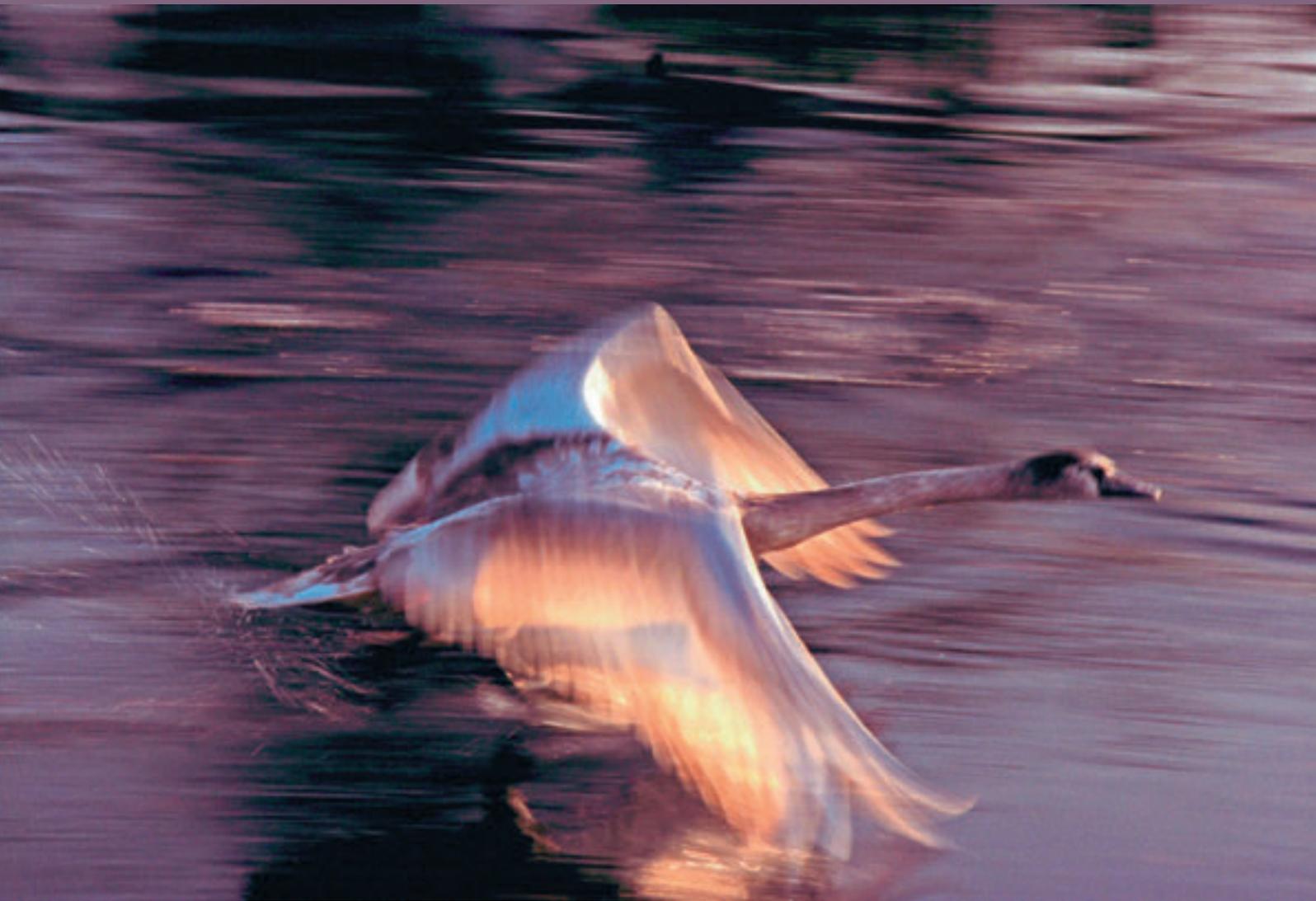


Exploring the effects of the past on the present and future of our community

# Bonnyseen

The magazine from Greenhill Historical Society

Issue Number 12 April 2016



*Photograph courtesy of Mr Bert Hopkins  
(see inside Front Cover)*





# Introduction

Greenhill Historical Society hopes that you enjoy our latest edition of Bonnyseen. Thanks to all who contribute articles and financial support to enable us to continue to preserve the history of our town. Special thanks to our designer, Brian Maddison, who does a sterling job of interpreting and arranging the vast amounts of texts and photographs we send him into some semblance of order and produces such a professional magazine. We are also indebted to the businesses and other organisations who allow us to leave copies of Bonnyseen in their premises so that the public have access at as many locations as possible.

We have inserted a photograph of the wall at the community centre with a 'coming soon' notification. In the next few weeks we will be able to preserve an amazing reminder of Bonnybridge's history by an 'installation' as they say in the art world. 'Watch this space'!!

**Phil Swierczek**

## Front Cover Photograph

*"Young swan taking off on Forth & Clyde Canal in Bonnybridge"*



This was one of a family of four young swans that took off together over the heads of their parents. They were following us along the canal to Bonnybridge when the noise of their feet running along the water alerted me to turn round to see the four of them taking off. I only had time to switch on the camera so the settings were as the last picture that was taken and I panned the camera on one of them as they went passed us. The sun was dropping in the west giving the colour on the head and wings and the shadow of the swan's head is shown on its wing. It was interesting to see the parents watch them take off and follow their flight path as they circled back towards the Falkirk Wheel which was close to the nest site.

*Bert Hopkins*

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Greenhill Historical Society

### WHERE TO FIND US



**GREENHILL  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

[www.greenhillhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.greenhillhistoricalsociety.org.uk) or  
[greenhillhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:greenhillhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

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

# A Bonnybridge lass doing her bit!

By Irene M Ryan



This photograph is of Jenny Connell ploughing a field at her dad's farm, The Drum, High Bonnybridge, in 1916; she was only about 14/15 years old. Daughter of John Connell, Janet, (known as Jenny), took to the stilts when most farm labourers enlisted for the Great War. Controlling two horses and a plough was difficult enough for a man, a young woman was considered too weak to create straight furrows. Her Victorian father did not believe she was able to carry out this task but Jenny, a very determined young woman, was out to show she was as able as any man.

With men away at the front and war related work paying so much more than farm labouring Mr Connell allowed Jenny to continue doing a 'man's job'. She would complete a full day's work on the farm then take the horse and cart to Griffith's Silica Works to collect bricks for delivery in Bonnybridge and surrounding area.

In 1917 the harvest failed throughout the country due to extreme bad weather. The nation was left with just three week's food reserve; it became desperate that the country grow more food. The Board of Agriculture set up the Women's Land Army and many women volunteered to work on farms. Jenny was there to show the way, to till the ground and drive a straight furrow. Although many farmers were happy for the extra help from women, some old farmers were not. A report in the local newspaper has one farmer saying; "he would rather have; boys, idiots, cripples or even imbeciles before he would have women working on his land."

Along with the millions of people who went to war, two McNellie brothers enlisted. Robert McNellie served with the Royal Horse Artillery and David was a Gunner with the Royal Garrison Artillery. Only Robert came back as sadly, David was killed in Action on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1917 and he rests at Bucquoy Road, War Cemetery, Ficheux, France. Jenny met and married Robert not long after he came home and they had 3 daughters and a son. Uncle David is still remembered for his bravery by all the family

Only 21 years later the unthinkable happened and WW2 broke out. Jenny, a positive thinking lady, continued *doing her bit* for this war as she did for the 1<sup>st</sup>. Shortly after the declaration in September 1939 the 57<sup>th</sup> Glasgow Searchlight Division took up their post at Clayknowes near Jenny's home at Cadgers Loan. The winter of 1939/40 was the worst for 45 years so the soldiers were billeted in one room inside Jenny's house. She welcomed them to her home, gave them a warm fire to sit by, home cooked meals and family entertainment, the soldiers were there for the duration of the war. Little did she know that two of her future sons-in-law were within this group of soldiers. Jenny also catered for the men at Greenhill Rifle Range, known as the targets. There seemed to be no end to her generous nature.

Jenny lived an eventful life, from pioneering women in farming during WW1, to helping young soldiers stationed in the area during WW11. As with people of her generation Jenny saw many changes to the world during her life. Jenny Connell McNellie died in 1987 aged 86. But her big hearted nature lives on through her youngest daughter and name sake and I thank her for the generous welcome, hospitality and information she has given me.



# Post Offices

*By Thomas Rintoul*

Bonnybridge has had a number of Post Offices in its time. On looking at the history of the Post Offices we can see that probably the first Post Office was situated on the north side of Bridge Street, Bonnybridge, next to the pharmacy. Although records show that the first post office was established prior to 1860, the one in Bridge Street was in that location about 1880.

In 1887 the Post Office then moved to Albert Place, opposite the Cornhill Inn. At this time the Postman was Robert Kerr, who had the job of collecting the mail from Denny Post Office and walking via Dennyloanhead Post Office and onto Bonnybridge delivering mail. He then continued on his way along to south side of the canal, delivering letters as far as Castlecary.

In 1895 the Post Office moved further west to a position opposite Bonnybridge Parish Church. The Post Office again moved about 1913 and was located on the south side of Bridge Street, on the area where the Rent Office is now situated (see photograph opposite).

In 1905 a new purpose built double storey building was erected in Main Street next to where the memorial gardens are situated. Mail was then delivered directly to this Post Office from Falkirk instead of having to be delivered to Denny. This remained as the Post Office for some 70 years until further developments took place



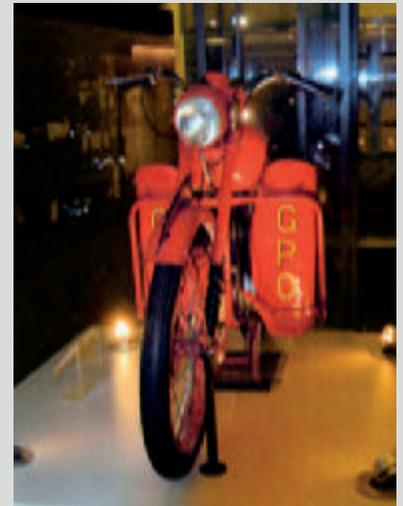
*Disused Post Box painted Black and sealed up to prevent use.*



*Victorian Post Box.*



*New Style Post Box.*



*GPO Motor-cycle used mainly in Urban Areas for delivering Telegrams.*

With the reorganisation of Post Office Services throughout the country and, in particular at Bonnybridge, the Post Office at Main Street was closed and a new one was opened within the Co-operative at High Street. To the rear of and within these premises was the Bonnybridge Sorting Office and also a storage facility for mail vans. This remained in situ until the Co-operative closed and was taken over by Scotmid. At that time a new post office counter was opened within the grocery department of the co-operative but the sorting office and van storage facility were closed and moved to Denny.

*Morris Commercial Royal Mail Van*



A Sub Post Office had been opened at Corona Terrace, Greenhill in 1897, and remained there until the 1950's when it moved into the Bonnybridge Co-operative premises at Greenhill but when this branch was closed the Post Office moved into the Seabegs Branch of the Co-operative in Roman Road.

The High Bonnybridge Sub-post Office was opened in 1913 in part of the premises rented from the Silica Co. Ltd. However, the Postmaster died in 1918 and alternative premises could not be found for the locating of the Post Office. This was resolved in 1931 when the Bonnybridge Co-operative Society rented part of their premises to be used as a Sub-Post Office at High Bonnybridge. Another Sub Post Office was also located mid-way along Wheatlands Avenue, Bonnybridge.

There was another Post Office at Glasgow Road, Dennyloanhead, almost adjacent to the Police Station. The final Post office in the area was situated at Banknock. The Post offices at Roman Road, High Bonnybridge and Wheatlands Avenue also closed. as did the one at Dennyloanhead while the one at Banknock was relocated to a shop opposite the Garage on the Kilsyth Road, although the Post Office within the Scotmid Premises at Head of Muir is still operating at the present time. Today the only Post Office in Bonnybridge is operated from within the Scotmid premises at High Street, Bonnybridge.



1930's Postman on his round with Pedal-cycle

Bonnybridge Post Office purpose built in 1905.



## What do YOU know about the History of Bonnybridge and District?

- 1 Where was the nine hole Pitch and Putt course situated in Bonnybridge?
- 2 How many stone 'Doo' cots and pigeon lofts are still in the area?
- 3 Where and what was the Check Bar and why was it so called?
- 4 Where was the curling pond in Bonnybridge?
- 5 Where did the fifty ton boulder lie for years and where did it come from?
- 6 Who was the first Scout Master in Bonnybridge?
- 7 In which two locations were the roller skating rinks?
- 8 How many rugby pitches are/have been in the district?
- 9 Who was Griffiths who owned a clay mine and brickworks in Bonnybridge?
- 10 To date, how many football fields are or have been in the area?

*By William Parker*





# Bonnybridge Brick Production for South American Railways

By Mark Cranston, Jedburgh

[www.scottishbrickhistory.co.uk](http://www.scottishbrickhistory.co.uk)

I have a project on the go whereby I am trying to recover, record and rescue examples of Scottish bricks and associated clay products such as roof ridges, garden edging etc. In the main these items will bear a stamp or mark that will identify them as being a product made in Scotland. Brick branding was one of the earliest forms of mass advertising.

Initially the brick makers stamp would simply be the makers name or location and this started to become a common practice in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. During this time, and later during the industrial revolution and beyond, Scotland played its part in progressing the brick making industry, particularly in the form of manufacturing refractory bricks which are basically bricks designed to withstand severe heat. Such bricks were used to line and protect stoves, boilers, kilns, and furnaces etc. As the industrial revolution progressed and huge quantities of iron and steel were the order of the day then refractory bricks and other special shaped products were required in ever increasing numbers to keep the furnaces protected and in good working condition. The quality of these bricks was forever being increased as hotter and hotter working temperatures were required to manufacture better quality steel etc. Scotland in its day was a world leader in the design and manufacture of these refractory bricks. Bonnybridge brick manufacturers have most definitely played their part in keeping the worlds furnaces in production.

During my travels throughout Scotland on the search for 'new' examples for my collection, I have often migrated back to Bonnybridge and it has proved a very successful hunting ground. Among the bricks I have recovered in Bonnybridge were several bricks bearing the mark BAP and FCP. For long enough the origins of these bricks eluded me, that is, until I found 2 bricks marked BAP Forth and FCP Forth. These were found at the old Roughcastle Fireclay Mine site. Forth is a known trademark for Roughcastle products and thus the origins of these bricks was solved but what did BAP and FCP stand for?

Thistle stamped bricks were made at the Stein Castleclary site at Allandale. There I have recovered bricks marked Thistle FCCA and FCO. At the neighbouring old Weir Castleclary brick works site, I have discovered bricks marked FCSO Gem, Gem FCAB and Castleclary FCCC. Gem is a recognised Weir Castleclary mark. Nearby at Glenboig I have recovered a brick marked Glenboig FCCA and FCS. These abbreviations would probably have gone unidentified had I not been contacted by a fellow brick enthusiast from Argentina. He has a great interest in the history of the railway systems of South America. During his travels around the old derelict railway yards he has found many bricks. Following his research he found similar bricks on my site namely Glenboig FCCA, FCO, Thistle, Gem, and FCCA to name a few. He then enlightened me to the fact that the FCCA brick had been found on the Ferrocarril Central Argentino Railway (abbreviated to FCCA) and the FCO had been found on the Ferrocarril Railway (abbreviated to FCO). Further research revealed that

**BAP** is an abbreviation of the Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway.

**FCP** is an abbreviation of the Ferrocarril al Pacific Railway.

**FCCC** is an abbreviation of the Ferrocarril Central del Chubut Railway

**FCSO** is an abbreviation of Ferrocarril del Sur Oriente Railway.

**FCS** is an abbreviation of the Ferrocarril del Sud Railway

**CAB** – is an abbreviation of the Ferrocarril de Antofagasta a Bolivia Railway.

The above Scottish bricks, in the main, have either been found at their place of manufacture or in South America which enhances the theory that they were made specifically for the South American Railways and marked as such. For further details on this theory, please see my website link below

<http://www.scottishbrickhistory.co.uk/scottish-bricks-manufactured-for-south-american-railway-networks/>

Interestingly I have found a Stein Castleclary brick marked Thistle GIPR and a Hurl, Glenboig brick marked EIR. Again, Scotland exported many bricks to India and I believe these initials stand for the Great Indian Peninsular Railway and East India Railways of India.

In the absence of corroborative documentation, the above remains a presumption albeit based on research and specific brick finds. Please feel free to comment via my website. Any thoughts either way on the subject would be much appreciated.

On a selfish note may I ask your readers to look out for a brick marked 'Dougall Bonnybridge' – I have 2 broken versions but not a whole one. I think it will be more a square slab than a normal sized brick.

Similarly has anyone seen a brick marked 'Milnquarter'? – as yet I have not seen one but a gut feeling does say that they will exist somewhere. Unfortunately I have as yet, not managed to obtain permission to look around the 'All Parts Auto Salvage' site which sits on or near the old Milnquarter works.

I would love to hear from anyone that knows where old bricks may be lying around or indeed anyone that would like to send a photo of a brick to me for an attempt at identification!

# Aftermath of the Battle of Bonnymuir

By Phil Swierczek & Hazel Wyle



In one of our previous issues we described the fate of those arrested and tried after the battle of Bonnymuir. They were charged with high treason and three of the accused were executed, one in Glasgow and two at Stirling Castle. The remaining thirteen were transported to penal colonies in Australia. One of those executed at Stirling was a relative of Jim Beveridge who has kindly loaned us a copy of the warrant for a free pardon granted to the victims of transportation to Australia by the reigning monarch of the day, William IV. This was small comfort to the families of those who died as a result of fighting for better working conditions and wages and for the freedom to vote for their representatives in Westminster. The copy is in handwritten script but Hazel, one of our members, has done a great job of deciphering the document. The reverse of the document has a list of a few of the names of those to be pardoned with descriptions of their identifying features. Apologies if there are any errors in the transcribing of the warrant.

William R  
Whereas the persons hereafter named were at the Session of Oyer and Terminer holden at Stirling in and for the County of Stirling on the 25 days of August and the 5 of September 1820 Tried and convicted of High Treason and had Sentence of Death passed upon them for the same but afterwards received a Pardon on Condition of being Transported to the Coast of New South Wales or some other of the Islands adjacent Vizt (means as follows) Robert Gray, Andrew Dawson, Allan Murchie, Thomas McFarlane, John McMillan, James Glelland, Benjamin Moir, Alexander Johnston, David Thompson, William Clarkson, Ealias Clarkson, Alexander hart, William Smith, Thomas McCallock, Alexander Latimer, Andrew White, James Wright, Thomas Pike, alias Pink, and John Barr.- We in consideration of some circumstances humbly represented unto us are graciously pleased to extend the Grace and Mercy unto them and to grant them Our Free Pardon for their said Crime Our Will and Pleasure therefore is that you do take due notice hereof: And for so doing this shall be your Warrant. Given at Our Court at St James's the Twenty First day of July 1835 in the Sixth Year of Our Reign.

## Beehives in Bonnybridge

By Thomas Rintoul



There was a request recently for information about BEE HIVES in Bonnybridge. When I came to Bonnybridge in 1974 my next door neighbour was an ardent collector of honey and as such he had several bee hives in the Bonnybridge area including two in his back garden. Hives were situated in a fenced off part of the field on the south side of the road between Rollo's factory and the entrance to Bonnyhill Farm while other hives were positioned in the grounds of Bonnyside House. It depended very much on the time of the year when the hives were moved so that the best type of honey could be obtained. Sometimes the hives were positioned on Bonnyside moor or on farm land such as Lochgreen Farm and further to the south in order that the bees could collect the pollen from the heather and thereby make heather honey. Other hives were situated near to bushes such as elderflower or where clover was growing. Hives were mainly of a standard shape but could be enlarged with additional parts added to them. The main maker of hives and parts for hives at that time was Steele and Brodie of Wormit in Fife, who supplied parts throughout the U.K.



The one thing that gave me concern about the hives was when the bees swarmed and this happened one day with the two hives in the back garden. This was not a suitable place for hives to be when there were young children around and the hives were moved to another location and they did not come back.

There was a lot of work involved in the keeping of bees which necessitated the combs either being cut into pieces for sale with the honey in them or the combs being placed in a cylinder and then spun at a high speed so that the honey flowed out of the combs and then honey was put into jars for use or sale.



# Singer's Sewing Machine Factory and the

Singer's Sewing machines were originally cast in John Ure's "Bonnybridge Foundry" The company became highly successful and in 1882 decided to expand the business. Since there was no room in Bonnybridge, Singers bought a piece of land in Kilbowie on the Clyde, where they built an enormous factory with a great 190Ft.- 4 faced clock tower, reputed to be the largest in the world at that time. By the 1930's Singers had sprawled well beyond its original 46 acres, had its own railway and employed over 10,000 people. A special tenement block "Singer Terrace" was erected by the company to house its "foremen, firemen and watchmen". At the outbreak of WW2 Clydebank was a densely populated industrial hub of shipyards, oil storage depots & factories. The Singer Company diversified into munitions to aid the war effort.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1941 Bonnybridge was targeted when 2 Parachute mines were dropped near the Russell Pit at High Bonnybridge, one of which detonated leaving a massive crater. The other failed to detonate and was later safely dismantled. There were no casualties. On that same fateful night the first of 236 German bombers converged on Clydebank and unleashed their deadly cargo. Clydebank was hit with the heaviest saturation bombing to ever take place in Scotland and the death toll per head of population was greater than that of any other City. The only anti-aircraft protection came from a Polish ship the 'Piorum' whose crew manned the guns till they were so hot they ceased operating and the sailor's hands were badly burned.

By the night of 15 March 523 people had been listed as killed, 617 seriously injured and thousands more with lesser injuries. These figures do not take into account any who died in hospitals outwith Clydebank town. Of 12,000 dwellings only 7 were left undamaged. 4,000 were completely destroyed and 4,500 uninhabitable. Many churches of all denominations and 9 schools were flattened or wrecked. Reports of the blitz were heavily censored.

On Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March a mass burial took place. Thousands of people were evacuated to various outlying towns. The log of Bonnybridge Public School shows that in the week of 25<sup>th</sup> March 22 Evacuees were listed and a further 26 between 31<sup>st</sup> March & 4<sup>th</sup> June 1941. It is amazing, that despite all the devastation, part of Singer's was back to work within 6 days. The spirit of the Clydebank People was as indomitable as the Singer's Clock Tower, which survived the attacks.



## **This is the reminiscence of Mrs Jean McLearie a survivor of the blitz.**

I lived in Singer building on Kilbowie Road at the canal. This building belonged to the Singer Sewing Machine Factory and all the houses were occupied by part-time firemen working in Singers. We had fire bells in every house and when they rang the men had to run into the fire station, report, find out where the fire was and put it out.

On the night of 13<sup>th</sup> March 1941 the fire bells rang out at 8.45pm and all the men ran to the fire station. We lived on the top floor and usually did not go down to the shelters as there had been a number of false alarms. However, that night my father came back and said "please go downstairs as I've a bad feeling and it's a 'Bombers Moon tonight' then he left to run back to the fire station.

Fifteen minutes later the sirens sounded and my mum, me and my pal Tina Bruce got ready and made our way downstairs to the close. We had no shelter but the close was reinforced with metal struts and baffle walls at both front and back entries.

My friend Tina had bought a new coat that needed a hem taken up as it was too long for her. Her mother did not sew, but mine did, and that's why she was at my home. All the Mums and the children came down to the close and we were all jammed into the corner. After a short time bombs began to fall. There was a screaming noise, then a crash, then a blast of wind. One of the air raid wardens came in to tell us that Livingstone street had been bombed and Janet Busby's father had been killed. We were all sad because we all knew Janet, whose father was an air raid warden. We were all singing Roll out the Barrel and other wartime hits to keep our spirits up. Sometime later a warden came in and asked if there were any children in the close and his news was that "all schools in Clydebank were either bombed or on fire." We cheered happily little realising what damage had been done. At one point in the night there was a small lull, so Arthur Christie, who was seventeen years old, said he was going round the back to see if anything was happening.

He came back to say that a German parachute was drifting down and he thought that a German airman was on the end of it. His mother would not let him go out again saying "He may have a gun leave it to the air wardens." Remember we had no dads with us as they were all fighting fires in Singers. But ... It wasn't a parachute ... It was a land mine! This fell silently.. No bomb scream. Just an almighty bang, then a blast of wind filled with broken glass and coal dust. We could hardly breathe. We were lifted up and thrown around, but fortunately no one was badly hurt ... just a few bruises and cuts.

We now had a big hole where our back court had been and two big steam engines and seven coal trucks had disappeared. The bombing went on relentlessly. Next morning when the all clear sounded all I could see were ruins of buildings and buildings that were on fire. The main water pipes ran under the road at Second Avenue and Kilbowie Road and they had been hit. Water was gushing out and the tram lines were like curls sitting up. This meant that the firemen had to pump water from the canal, and there was a shortage of water for fighting fires, aggravating the situation. The whole of Kilbowie hill was on fire! When we went back to our house we saw that there was no roof and windows left in the building. The first thing my mum did was to try and make a cup of tea ... but there was no water. Then she remembered our gas camping cooker. Next job I had to do was to walk Tina home to Hawthorn Street and my mum would try to find out if dad was ok.

Tina and I walked up Kilbowie road to Second Avenue where the warden diverted us along on one side of the Singer Factory, on the other side houses were burning. We went up Singer Street to Grahame Avenue past the La Scala (the Cinema) and noticed the Wederlee Hall and buildings up Kilbowie Street were demolished. When we reached Hawthorn Street Tina's house was a burning shell. We were standing there wondering what to do when two air raid wardens came up Hawthorn Street. One was Alex Graham, whom we knew, and he was able to tell us that Tina's gran was in hospital and the rest of the family had been evacuated to the Vale of Leven. He found Tina a seat on a lorry to take her to the vale. I went home.

My mother still had not found my dad. He eventually came out of Singers at two o'clock in the afternoon, had a wash (he was like a scarecrow and covered in dust and smoke) had something to eat, told us to go to my grandma in Glasgow and then went back to his duty in Singer's. Friday night was another night of raids but we were all so exhausted that we half slept, waking up when a bomb landed close. I did not see my dad again until Saturday afternoon. By that time we were at grandma's in Glasgow. We lived there for four months until our house was repaired.

Clydebank suffered greatly on the nights of the blitz and many lives were lost. I found out later that even just among my neighbours there were two families who lost more than most. The Bowman's lost eight and the Rocks lost ten.

**The 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016 marks the 75th anniversary of the Clydebank Blitz.**

*My thanks to Mrs McLearie for her kind permission to print her reminiscence*

**THE BLITZ REMEMBERED:** Exhibition at Clydebank Library, now open and running until next year. Free Entry.  
Open Monday - Thursday 9.30am - 8.55pm and Friday - Saturday 9.30am - 4.55pm



# Who remembers the 1960s?

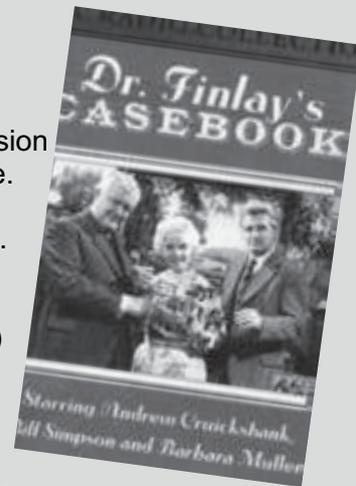
By Irene M Ryan

The saying is, 'if you remember the 1960's you were not there' but perhaps you do remember some of these news snippets. If you have others we would like to hear them. I was looking at the local newspaper on microfilm for 1966, they are very difficult to read but here are a few 'little gems'

## Dr. Finlay's Casebook

Sometime in the 1960's the village was thrilled as an episode of a very popular television programme at the time; "Dr. Finlay's Casebook", was being filmed within Bonnybridge. As it turned out only Dr Finlay in his 1920's car, a 1927 Wolseley 11/22 tourer, was filmed going through the pend, with Freddy Forest using his old tractor towing the car. Also, I believe that the McMenemy children were in the filming but I cannot find any local person's name in the credits for appearing in the programme. (If anybody can give me some more information it would help with my correspondence with the BBC.)

An episode of the programme was also filmed in Denny and a local man, Ronald Muirhead, appeared in an instalment. He was credited in season 4 episode 14 called 'A Matter of Confidence'. The Tannochbrae FC in the show was actually Alloa Athletic FC with their Recreation Park doubling for Tannochbrae Football Park. Unfortunately, the programmes have not been preserved and although some of the 1<sup>st</sup> season is intact there are large gaps. Of 191 editions there is only about 56 still known to exist, and only about 7 of later episodes filmed in colour have survive.



## The Summer Weather was better when I was younger

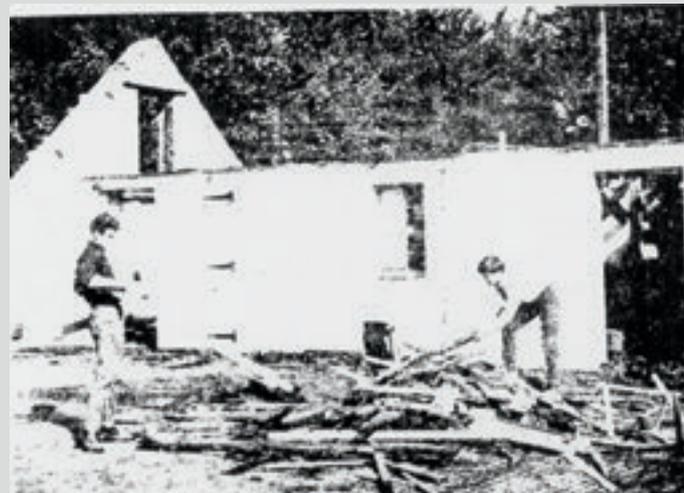


Do you remember August 1966, nothing to do with *that* football match at Wembley, (think about the 1967 match). We talk about 'Global Warming' today causing our summers to be wet and miserable but in the middle of the summer of 1966 the rain had been so severe that the Bonny burst its banks and flooded the football ground in Duncan Stewart Park. The home of Bonnybridge Juniors FC was under 2 feet of water and the pitch was unplayable for many weeks. The winter had been severe and about 1 ft of snow fell in April. Rainfall had been more than twice the average and there were violent thunderstorms during the summer months. This brutal weather was not just in Scotland but throughout the British Isles resulting in the tragic disaster of Aberfan, Wales.

## Bonnyside house on fire A headline in the Falkirk Herald for August 1966 "Bonnybridge Fire"

The story reads *Bonnyside House* blaze. This makes you think the main house had experienced a fire. However, when you read the story it was an outhouse, near the main building, which was packed with dry wood and straw, that was reduced to four walls.

David Horsheld, who was 16 and lived at the adjoining house, was the first person on the scene, and called the Fire Service. The Fire Engines, came from Denny and Falkirk but the structure was well ablaze by the time they got there. David told the *Falkirk Herald* "the house went up like a bomb and was gutted by the time the fire brigade arrived." The fire started at about 7.15pm and the fire service attended quickly but left when they thought the fire was out. Unfortunately, they were called out for a second time the next morning when smouldering straw caught fire again and the building was once more ablaze.



## Compare and Contrast

50 years, to many, is not a long time but when you look at the difference in prices it is quite a shock.

The average weekly wage for a man in a manual job was	£10 - £14 per wk
The rent for a house/flat with outside toilet	£ 9 per quarter
To buy an average house/flat could be between	£200 - £2000
A new car, for example a Morris Mini-Minor standard	£497
The road tax in 1966 would cost	£19.05s (£19.25p)
A pint of milk was	3d (2 pence)
A loaf of bread would be about	5d (3 pence)
Then a pint of beer cost	11d (5 pence)



*All the above prices are averages.*

## Bonnybridge Sportsmen-I

### ARTHUR MANN

Arthur was a member of the well-known and lovely Mann family from Bonnybridge. He visited his relatives in Roman Road, Seabegs, often and was a quiet, reserved and very pleasant lad. He was actually born in Burntisland, Fife on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1948 and played as a left-back for Lochore Welfare in Fife where his potential as a very fast, clever and tenacious left-back soon attracted the senior teams. He signed for the Heart of Midlothian F.C. with whom he played thirty-two games including the 1968 Scottish Cup Final against Dunfermline F.C. before he was transferred to Manchester City for a fee of £65,000 and played thirty-five games for them. He later played for Blackpool, Notts County, Shrewsbury Town and Mansfield. He then went into the management side of football at Kettering Town, Telford United and Grimsby Town before he went to West Bromwich Albion as assistant manager and a short spell as manager in 1997. When he left football he was employed as a forklift driver in Birmingham and unfortunately on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1999 he was killed when his forklift overturned and he was trapped underneath. Every year the supporters of Hearts and Manchester City play for the Arthur Mann Trophy which was presented by his wife. Arthur's son was also a very good footballer and played one hundred and seventy-five times for Hull City before injury curtailed his career. The two photographs show Arthur playing for Manchester City against Newcastle United and carrying his boots into Tynecastle Stadium to play for Hearts.



**EASY BISCUITS**

$\frac{1}{2}$  lb slightly salted Lurpak butter  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  lb caster sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  lb plain flour  
 2 level tablespoons semolina

Mix all ingredients together. Roll out to the desired thickness and cut into desired shapes.

Leave in fridge overnight.

Bake at 160° for 13-17 minutes.

*Frank Walton.*



# Alexander Morrison Govan

*By Thomas Rintoul*



*Lieutenant Govan in Army Uniform.*

One of our senior members of the Vale of Bonny was recently presented with the medal and rank of Chevalier in the Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur, France's highest award, in recognition of his involvement in the liberation of France in 1944. Mr Govan was 99 years old when he received the award from the President of the Republic of France on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015. The ceremony was conducted on board the French Naval Destroyer "Aquitaine" which was berthed in Leith,

Mr Govan was born in the Scottish Borders where he was educated and commenced work. At the age of 21 he joined the Edinburgh City Police. As the Police was a reserved occupation he was not called up for war service until 1942 when he was sent to Alexandria for training. He was then posted to the 38<sup>th</sup> Signal Training Regiment, Royal Artillery. He learned the use of Morse Code and how to ride a motor-cycle but it was quickly recognised, due to his Police training, that he was officer material and he was promoted and sent to Wales where he underwent further training and left with the rank of Lieutenant.

As the War progressed he found himself being transferred to the Anti-Aircraft Regiment at South Shields and then to the submarine base at Blythe in Northumberland. He was then transferred to the Isle of Man for training in preparation for D-Day. On 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1944, as a member of the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Queens Own Highlanders, he sailed from Newhaven via the Isle of Wight to East Sword Beach in France. On 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1944, he was asked by his Commanding Officer to take his battalion into the town of St Valerie-en-Caux and liberate it from the German Army. The German Army did not put up any opposition to the Allied Forces and it was recaptured without bloodshed. The town had been held by the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division until it was overrun by the German Army under the command of Field Marshall Rommel and it was a proud moment for Lieutenant Govan and his men to liberate the town from the enemy.



*Lieutenant Govan (cross above his head) after leading 5th Battalion Queens Own Cameron Highlanders into St. Valerie-en-Cruix to liberate the town.*

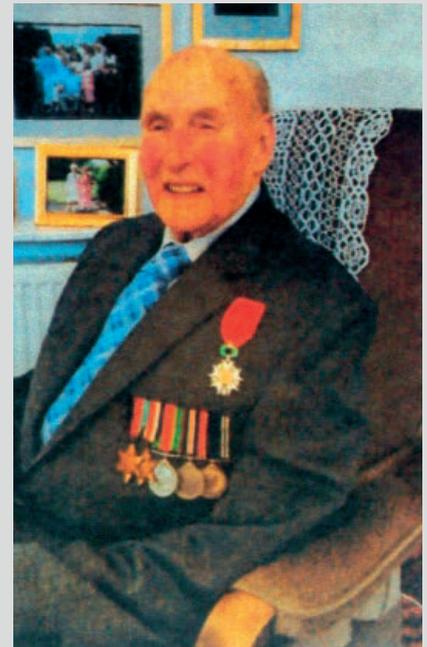
Lt Govan and his Battalion then fought their way through France, Belgium and Holland and arrived in Cruckshaven in Germany when hostilities ceased and V.E.Day was declared. With the war in Europe being at an end he was given the choice of carrying on in the army and going to the Far East or leaving the Army and returning to his civilian job in the Police Service. He opted to do the latter and returned to Edinburgh where he returned to his C.I.D. Duties.

In the 1950's he decided to transfer to Stirling and Clackmannan Police Force and was stationed at Stirling where he was promoted Sergeant and then to Denny when he was promoted Inspector.

He met another Police Officer, Hellen McIntosh and in 1956, they were married and have a son and a daughter. Mr Govan retired from the Police in 1968. His son also joined the Police and reached the rank of Inspector but has since retired.

Mr Govan received the 1939-45 Star for his Military service, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal and the Victory Medal. In 2005 he, along with other servicemen, was granted the freedom of Falkirk, in recognition of his War Service. He also received the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for his service in the Police Force.

It has been a Royal Year for the Govan family but they are far from finished yet as they are looking forward to receiving letters from Buckingham Palace when Mr & Mrs Govan celebrate their Diamond Wedding in April. 2016 and also in July when Mr Govan will reach his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.



*Mr Govan wearing his medals.*

*We wish them well.*



*Freedom of Falkirk Certificate.*



*Invitation to Award Ceremony.*

*Mr Govan with his Son and Daughter-in-law.*

*Mr Govan being congratulated by the Frech Officer. Looking on are his Son, Daughter-in-law and his Wife.*





# Before and After Fifty Years

By Reg Hagen

In the mid nineteen fifties, as a group of teenagers living in the Bonnybridge area we became friends and began going about together, playing football, on our bikes, going to the pictures and the dancing. I remember our main meeting place was Petale's Café at Bonnybridge Toll. We were, Reg Hagen, Danny Deans, Graham Smith, John Mcpherson, Andy Stewart, Jim Laird, Campbell Proven and Stuart Mcpherson. At times there would be three or four of us together but this was the group of friends.

On our bikes in the summer, we would go to Carron Glen for a swim or even as far as Loch Lubnag up through Callander, quite a distance from Bonnybridge, but that's the way we were and these are places we would go for a run on our bikes and a swim. Three or four of us played football for Bonnyvale Star. Our home ground was Anderson Park and the changing pavilion was a long building at the rear wall where Doctor Reilly's house used to be. If the weather was bad on training nights the building was big enough for Tam Peebles to give us training inside. Jock Black and Ian (Dusty) Miller were the management and Soapy Weir the kit man. At that time local boys Davy Proven went to Rangers and John Sneddon to Arsenal from Bonnyvale Star. Other locals making top teams at that time were Danny (Boon) Smith and Tommy Trainer, many more have made it since then.

After training we would make our way to Petale's Café for a plate of chips and a bottle of cola, we could also play records on the juke box. As a meeting place, I think, at the time, it was the hub of Bonnybridge Toll. We had the Wellstood Huts where the Community Hall is now, we could play Snooker, Billiards, Table Tennis and Darts. These are places I feel teenagers miss out on today.

In Bonnybridge we also had Harris's (the geggie) Picture House or you could go to the Dellux in Denny and both showed three different films a week. Our holidays were mostly to the Isle of Man, again not all would go, but we always had great times. I remember I think I had twenty-two pounds to pay for return fares on the train from Glasgow Central to Ardrossan, the boat to Douglas I.O.M. return, and the hotel for one week. I remember coming home with 2/6p, twelve and a half pence in today's money, wouldn't it be great if it still cost that!

We went to Doaks dancing at Falkirk Bus Station, it is called Storm now and I believe is still run by Johnny Doaks grandsons. Meeting girls, we all started going our own way. We were lucky that we all had jobs, then it was getting married and eventually we drifted apart. That is why I call this "Before and After Fifty Years."

About four months ago I got a phone call, it was Danny Deans asking "What about a get together with him and Graham Smith," I said yes! Since then five of us have meet twice and enjoyed talking about what we have done in our lives. Sadly we can not all be together I believe Dougie is in South Africa, Speedy and Stuart are in England, Robert Burns and Campbell Proven have passed away. The photo is some of our group in the Isle of Man on holiday in the 1960s. Getting together after FIFTY years has been great. We now keep in touch every couple of months, have a bar lunch in the Railway Inn at Dennyloanhead where Graham & Jackie and their staff see we are served well. We talk about what has happened in our lives. Now we are all in our 70s there are many interesting stories to be told. Cameron Mcbeath has joined our group and there is a lot of talk about Juvenile and Junior football teams of the past and who played in them.

***If anyone has any information on where Jim (Speedy) Wilson lives we would be pleased to hear from you. Please phone 01324 262420 or 07828143071.***



# Bonnybridge People - We need YOUR help



By Irene M Ryan

## The history group are gathering information regarding Bonnybridge and WW2.

Can you tell the historical society what WW2 was like for you? Between 1939 and 1945 the country was again in turmoil. Being only 21 years after the end of WW1 many local people would still remember the uncertainty of that time and be concerned for their families. We want to hear what you and your family or friends did. If you were a child what games did you play, did school change, were lessons different, do you remember your dad being in uniform, did your mum go to work, if so what did she do, did rationing affect you, in fact we want to hear anything you remember, did the war change your life or did it continue unaffected. Were you an evacuee, did your family decide to stay in Bonnybridge, if not, did you move back to Bonnybridge as an adult? Did you live with or were friends with an evacuee? If you knew any children from other parts of Scotland, how did they settle in the village without their parents? We would like to know where the evacuee children came from. Did your family know any ARP wardens or anybody in the Home Guard? The women of Britain stepped up again and did many voluntary jobs, ATS, WRVS, or The Land Army. Many women went to the Munitions Factories, were any of these brave ladies in your family? Do you have any WW2 objects, no matter what it is, we would like to see it, we would only photograph it if you do not want to part with it.

**If we have your permission some or all of the stories, objects or photographs could appear in future magazines.**



- Answers to What do YOU know about the History of Bonnybridge and District?**
- 1 The Pitch and Putt course was at the end of Anderson Park furthest away from the town.
  - 2 There are no 'Doo' cots but there are four pigeon lofts. If you know of any others please get in touch.
  - 3 The Check Bar was a wall near the Golf Club which was painted black and white to alert drivers to an accident black spot.
  - 4 The curling pond was where the Community Centre and Library are now and not at the Loch as many people think.
  - 5 The 50 ton boulder lay at the roadside opposite Pollock's Farm and came from the open cast mine.
  - 6 The first Scout Master was William Dow.
  - 7 There were two Roller Skating rinks-one at the old paper mill in Broomhill Road and the other was in the public hall.
  - 8 As far as we know there have never been any rugby pitches in the area.
  - 9 Fred Griffiths was a local business man and ex Provost who started his works in High Bonnybridge in 1894. These were taken over by his son Azariah in 1901.
  - 10 We have located 26 football pitches in the area at one time or another. If you know differently please get in touch.

COMING

soon.....



*Spring Daffodils on the banks of the Bonny  
by Phil Swierczek.*

