee Henderson) and we are very grateful to her. She writes: "My gran Henderson lived at station cottages until they flooded in the spring floods, then she moved in with us at Stirling. My grandfather was a railwayman.....my aunt ran away to take up nursing. Later, I was evacuated to my other grans at Paterson Place (112 Main Street) and spent a good couple of years enjoying school there. I am still in touch with classmates. My grandfather, Andrew Paterson, worked in the S & W Foundry as did my mum during the war. My granny P was previously the cook to the Cockburns who also had a foundry. She taught me to cook on her range bursting black puddings etc. and a good broth with just enough barley (the measure of a good cook)."

Sandy Beveridge sent us this email from Canada in relation to Phil's piece on The Battle of Bonnymuir in the last edition. He writes: "Phil, thank you so much for sending me Bonnyseen with your article on Bonnymuir. It was great, and thank you so much for including the photo of my dad. I also saw the photograph of the Radical Pend plaque. I was the guy who drilled the holes and bolted it to the pend! When the plaque was installed there was a parade. Winnie Ewing from the SNP and Billy Buchanan were also there. This was in the months just before I emigrated to Canada – in January 1982. I will keep this magazine for all my life and hand it down to my grandchildren.

Many thanks Phil,
Aye Sandy"

This is the second, and final, installment of the story of **Moira Mann's** father John. Moira tells how the Ross family joined six other Scottish families in another continent, with the last section detailing her father's retirement from Smith & Wellstood. This article serves as a memorial to the life of an amazing man, by his daughter.

In my fourth year, 1950, my parents emigrated to South Africa. Seven families were going to Springs, Transvaal, near the Nuffield Industrial Estate where a new Smith and Wellstood foundry had been built. The other families were two Moffats, the Rileys, the Drummonds, the Buchanans, the Goodwins and ourselves. My dad's younger brother Robert (Bob) was already there with his new bride, Doris Mann, also from Bonnybridge - easier for my parents, I'm sure, to have relatives in this strange, fascinating land.

My dad was foreman in the Nuffield foundry, supervising black Africans. He showed interest in his workers and told mum and me many tales about activities in the compound where they lived with their families. He became very popular as it was unusual for a white man to be friendly with black workers under apartheid. My dad and I would be walking in main street when we would hear "Boss John, Boss John", and a black figure, grinning and waving madly on the other side of

the road, would point at me and say "piccanini". My dad would say "aye . . . aye" and wave back.

After almost 13 years, we came back to Scotland. The Wellstood had changed from making Esse stoves and were now manufacturing catering equipment. Bob had been back for years and had told dad jobs were available. Dad never wanted to leave South Africa but mum had always been homesick and afraid of the unrest presenting itself by 1963. She didn't want to get caught in a bloody uprising, which some were predicting. So dad agreed to come home.

As soon as we arrived, he was sent to London for training. Once back, he enjoyed going all over Scotland installing S&W catering equipment. He mentioned being at Woolworths in Glasgow one day, or "we were in Dumfries" or "Lanark". Later he stayed in the foundry more, as S&W had started making woodburning stoves again. Dad eventually retired at 68, although he didn't want to, but mum thought he should. However, before long he was recalled. S&W wanted to bring back a previously successful stove, the Dragon. They couldn't find anyone who had worked with it, and asked dad if he had. Yes, as early as his apprenticeship! He was asked to oversee refitting the Dragon and we didn't see him for dust. It lasted only months, but he was happy.



Seven families who went out from Scotland to work for Smith & Wellstood: second image is "John Ross".

Two things make me sad regarding my dad's life at S & W. The first is, due to the company's financial difficulties in the 70s, and numerous changes of management and directors, I feel his long association with the firm - spanning 52 years – had not been duly acknowledged when he finally hung up his dungarees. He was given a cheque for £50.00 - not quite £1 for every year - and told to buy something, which they could present to him at an official leaving ceremony. Mum and dad together chose a clock to hang on their fireplace wall. In his farewell speech, Alfred Mann, my father in law, who was in office management, and chosen to do the presentation, said that one of the most remarkable features of my dad's working life was the fact that he had never, ever, been late for work. As far as I can recall, he was never off ill either. This says it all about the kind of man he was.

The second thing that saddens me is the fact he didn't appear on the foundry's wonderful mural which used to grace the wall of the foundry beside the canal. There were many familiar faces on it, including workers in the foundry, but dad had retired by then. He might have been working on the Dragon, but he was away from the part the artist had sketched. Nobody there would know his history or how he deserved his place on the mural. So dad, this is for you. Your little bit of fame.

Dad died in 1986 with lung cancer, aged 77 years. He was a fresh air fiend, and walked instead of taking the car when he could, so it seemed so unfair. His flame, however, will burn forever brightly in my heart.



My name is Margaret Aytoun (now McDougall) and I was born in 13 Singer Place, Bonnybridge on 23rd July 1936. Singer Place belonged to Smith and Wellstood's where my father was employed as a moulder. When I left school I went to work in the B.A.T factory (British American Tobacco Co.). While I was working in the B.A.T. I also had a part time job in Harris' Picture House in the evenings and at the Saturday morning matinees. I was the usherette for a few years and I was paid 12/6d (the equivalent of 75p) which was a bit of pocket money for me. When the cashier, Agnes Forbes and the film operator Jimmy Candlish got married I got the job of cashier which meant I had to work until 9.00pm. Miss Ann Strand sold ice cream at 9.00pm before the second showing of the films and if she couldn't manage I used to fill in for her. Ann is related to Harris and still lives in Bonnybridge. She will be 100 years old in March 2012 and is looking forward to a telegram from the queen. Another relative, Francis Harris lives in Wheatlands Avenue. Tuesday evening was my night off from the Picture House and I used to go to Falkirk to the pictures! The seating in Harris' Picture House was 6d for front wooden seats, known as 'the dumps', 1/- for soft seats and 1/9d for the back stalls where the couples sat. The queue for the film shows stretched from the Picture House out to the pavement and along to the old co-op building and there was no guarantee you would get in as it was always so popular.

I remember paying Shepherd money and Rechabites money in the Lesser Hall for mum and dad. These schemes were set up to provide sick pay if dad was ever off work. Mrs Dunsmore collected the Shepherd money and sometimes I was sent to her house in the Main Street with the money. She always had whitening on her steps and this can be clearly seen in some of the old photographs of the Main Street. Her son Andrew is a member of Bonnybridge Bowling Club. The Lesser Hall was behind the Public Hall and I was in some of the Pantomimes that were performed there and I have a photo of Andrew Dunsmore as leading man.

I have a question I hope someone can solve. There is an old photograph of Bridge Street with a tall chimney in it. This is where the new Tesco has been built. Does anyone know what this is?

(Margaret's memories have been serialised into three parts, with Parts II and III appearing in the next editions).

A friend in Denny recently sent me a copy of the current edition of the Bonnyseen magazine and I am so impressed by the presentation and content that I would like to comment on it and add some memories. Your group stands out as it embraces industry as part of the local heritage. Often heritage groups are dominated by people who tend to portray industry as polluters of rivers and landscape spoilers. This is true in many cases (I remember the smell and colour of the Carron & Bonny in the 1950s!). However, we cannot ignore the fact that many generations of our population have spent a good proportion of their lives working in these establishments, making long lasting friendships while doing some useful work. What you are doing is keeping the cherished memories of those working days alive. Industry gave us the means to earn a living to support our families and the satisfaction of knowing that we contributed to the manufacture of goods that were useful to the community and worldwide.

Congratulations for giving such a balanced view of the past.

My name is Tom Rollo and I am from Perth Western Australia where I have lived since I left Denny in 1963. I was born in Bonnybridge but spent most of my childhood years in Denny. For a short time I lived in Waverley Place in High Bonnybridge and attended the Greenhill School. My best guess is that was in 1947/48. I have three distinct memories of my days at Greenhill School but not much more. I will be very interested to hear from anyone who also attended the School during that time who has further information or relevant photographs.

Firstly, we had to catch the school bus in High Bonnybridge for the commute to the School. However if we (just) missed it, a fast walk (or run) along the side of the railway would generally get us there ahead of the bus. As walking along the railway was 'strictly forbidden' we had to hide until the bus arrived, then try and mingle in with the rest. Unfortunately there was often a 'wee clype' who would pass on the names of the 'offenders' to the Teacher who then dispensed the mandatory punishment. Unfortunately I seemed to be a regular recipient of 'the strap'

Some of us would go up on to the moor at the back of the school and 'play' around the Peat bogs at lunch break. Of course, this was also strictly forbidden (I guess that was the only reason we went there) and once again my hand met 'Mr Strap' each time I was caught which was too often.

Our teacher was very progressive for the time as she encouraged us left handed students to write naturally with a backhand slope instead of trying to make us contortionists in order to be able to write as right handed persons. This had a profound effect on me because I was always able to resist attempts by later teachers to 'make me conform' just by quoting her.

I was interested in the article regarding the gas lamps in Bonnybridge. My grandfather Lewis Elder Young (1888- 1966), was a lamplighter for many years, right up to change over to electric lighting in the late 1940's to early 1950's. His main job was that of a Clay miner at Dougalls pit. He was also an occasional chimney sweep and always had a few funny stories to tell about his days 'sweeping the lums', especially when the brush went down into the wrong fireplace! His payment for this onerous task was often 'see you later Louie'

Prior to 1941, his home was Allanhill Cottage in Falkirk road next to Anderson Park. This is where he and Janet brought up five children. I was born there, as was one of my sisters. The cottage 'survived' until 2010 when it was



demolished to make way for a new development. On the left is a picture of him and his wife Janet and my mother, Margaret Anderson McDonald Young, taken in 1919.

Lewis was a keen member of the Loyal Order of Shepherds which was basically a Friendly Society where people contributed a weekly amount as 'Insurance.' For many years he was the 'Sick Steward' and he travelled around Bonnybridge collecting subscriptions and paying out 'sickness benefit' to members who were off work. I remember going with him to a couple of the 'Shepherds Walks' in Glasgow. A special bus was hired for the trip from Bonnybridge. Many lodges would assemble then parade to a church service. They were bright, colourful affairs with all the members wearing their regalia and many carrying Shepherds crooks.

The information on Lewis Elder has been compiled with the assistance of his son Tom who still lives in Bonnybridge. Tom is an ex Smith & Wellstood and E.R Moffat man.

My grandmother (Janet McDonald Young) was the great granddaughter of John and Janet Anderson. That family was responsible for donating the land that became Anderson and Jenny's parks in Bonnybridge as well as Anderson Park in Denny.

Their grandson, David Anderson (1847-1924), built the 'public' hall in Denny that later became the Cinema De Luxe then the Bingo Hall. I understand it was demolished recently. I have been fortunate to inherit his shoulder sash with his badges attached. I guess there are not too many of them in Australia.

As noted above I would be very interested to hear from anyone (even the 'wee clype' if still around) in regard to Greenhill or other historical issues. I hope to visit Bonnybridge in September and will gladly meet up with anyone in regard to the above.

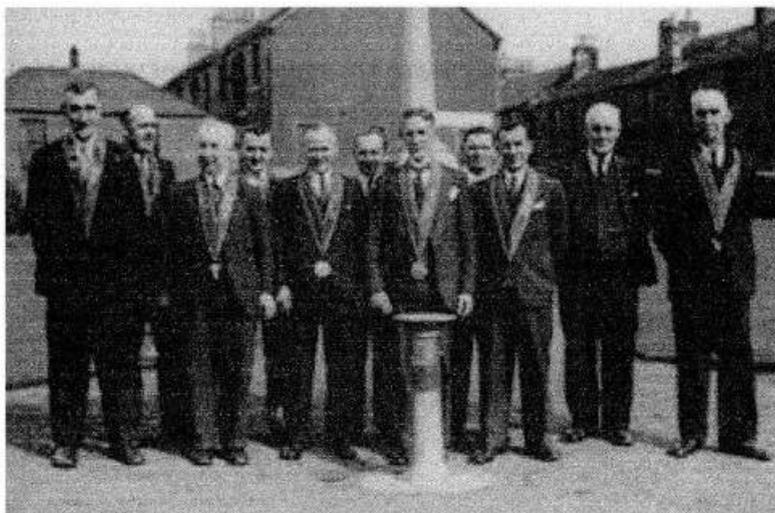
One of my other hobbies is genealogy. I have produced family trees and narrative reports covering the Rollos, Youngs, MacDonalds and Andersons as well as the Fergusons and Waughs from Bothkennar. These are available to share with interested parties.

My contact email is

tomr9582@hotmail.com

Ps: It is great to see you publish in a large font that is of great assistance to the 'oldies' - keep up the good work.

The Shepherds in Bonnybridge



L to R : Lewis Young, John Dunsmore, John Torrance, Matt McNeilage and William McCluskey
Around Fountain : Andrew Niven, Harry Lee and John Gillies

Strange as it may seem the moving power behind the formation of our branch was a local farmer, Mr Tom Scott who had been impressed by the work done by the first institute in the world started by a farmer in Stoney Creek Canada. As a result of his prompting, the inaugural meeting of the branch was held on the 19th October 1925 in the Maxwell Muller Hut. At this meeting 27 ladies from Greenhill and the surrounding villages were addressed by Miss Howard, the central area organiser, who explained the aims of the movement. After discussion it was decided to start a branch for a trial period of six months, after which Miss Howard would return and a final decision would be made.

Thereafter a working committee was chosen, the first president being Mrs Leonora St. John, who in the years to follow gave enthusiastic and inspired leadership to the members of the institute.

Younger readers in this highly organised transport age may be amused to learn that it was decided to hold the meetings once a month, on the Monday evening nearest to the full moon. No! This was not done to ensure that the local witches might attend but simply to help the "human" members, who were spread far and wide throughout the district, to find their way home by the light of the moon, as there was no local transport. They had to be keen in those days.

A syllabus was prepared and our new venture was in being. It is worth recording that the motto for our first meeting was

"Such help as we can give each other in the world is a debt we owe to each other."

This motto still plays a large part in our relationship with others.

After six Months Miss Howard returned and was delighted with the progress made and the decision to continue was unanimous. We were definitely on our way.

During its existence our branch has enjoyed interesting talks, useful demonstrations, provocative discussions and many visits to places of interest. The desire to help has been, at all times, in the forefront of our aims. One of our projects then was egg collection.



Mrs St. John and Mrs Howard?

The eggs, seldom less than 70 dozen, were taken to Falkirk and District Infirmary. When war broke out the scheme had to be abandoned, but was replaced by an offering of groceries. During the war some members had dual roles as members of W.V.S. and the institute and helped the war effort as best they could by knitting, sewing and running functions to enable us to send garments and money to the local men and women serving in the forces. The circumstances taught us all to make do and mend in all aspects of our domestic life. The experience drew us all closer together and impressed on us the importance of human relationships.

We have learned a great deal over the years, good management, how to conduct meetings, how to appreciate other peoples point of view and especially how to be hospitable. All our speakers and guests have been kind enough to pay tribute to the friendly atmosphere at our meetings. This is something we are particularly proud of.

Up to 2003 our meetings were still being held in the Maxwell Muller hut. This hut had been erected by captain and Mrs St John for the good of the community and in 1948 Mrs St John kindly handed over the title deeds of the hall to our branch. We then bought the land on which it was built.

Unfortunately our hall was in need of major repairs and after careful consideration and expert advice it was decided by the members to move to Bonnybridge. This decision was not taken lightly and at one point we thought that in losing our hall it would be

Greenhill and District Branch 1925 - 2012

by Anne Paterson

was not the case as we now hold our meetings in the Masonic Hall, Wellpark Terrace Bonnybridge and to our delight our membership has grown.

We are sure that after celebrating 85 years Mrs St John would be very proud of the achievements of the institute she started way back in 1925.

Taken at Institute 85th party) Oct. 2010. at 25th? Anniversary party

Back row J Dunsmore (President), (Past Presidents) E. Barr, A. Patterson, H. Mochrie, M.Dalglish, (Vice President) M. Logan

Front row (Past Presidents) A. Philpot, W. Stevenson.



Dumgoyne Wartime Fruit Cake

1 cup brown sugar. 1 1/2 cups seeded raisins. 1/2 tsp. mixed spice. 1/2 tsp. ground ginger. 1 cup water. some orange peel. 1 tsp. cinnamon. 1/4 tsp. salt. 1 tsp. baking soda. 2 cups flour

Put in saucepan together for 3 minutes, cool and add the baking soda dissolved in hot water or milk and 2 cups of flour. Bake in moderate oven for 1 hour.

Multi-coloured Macaroons recipe

175gm icing sugar, 125gm ground almonds, 3 large free-range egg whites, 75gm icing sugar, 150gm butter, softened.

- 1) Preheat oven to 160C/fan 140C/gas 3. Whizz the icing sugar and ground almonds in a processor to a very fine mixture, then sift into a bowl.
- 2) In a separate bowl whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt to soft peaks, then gradually whisk in the caster sugar until thick and glossy. (At this point you can stir in flavour extract such as peppermint or lemon, and corresponding colouring such as blue or yellow, to the meringue mixture. Or divide the mixture into separate bowls if you want to make more than one colour.
- 3) Fold half the almond and icing sugar mix into the meringue and mix well. Add the remaining half, making sure you use a spatula to cut and fold the mixture until it is shiny and has a thick ribbon-like consistency as it falls from the spatula. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a 1 cm nozzle.
- 4) Line 2 baking sheets with baking paper. Pipe small rounds of the mix, about 3cm across onto the baking sheets. Give the baking sheets a sharp tap on the work surface to ensure a good 'foot'. Stand at room temperature for 10 – 15 minutes to form a slight skin. This is important – you should be able to touch them lightly without any mixture sticking to your finger. Bake for 15 mins. Remove from the oven and cool.
- 5) Meanwhile, make the fillings in a bowl, beat the butter until light and fluffy, then beat in the icing sugar (you can now add flavouring or nuts and colour – chef's tips). Use filling to sandwich pairs together.

Macaroons taste wonderful plain, but why not add flavouring and colouring.. To flavour and colour your macaroons, in step 2, add around 1/2 tsp. flavour extract, and then add the appropriate colouring, a drop at a time, until you reach the desired intensity. Flavour and colour the buttercream in the same way.

The First World War 1914 – 1918 Diary and letters of Piper Archibald McNeilage

In 1904 at the age of 20, my grandfather enlisted in the Highland Light Infantry at Hamilton, Lanarkshire, and served for three years in the Colours. On demob in 1907 as a regular he was automatically enlisted as a reservist and could be recalled back into the army.

In August 1914 he was returning from band practice, he was a keen Piper and was Pipe Major of Banknock and Haggis Pipe band, when he saw posted on the church gates a notice calling all reservists to report immediately to their units. In his case the 2nd Battalion the Highland Light Infantry at Hamilton.

He was now married with a son, my father, aged 3 and a daughter, my aunt aged 6. Before leaving, his mother gave him five half crowns which he placed in his 'soldier's small book'.

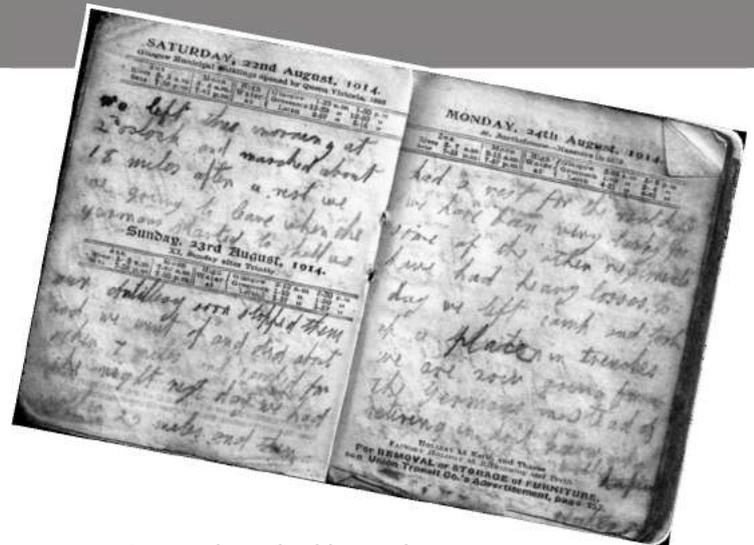
My grandfather kept a diary in a railway timetable and the following are some extracts from it.

Tuesday 4th Aug. - left Hamilton for Aldershot and arrived at 12 o'clock.

Thursday 13th Aug. - Left Aldershot for Southampton and then landed in Boulogne.

Saturday 15th Aug. - left Boulogne at night, 16 hours on train to the village of Le Petit Verly near the French Frontier. Remained there until Friday 21st then marched to Le Grouse.

Saturday 22nd Aug. - at 4.00 p.m. marched 16 Miles to La Leve which we left after a few hours rest and crossed over the Belgian border 23rd Aug. to a place called Monz and there went into the trenches. We were there for three hours the German guns were firing shells at us all the time, about 12 of our chaps got hurt. After that we were walking from place to place covering between twenty-five and thirty miles a day for nine days to the 1st Sept. drawing the Germans out so that the French could get a go at them. We had some very narrow shaves, the marches were awful, it is so hot, the sun out all day and half the chaps dropping out beat up and at night it is very cold and a heavy dew falls. We have been very lucky, for some of the other



regiments have had heavy losses.

Fri. 4th Sep. - Today we left camp and took up places in the trenches. We are now going for the Germans instead of retiring. I don't know what will happen.

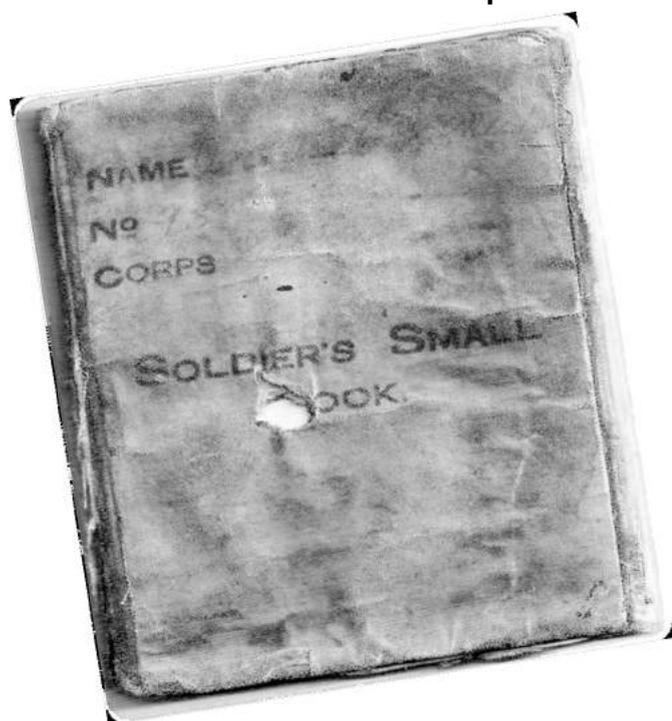
Sat 5th Sept. - We were attacking the Germans today but there were not enough of us so, we had to retire and the next day we went out again. Yesterday (Tuesday) we had a big fight, the guards lost a lot of men and we went up to help them and we had a very exciting time, shot and shells flying everywhere and nothing but dead men and horses everywhere. It is not all honey in the trenches. One poor chap popped off on your right another on your left, Shrapnel and Black Marias overhead. Shrapnel Shells burst in the air and spread their contents over 30 yards The Black Maria's whistle overhead and then a bang and a hole made in the ground which could comfortably accommodate a horse and cart. When it rains which it does here at some tune the water rushes down into the trenches and while not exactly up to your neck it is pretty near it. Then it is a case of bailing out with any old tin you can get a hold of. It reminds me of the small leaky rowing boats at Rothesay.

I do wish we were finished. At night we came right up past all the rest and did out-post duty. We are lying here this morning waiting to see what happens. The big guns are doing all the work. Thursday we had a rest all day and I can tell you we need it. Next day (Friday) the Engineers repaired the bridge that the Germans had blown up and as we were going across they were shelling us all the time but didn't do much damage. We were out all night, we are now lying under cover waiting to see what happens. Some of our chaps got a cutting up but so far I've been lucky.

by Rae Wilson

This place is called Neuilly we have had four days of fighting. This morning we were first up and were put in a wood and lay down when shells came and knocked out a dozen of our company, it was a close shave. Yesterday we were shelled all day. Today looks as if it is going to be worse; we have been 8 days in here and this morning Sunday 20th. I got wounded in three places. Two shots in the head and one shot in the arm. Not very bad though, could have been worse.

It was on this day that my grandfather's life was saved by one of the half crowns given to him by his mother which he carried in his soldier's small book in his breast pocket.



A piece of shrapnel had penetrated his pay book and lodged into the half crown piece there. My grandmother had this made into a Brooch which she wore in gratitude every day.

(This was the first time my grandfather was wounded. He was taken to Hospital No3 Bas St Nazaire, near Nantes.)

After a fortnight in Hospital I'm just about all right again and will soon be going back To the front. Had a few weeks rest and then joined the battalion at Yepres. These were the first few weeks of his war.

On the 1st June 1915 my grandmother received a telegram stating that on the 15th. May my grandfather had been wounded with gunshot wounds to the head. It was not stated whether wounded "dangerously", "severely" or "slightly". He was taken to the Red Cross Hospital at Winereux. Several weeks later my grandmother had news. It proved to be a serious wound and he was left with shrapnel in his head which affected his memory in later life. After a number of weeks convalescence he was subsequently returned to the front. Because he had been a regular soldier my grandfather still did not get home immediately and marched into Germany where he was billeted with a German blacksmith who he often helped in his smithy. He felt no hatred for the Germans. He was one of the fortunate men who returned. My father was aged 3 and my aunt 6 when he left for war. My father was aged 8 and my aunt 11 when he returned.



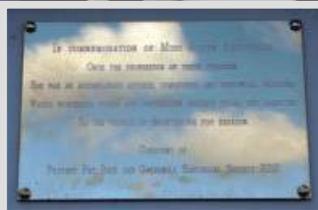
He returned to work in Smith and Wellstood until he retired.

Archibald McNeilage died 18th. Dec. 1958 aged 74 Years.

264 men from Bonnybridge district were killed in The First World War.

67 men from Bonnybridge district were killed in the Second World War

Do you know of any other local heroes? Why not get in touch and tell us their story?



Plaque Dedication to Agnes Henderson, March 2012

In the last issue of Bonnyseen we published some information on Agnes Henderson, and asked you for further information. We were delighted that so many people came forward with fond memories of her. Such was the regard in which she was held by those who knew her that we decided to erect a plaque in her honour. Provost Pat Reid dedicated the plaque on the 7th March 2012, on the premises where she used to run her shop. The plaque is located on the Main Street at Barbers Inc., the site of Agnes's tobacconist shop in Bonnybridge.

Agnes was born, we think, on 15th March 1897 and died in 1981. Agnes played many roles in the Henderson Players and the Bonnybridge Players, assisting with producing and directing as well as acting. Most of the performances took place in Bonnybridge Public Hall but many were also staged in Falkirk Town Hall and as far away as Airth and Cowie. As well as these activities, Agnes also ran bus tours for the people in the village and, for many, a trip to the seaside or 'doon the watter' was their only holiday in the year.

With grateful thanks to Provost Pat Reid for supporting this plaque; to the Falkirk Herald for helping to commemorate Agnes and promote the event; and to everyone far and near who provided us with memories.